

## An Appaisal of the Practice of *I'tikaf* in Selected Mosques in Ilorin Metropolis

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### Abstract

*I'tikāf* is one of the common spiritual practices in Islam. It is a spiritual retreat, usually done in a central Mosque where jum'ah is being performed during the last ten days of *Ramadan* with the intention of moving closer to Allah. The research aims to examine the concept of *I'tikāf* as mentioned in the Glorious Qu'ran and *Sunnah* as well as the perceived abuse of the sacred exercise among contemporary Muslims in Ilorin. Analytical and descriptive research methods were adopted in this study. Analytical method was utilized to analyze the prophetic *I'tikāf* while observation method was used to gather information about the practices, motives and behavior of people in selected Itikaf centres in Ilorin Metropolis. Interview was conducted with volunteers who are actively involved in practice and planning for Itikaf in Ilorin. it was found that despite the awareness of some Muslims on the prophetic *I'tikāf*, they still involved abusing and violating the rules and regulations of *I'tikāf*. This study therefore, suggested that before someone could engage in the practice of *I'tikāf*, he must know the etiquettes, conditions, rules, and regulations governing its practice, and uphold a decent and upright behaviors throughout the period.

**Keywords:** Practice, *I'tikāf*, Abuse, Contemporary, Muslim and Ilorin

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### Introduction:

Islam as a divine religion, has it been distinctive practices characterized by laws and orders, to be abided and followed by the Muslims for the fulfillment and validity of their practices. The acceptability of these

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practices will therefore be determined, on how they are being carried out according to the teachings of Islam. *i'tikāf* therefore, as one of Islamic practice, to get close to Almighty Allah by secluding in the Mosque and staying away from worldly affairs (Ramadan, n.d.). This is undoubted and can be traced to the life of the prophet and the great companions as well as their successors. Also, it is a means of devotion to worship and allow believers to leave earthly things behind by having closeness with Allah, as well as to reach spiritual peace (Ibn Bazz, n.d).

It is a common practice among devoted Muslims to seclude themselves in a mosque during the last ten days of *Ramadan*, and spend their time in supererogatory prayers, supplications, recitation of the glorious Qur'an, and some other prophetic prayers in anticipation of *laylatul-Qadr* (The Night of Majesty). It is unanimously agreed by the scholars of the science of the Qur'an that the Qur'an was revealed on this night.

Furthermore, Muslim scholars emphasized the importance of this night and recommended it be search by Muslims in the last ten days of Ramadan. However, with the fact that means and ways of searching for this night during *i'tikāf* have been highlighted and many Islamic scholars have written on this concept, many Muslims are derailing from it is real practice and the sacred purpose of *i'tikāf* is gradually changing and becoming increasingly difficult for contemporary Muslims to respect and abide by it etiquettes, conditions, rules, and regulations.

Innovations and abuses of different kinds are increasingly penetrating the practice of *i'tikāf*. This paper, therefore, concentrates on assessing the practices of *i'tikāf* among Muslims of the Ilorin metropolis, examine the innovations and abuses in the practice and possible solutions to these problems were suggested.

Hence, this paper focuses on the practice of *i'tikāf* and its assessment on contemporary Muslims.

#### **Definition of *I'tikāf***

The term *I'tikāf*, etymologically derived its origin from the Arabic trilateral verb “*akafa*” which means to face something totally without deviating; Muhammed bn Abi Bkr, defines *I'tikāf* as “to stay or hold”. (Ibn Mandhur, 2007) In the view of Ahmad Mukhtar Umar, *I'tikāf* means “to reside or stay for worshipping”.<sup>3</sup>In the opinion of sabiq, *I'tikāf* indicate “to stick to something, whether good or bad, and to block out everything else (Umar,

2002) the. Definition of sayyid sabiq here is nearer to the meaning of *I'tikāf* islamically.

However, this derivative has its origin from the various verses of the Glorious Qur'an. Such as the term means 'to stay' as interpreted from the verse below:

Do not approach your wives while you are doing *I'tikāf*  
(retreat in the masjids in the last ten days of Ramadan) in  
the masajid ... (Q2:187)

Also, the word *ākif* (from the same root as *I'tikāf*) was used in the verse below to convey the meaning of a 'permanent resident' as thus:

Which We have appointed for all people, **residents** and  
visitors alike ... (Q22:25).

