565930 - Interrupting I’tikaf to Deliver Khutbah

the question

I am a khatib who delivers khutbahs on Fridays. Is it permissible for me to go out from the place where I am observing i`tikaf to deliver the khutbah in another mosque, then come back to the place of i`tikaf again?

Summary of answer

Your going out to deliver the Jumu`ah khutbah in another mosque is permissible, because your i`tikaf is sunnah and recommended (mustahabb) – and not obligatory – but it renders your i`tikaf invalid, unless you stipulated that you could go out for that purpose before starting your i`tikaf.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

I.