Likewise, it was interpreted in another verse as a means to prevent something from allowing it to occur:

They are the ones who disbelieved and obstructed you  
from the masjid-al-haram (sacred masjid - *ka'ba*) and  
prevented your offerings from reaching their destination  
...(Q48:25).

Another meaning of this word is to devote one's self or stay firm upon something as interpreted from the following ayah:

Musa cursed him (i.e. *Samiri* who had made a calf of gold for people to worship): "Get out of here! Now throughout your life, you will say to other people: 'Touch me not'; and you will not escape your appointed doom. Behold this (false) 'god' to whom you had become a devoted worshipper: we will burn it (i.e. the calf) and scatter its ashes into the sea." (Q20:97).

The meaning of devotion or being strongly attached to something can also be interpreted from the ayah below:

Remember that occasion when Ibrahim asked his father and his people, "What are these images to which you are so devoted?" (Q21:52).

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Technically, Muslim scholars have expressed their views and perspectives on the concept of *I'tikāf*. The current study juxtaposes the various views of Islamic scholars intending to have a broader perspective of the subject matter.

According to Ibn Hazm:

هو الإقامة في المسجد بنية التقرب إلى الله - عز وجل -  
ساعة فما فوقها ليلا أو نهارا

“*I'tikāf* means staying in the mosque with the intention of getting closer to Allah for an hour or more either in the morning or night” (Al-Faywumī, 2010).

In the view of Ibn Qudāmah:

الإقامة في المسجد على صفة نذكرها قربة وطاعة

“*I'tikāf* implies staying in the mosque as instructed in order to obey and get close to Allah” (As-Sayyid Sabiq, 2010)

In the opinion of Ibn Daqiq:

لزوم المسجد على وجه مخصوص

*I'tikāf* means residing in the mosque in specific ways. (Ibn Quddamah, 2011)

Ibn Tamiyyah defined it as:

لزوم المسجد لطاعة الله

“*I'tikāf* is following the dictates of Allah by residing in the mosque” (Ibn Quddamah, 2011)

While Ibn Baz described *I'tikāf* as;

التفرغ للعبادة والخلوة بالله

“Secluding and devoting oneself to worship for Allah’s sake” (Ibn Daqiq, 2009).

From the above interpretations on different roots of words where *I'tikāf* is originated, it can be deduced that a Muslim who studies Islam to whatever level might not be able to present a meaningful contribution on *I'tikāf* unless

he/she has been involved in a constant practice of *I'tikāf* as done by Prophet Muhammad. It is just like asking a non-Muslim scholar of Islam to write on Salah or even for a Muslim who has not performed hajj to present a comprehensive treatment on the various rites of hajj and their observance during the period of hajj. Henceforth, any Muslim who wishes to present an acceptable scholarly contribution on *I'tikāf* must be a person who has been involved in a constant practice of *I'tikāf* as done by Prophet Muhammad SAW.

From the above scholastic definitions, *I'tikāf* can therefore, be referred to confining oneself to the masjid for the sole purpose of worshipping Allah SWT and to attain His pleasure by refraining from certain worldly affairs, with the intention of attaining the reward by sticking to the Sunnah of *I'tikāf*.

### **The Conditions for the Validity of *I'tikāf***

The scholars explain the following conditions for the acceptance of *I'tikāf*:

- a) Islam, sanity, and maturity.
- b) State of purity, free from major ritual impurities of janabah, menses, and postpartum bleeding.
- c) Intention (*an-Niyyah*)
- d) Seeking of permission of intending *mu'takifah*, who is a married woman from her husband.
- e) Staying confined in the masjid [or place of prayer] for the duration of *I'tikāf* except for valid reasons for which one would need to go out of the masjid
- f) Fasting. Though, this does not have a consensus of the jurist and majority of them does not support this stance. (a detailed discussion on this topic has been included in section 3.5.3)

### **Permissible and Non-Permissible Acts for the *Mu'takif***

Concisely, the conclusion of our findings on the permissible acts for the *Mu'takif* include: going out to relieve oneself, sleeping in the masjid, going out to bring food, talking to others on necessary occasions, studying within a short period (though, this has divergent opinion), washing or sewing of one's clothes, cleanliness of one's body, wearing of perfume, delegating some responsibilities of business or trade, inquiring about someone's health, doing *Nikah*, meeting of one's wife in the masjid during *I'tikāf* and they are permitted to touch each other so far it is not sexually.

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However, the acts which he is not permitted to engage in include: going outside of the masjid without any valid reason, passing underneath a room with a roof outside the masjid, Attending the funeral while in *I'tikāf*, visiting of someone's house to inquire about their health, buying and selling, consuming a substance that impacts sanity, sexual relation with one's spouse, not talking to anyone during *I'tikāf*, excessive socialization with other people in *I'tikāf*.

#### ***I'tikāf* in Selected Mosques Ilorin**

1. Ilorin old central mosque, Idi-Ape
2. Ansar al-Deen central mosque, Taiwo, Ilorin
3. Lawal central mosque, GRA., Ilorin
4. Madinah central mosque, Ilorin.
5. Imam Ahmad central mosque, Kulende, Ilorin
6. AL-Muniy OTM Central Mosque, Galadima, Ilorin
7. Istijaba Mosque, Ayegbami, Ilorin.
8. Nana Hawau Mosque, harmony estate, Ilorin
9. Oloje mosque, Oloje, Ilorin
10. Al-huda Islamic Mosque, Ogidi, Ilorin

#### **1. Ilorin Old Central Mosque, Idi-Ape**

The general information of Ilorin Old Central Mosque Idi-Ape, had been given above. However, the reason for repeating here is because, it is part of the mosques that this research selected to observe and gather information related to *I'tikāf* in Ilorin (Salihu Muhammad Bashar, An Oral interview by researcher, 1 October, 2022).

#### **2. Lawal central mosque, Ilorin**

Lawal central mosque is the mosque built by the former governor of Kwara state in 2006 at Government Residential Area, Kwara state. The practice of *I'tikāf* was therefore, began in the mosque in the year 2007. The population from the inception had been up to 50 participants till now (Abdul Ganiyy, An Oral interview by researcher, 5 October, 2022).

#### **3. Madinah central mosque, Ilorin**

This mosque was originally named masjid Istijābah but it is popularly known within the people around it and referred to as Madinah central

mosque. This is because the owner, popularly known as baba agbade, the present khalifah of Tijaniyyah Sufi order of Kwara, being one of the first to reside in the mosque environment, named it after the street or vicinity as Madinat-al-Baye Inyas. This name was so circulated that the mosque later derived its popular name from it. It is located along Technical Road, Ilorin, Kwara State. It was built in 1986 and *I'tikāf* began in the mosque in 2000 by some members of the mosque (Ibrahim Olashaykh, An Oral interview conducted on 28 November, 2022.).

#### 4. Imam Ahmad Central Mosque

Imam Ahmad Central Mosque was built by Professor Abdur-Rahman Ahmad Kakuri in 1999. It is located around Texaco Street, Sango, Ilorin, Kwara State. *I'tikāf* began in the mosque in 2005 with high population of the *Mu'takifeen*. However, the *I'tikāf* in 2022 as at the time of this research had a lower population which is different since the inception (Lawal Abdur-Rahman, An Oral interview conducted on 25 November, 2022.).

#### 5. AL-Muniy OTM Central Mosque, Galadima, Ilorin

AL-Muniy OTM Central Mosque, Galadima, Off Airport Road, Ilorin Kwara State. The mosque was built in 2005 by Sheikh Abdullah Abdulazeez Al-Muniy, under World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY), through Professor Qaasim Badmaasi. The mosque is presently supervised by Organization of Tadamunul Muslimeen (OTM), Kwara State.

The mosque started *I'tikāf* in 2010 with only one person who is the Imam of the mosque and then, the congregation would join him at midnight for Tahajjud. As time goes on, the population was later increased drastically (HebeebuLlah, 2022.).

#### Mode of *I'tikāf* Practice in Ilorin

The modes of *I'tikāf* observed in this research were limited to the information collected from the selected mosques mentioned above. The general modes adopted in Ilorin for their *I'tikāf* programs will be summarized below and the areas of their differences will be pinpointed.

1. **Appointment of the *I'tikāf* committee:** this study discovered that in Ilorin metropolis, there is usually a committee, solely appointed for *I'tikāf* programs in each mosque annually. They used to be selected within the participants of *I'tikāf* program. Their primary assignment is

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to coordinate the program throughout the period of *I'tikāf*. The committee comprises the general secretary financial security, welfare director, health officers, *Mufassir*, which is headed by the chairman, who is also among the *Mu'takifeen* or the Imam of the mosque who might also double as the owner of the mosque. Their duties are to supervise the *I'tikāf* program and to maintain proper practice of it in the mosque.

- 2. Requirements for the intending *mu'takif* to be fulfilled:** there used to be requirements listed by the committee of each mosque for *I'tikāf* before admitting the *mu'takifeen* to the mosque. These requirements used to be varied based on the conclusion of the committee of each mosque. It used to be different right from the fees that will cover the expenses of the needs of the *Mu'takifeen*. Such as the admission, feeding and other welfares fees which are to be paid by each *Mu'takif*. However, the researcher discovered that many of these mosques do not charge unnecessary payment which though, some used to do. Finally, we still observed that there are some mosques which do not charge for any fees for *I'tikāf* programs.

The other requirement is the completion of the admission form which will include the personal information of the *Mu'takif* for registration and recording purpose.

- 3. The Beginning of *I'tikāf*:** this study observed that majority of the *Mu'takif* in Ilorin used to enter masjid for *I'tikāf* on the 20<sup>th</sup> day, in the night of Ramadan while others enter on the 21<sup>st</sup> day, in the morning.
- 4. The Place of *I'tikāf* (*Mu'takaf*):** after entering of the mosque, the selection of place by the *Mu'takif* where he will spend his days and nights, fervently praying used to be selected according to the availability of space in the mosque. Some used to pitch tent with mosquitoes' net while others with nothing used to select any part of the mosque. However, the researcher discovered in this study that there are some Muslims who do not do *I'tikāf* in the mosque, rather at their place of choice. Such as, their room and any other place that is convenient for them.
- 5. Individual Acts of worship in *I'tikāf*:** with the commencement of *I'tikāf*, individual activities of the *Mu'takifeen* include:

1. Recitation of the glorious Qur'an or *Dalā'il-al-Khayrāt*: we discovered that many of the *Mu'takifeen* used to occupy themselves with the recitation of the Quran or *Dalā'il-al-Khayrāt* especially in the odds night of the days of *I'tikāf*. Many of them used to complete the whole Qur'an five times before *I'tikāf* ends. Likewise, *Dalā'il-al-Khayrāt*, which contains praises and salutation to the prophet (PBUH).
  2. Chanting of prophetic *Adhkār* or any other *Asrār* (*Asiri Tira*): It is also part of the activities of the *Mu'takifeen* to chant different prophetic *Adhkār* or any others selected prayer or even *Asrār*, which is popularly known as *Tira Asiri* in Ilorin metropolis. Such as: *sayfi sanni sanni*, *imam Madrasah*, *jawhirat-al Kamaliyyah* and other numerous *Asrār*
  3. Observation of *Nawāfil*: *Nawāfil* recommended by prophet or any other as desired by the *Mu'takifeen* are also part of activities which occupied their period in *I'tikāf*. Such as: *salāt-al Duha* and others. Therefore, *Nawāfil* that are different from *Tarāwih* (*Asamu*) and *Qiyāmu-al Layl*, are usually observed individually.
  4. *Tahfidh-al-Qur'an* (memorization of the Qur'an): we also discovered that there are some *Mu'takifeen* who spend some of their periods on memorization of the Qur'an or on remembrance of their memorization (*Murāja'*). However, this act is not commonly practice in *I'tikāf* in Ilorin.
- 6. Congregational acts of worship in *I'tikāf*:** aside from the individual activities of the *Mu'takifeen*, there used to be some programs which used to bring them together. Among them are:
1. Compulsory prayers: the five canonical prayers used to be observed congregationally at their appropriate time by the *Mu'takifeen* and other part of *jamā'ah*, members of the mosque who are not in *I'tikāf*. We also observed that there used to be congregational prayer (*Du'ā*) which is usually led by the *Imām* of the mosque. Such as: Chanting of prophetic *Adhkār* after the completion of each prayer. Although, it is not generally practiced in all of the Mosques in Ilorin.
  2. *Tarāwih* (*Asamu*): *tarāwih* is generally observed congregationally in all of Ilorin and it is popularly referred to as *Asamu* within the Metropolis. Majority used to observe ten *Raka'āt* then follow it with *Shaf'i* and *Witri*. While others used to pend *Witr* till midnight (*Qiyāmu-al Layl*) when another

voluntary prayer will be observed congregationally. Even though, this is not made compulsory for all and sundry, many of the *Mu<sup>c</sup>takifeen* usually participate from its beginning till the end.

3. Prep talk: this is some kind of motivating discussion which is usually led by any knowledgeable person chosen by the committee, to remind others of their purpose of being in the mosque. It also comes in form of discussion on challenges encountering by the *Mu<sup>c</sup>takifeen* and how probable solutions can be suggested.
4. Tafsir: according to our research, this is not commonly practiced in majority of the mosques. However, some are practicing it and the *Mu<sup>c</sup>takifeen* used to participate. Such as Ilorin old central mosque, Idi-Ape, where *tafsir* used to be delivered twice in the mosque, the first used to be delivered by the *ufassir* to the *I'tikāf* committee and last one is by the *mufassir* of the mosque which usually lasts shortly to the period of *Iftār*, to enable the *Mu<sup>c</sup>takif* to prepare for both *Iftār* and *Maghhrrib* prayer.
5. *Tahajjud*: During the nights of these days, there used to be a *qiyām al-Layl*, a sunnah prayer which is also known as *tahajud*. This is led by the Imam of the mosque and he used to be followed by the *Mu<sup>c</sup>takif*, though it is not made compulsory on them.
6. Studies in *I'tikāf*: the committee in some mosques like Imam Ahmad Central mosque and AL-Muniy OTM Central Mosque, used to organize for lecturers in different fields to teach the *Mu<sup>c</sup>takifeen* the basic knowledge in Islam, where topics related to Fiqh, Hadith, Inheritance and other contemporary issues will be discussed. However, because some of the *Mu<sup>c</sup>takifeen* were complaining that it affects their main purpose in the mosque, it was stopped in some mosques like Imam Ahmad central mosque in their *I'tikāf* program in 2022.
7. **Preparation of *Sahur* and *Iftār* meals:** the modes of preparation of *Sahur* and *Iftār* meals are different in each mosque. The researcher observed that in many of the mosques, the *Mu<sup>c</sup>takifeen* used to prepare their meals by themselves at any period nearer to *Sahur* and *Iftār*. Whereas, there is usually free food for each *Mu<sup>c</sup>takif* organized by some notable individuals who are financially buoyant to bear the responsibility in some mosques. Also, the

committee in some mosques used to prepare meals for the *Mu'takifeen* through the feeding payment they have made in the beginning of *I'tikāf*. Others who are not interested in the meals prepared by the committee are therefore, used to get their meals outside of *I'tikāf*, through delivery by any of the family member of the *Mu'takif* or from nearby available eatery service.

8. **Duration of *I'tikāf* in Ilorin:** the duration of *I'tikāf* in Ilorin does not have any strict regulations but according to the want of the *Mu'takif*. Although, it lasts generally for ten days in many times. While some used to stay in the mosque during the days only while others preferred the nights only. In our study, we observed that some part of the *Mu'takifeen* focused on the 27<sup>th</sup> day of Ramadan as *Laylat-al Qadr* when they will end their *I'tikāf* in the next morning of 28<sup>th</sup> days.
9. **Last day of *I'tikāf* in Ilorin:** *I'tikāf* in Ilorin is mostly end in the last day of Ramadan where most of the *Mu'takifeen* used to move straight from the mosque to any Eid praying ground of their desired. Although, we observed that there are some who departed from the mosque.

#### **Some Identified Abuses of *I'tikāf* among Muslims in Ilorin**

1. Using magic powder [*ebu*] even with alcoholic substances.
2. Invoking names of *Jinn* while supplicating
3. Fortune-telling and destiny prediction by browsing sand or via other means
4. Constant use of mobile phones, laptops and other related gadgets for social media, such as facebook, whatsapp
5. Unnecessary argument during *I'tikāf*
6. *Zāwiyah* and unsolicited *Adhkar* in *I'tikāf*.
7. Telling people that we are doing this *I'tikāf* for your own purpose.
8. Spiritual consultation (*jalabi*) during *I'tikāf*
9. Non-observance of mandatory prayers
10. Doing *Adhkar* while obligatory prayer is being performed.

It is important to pinpoint that these practices are erroneous and are against the core teaching of *I'tikāf*. That is why we concisely discussed some and related evidences were used to debunk the practices.

### Using Magic Powder [Ebu] Even with Alcoholic Substances

In the contemporary time, some Muslims do not understand the teaching of Islam in general and *I'tikāf* in particular. *I'tikāf* is to reside in the *Mosque* for the last 10 days of *Ramadan* with intention of move closer to Allah. But, some contemporary Muslims abuse it by bringing magic powder (ebu) to *I'tikāf* often using it with alcoholic substances. This is totally against the etiquette of *I'tikāf*. Medically speaking, these poisonous substances called 'ebu' are known mere impurities with potentials to cause a lot of damage such as kidney problems, liver cirrhosis and appendix etc. for the consumers. Meanwhile, Islam has taken a very strong stance against self-harm according to Q2:195

“And do not throw yourselves into destruction”

Consumption of alcohol is another great sin that is anti-Islam. While Muslims are expected to take advantage of the blessed month to seek forgiveness, it is surprising to observe people flagrantly consuming alcohol during *Ramadan*. This could imply non-acceptance of the *Salāt* for forty days, considering the implication of the Ahadith of the prophet as follows:

“if a man among my *Ummah* drinks *Khamr* (alcohol), Allah will not accept his *Salāt* for forty days” (Al Khattab, 2007)

Since *Salāt* is a major pillar of faith, a Muslim engaging in such a practice is merely wasting his time and not worshipping Allah.

### Fortune-telling and destiny prediction

Another way through which some Muslims abuse *I'tikāf* is by engaging in future telling and destiny prediction. It is common to see supposed Muslim scholars bringing sand or rosary to mosque for the sole purpose of predicting future events and destinies, especially for people who seek spiritual service in and outside *I'tikāf*. This practice is a gross violation of the Islamic principle and therefore remains unacceptable during *I'tikāf*. There is a consensus among scholars that future telling is *haram* in Islam. There are many *Ahadith* of the prophet which stated that this kind of practice is forbidden. An example is the *Hadith* narrated by Safiyah bint Abi Ubayd one of the wives of the prophet said that the prophet said;

من أتى عرافا فسأله عن شيء فصدقته لم تقبل له صلاة أربعين  
يوما

“Who ever goes to a soothsayer and ask him about something and believes him, his prayer will not be accepted for forty days”.  
(Muhammad, 1997)

Nevertheless, it is also narrated by Abu Hurayrah that the message of Allah said who ever come to a soothsayer and believe what he said, has nothing to do with that which has been reveal to Muhamma<sup>21</sup>. Similarly, it is expressly stated in the Quran that only Allah has the absolute knowledge of the seen according to the following verse: Q27:65

“Say non in the heaven and earth knows the unseen except Allah”.

Conclusively, this practice is not only *Haram* during Itikaf but even after it.

### **Uncontrolled Use of Mobile Phones and Smart Gadgets in *I'tikāf***

Bringing plasma screen television to *I'tikāf* is also another way of abusing *I'tikāf*, and it is a bad habit which is not good for a devoted Muslim. There is no wisdom behind bringing plasma television to the *I'tikāf*, when *Masjid* is meant for worshipping Allah and some other religion activities. So, *I'tikāf* is total devotion to Allah, any act beyond praying, praising and glorifying the name of Allah in mosque could be regarded as bad habit, and it also serve as an abuse of *I'tikāf*. Allah says in Q 72 vs 18

“And the mosques are for Allah alone, so invoke not anyone alone with Allah”

However, some Muslim used to watching pornography films on phone or laptop during *I'tikāf*, and this is clearly prohibited either we are in home let alone watching it in the month of *Ramadan*, while *I'tikāf* in is being performed. The main purpose of *I'tikāf* is to worship Allah, seeking for forgiveness and the night of Majesty. But watching pornography films on phones or laptop is the act of committing another sin, and this habit is an abuse of *I'tikāf*. The Glorious Qur'an indicates:

“Verily hearing and sight and heart all of them will be called to account for it on judgment day”. (Q. 17:35)

Also in Q, 24:30

“And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and to be mindful of their chastity”.

And Q:7:33

“Verily Allah has forbidden only shameful deeds be they open or secret and every kind of sinning and unjustified envy’s.

### ***Zāwiyah in I'tikāf***

The religious permissibility of *Zāwiyah* is a subject of controversy between the *Sunni* and *Šūfi* scholars. However, there seem to be a convergence when it comes to *Zāwiyah in I'tikāf*. It is one of the methods that people have created, without religious basis, to abuse *I'tikāf*. It is common to see people together doing *Kubrā* and *Hailalah*, ultimately shouting and disturbing other worshippers in *I'tikāf*. As we have established, *I'tikāf* is not meant for *Zāwiyah* and similar habits that are clearly against the aims and objectives of engaging in *I'tikāf*. As stated in Q 17: 110

”Do not utter your prayer with a very raised voice nor be silent seek a way between these”

For this reason, some scholars opined that worshippers observing *I'tikāf* should sit at the extreme rear of the mosque in order to avoid anyone who might engage him in conversation. (Hussain, 2005) This was in line with view of scholars which indicates that talking and conversation are not allowed in *I'tikāf* especially when the *Mutakif* is inside his *I'tikāf* tent or his special *I'tikāf* spot where his programme of *I'tikāf* is going on. (Hussain, 2005)

### **Invoking the Name of Jinn in Supplication**

In our contemporary time, some Muslims do not differentiate between the name of Jinn and Allah’s name. That is why, it common to see them calling

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the name of *Jinn* replace the beautiful names of Allah. This is another way of abusing *I'tikāf* by calling the name of Jinn which is totally against the prophetic prayer that a devoted Muslim should be engaged in. Instead to be reciting the glorious Qur'an and some other prophetic prayers, they will be calling the name of Jinn, which is obviously contradicted the aims and objectives of *I'tikāf*. The appearance of Jinn may cause a lot of problems for them, such as shouting, screaming and disturbing others in *I'tikāf*. Allah says in Q7vs 180:

“And the most beautiful names belongs to Allah, so call Him by them and leave the company of those who belie or deny or utter in pious speech against His name they will be requested for what they use to do”.

Allah also says in Q17vs 110

“Invoke Allah or invoke the most beneficent, Allah by whatever name you invoke Him is the same, for to Him belong the best names.

Also, in Q, 20:8:

“One has the right to be worshipped but He, to Him belong the best names”.<sup>31</sup>

Also, in Q, 5:24:

“He is Allah the creator, the inventor of all things the bestower of forms, to Him belong the best names all that is in the heaven and the earth glorify Him, and He is the Almighty the all wise”.

So, to be calling Jinn's names either at home or during *I'tikāf* is not good for a devote Muslim, because it is an act of Shirk.

**Chanting *Adhkar* while Obligatory Prayer is being Performed**

It is un-Islamic to be doing something else while obligatory prayer is being observed. People will be busy doing *Adhkar* in *I'tikāf* while obligatory prayer is commencing, So, any kind of *Adhkar* that we might be doing on the commencement of *Salāt* in *I'tikāf* we supposed to leave it for *Salāt*, because it is un-reasonable to be in mosque doing *I'tikāf* and not perform congregatory *Salāt*. Islammically doing *Adhkar* while *Salāt* is being

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observed is not an excuse for missing congregatory prayer. They will intend to finish their *Adhkar* before observing *Salāt* and all these were not recommended by Allah and the Prophet. And there is a time for every *Salāt* and whoever fails to observe it on its appropriate time is a sinner. In relevant with Q4:103;

“when You have finished As-Salāt (the prayer - congregational), Remember Allāh standing, sitting down, and lying down on Your sides, but when You are free from danger, perform As-Salāt (*Iqâmat-as- Salât*). Verily, the prayer is enjoined on the believers at fixed hours”

Conclusively this habit is against the teaching of prophetic *I'tikāf*.

**Unnecessary Argument during *I'tikāf***

Unnecessary argument is one of most common bad habit among the people in *I'tikāf* instead to utilize their times in reciting Glorious Qur'an and some other Sunnatic words, they will be argued on political matters, football and some other worldly affairs. They will be on this argument like two or three hours without concentrating on what they supposed to be doing in *I'tikāf*, they will also continue this bad habit in the following day. Because they lack knowledge, etiquette, condition and rules and regulations of *I'tikāf*. This argument may lead to a terrible quarrel among them. This is in line with Q. 29:46:

“And do not dispute with the followers of the Book except by what is best”.

Also, in Q, 18:54

“And man is most of all given to contention”.

Also, in Q, 3:66

“Behold! you are hey who disputed about that of which you had knowledge, why do you dispute about that of which you have no knowledge? And Allah knows while you do not know”.

### Playing and Listening to Music in *I'tikāf*

The habit of listening to music in *I'tikāf* is obviously wrong and serves as an abuse to the practice of *I'tikāf* because, *I'tikāf* is not proper place to be playing and listening to any music. The aims and objectives of *I'tikāf* cannot be attained by playing and listening to music, this habit contradicted the rules and regulations of *I'tikāf*, by disturbing others and distracting their attentions. Therefore, music is not good to be hearing in the mosque while *I'tikāf* is on progress. This was mention in Q: 31:6

“And of men is he who takes instead frivolous discourse to lead astray from Allah’s path without knowledge, and to take it for a mockery, these shall have an abasing chastiment’

### Recommendations

1. The Muslims of today’s contemporary society need to be conversant with undiluted and pristine Islamic teachings from respected scholars and experts in Islamic law and jurisprudence.
2. Misleading, concocted and fabricated religious ideas are so rife, particularly in South-west and North Central Nigeria that many people could not differentiate the true Islamic teachings and ideals from baseless innovations.
3. There must be regular orientation exercises on practices that are inconsistent with Islam for people doing *I'tikāf*; they would therefore have adequate knowledge about rules and regulations of *I'tikāf* and how it was practiced during the life of the Prophet and *Sahābah* in other not to fall into what might constitute abuse of *I'tikāf*.
4. It is imperative that all Muslims must have knowledge about the ideal concepts of *I'tikāf* in accordance with Qu’ran and *Sunnah* and should shun all act of innovation.
5. In South-west Nigeria, there is a prevalent lack of religious knowledge, including the basics of *I'tikāf* which is responsible for many of the abuses observed. Allah does not accept ignorant worship. Therefore, all Muslims must strive to have the basic knowledge of *I'tikāf*.

## Conclusion

It is apparent from the foregoing that *I'tikāf* is to devote oneself to 'Ibadah inside the mosque for a certain number of days and to stay away from worldly affairs. *I'tikāf* is intense worship and more importantly, allow believers to leave earthly things behind, and increase their worship of Allah. By performing *I'tikāf*, the individual expands his heart and reaches spiritual peace. Individual who reach inner peace can cope more easily with the troubles of life and develop anger control. *I'tikāf* is a time of purification and spiritual upheaval. In this paper, *I'tikāf* has been observed to increase spiritual well-being and can be especially said to increase confidence in the future and the ability to cope with life trouble. The potential of *I'tikāf* is to increase spirituality which should also be noted. At the same time, patience and confidence in God are spiritual values. In short, *Ramadan* comes once in a year and serves as a chance for observing *I'tikāf*. Therefore, before someone can perform *I'tikāf* he must know the purpose of *I'tikāf*, how it was practiced during the life time of the prophet, the etiquette, conditions and rules and regulations guiding *I'tikāf*, in order to abstain from abusing it.

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## Conflicts of Interest

We hereby declared that we do not have any competing interest, including financial or personal relationships, in connection with the writing of this paper.

## Authors' Contribution

I, Dr. Ali Miqdad Ali and my co-author Ibrahim Qadri designed this study and gathered some precedent literatures to write this article in respect of I'tikaf practice in South West Nigeria mosques in general and the mosques in ilorin metropolis specifically, to fill up the gap observed in the course of itikaf. Analytical method was used, Interview was also conducted

to generate the behavioural inclinations of *mu'takifn* and suggestions were made to correct the abnormalities with the *mu'takifn* for better and rewardable *itikaf* in future.

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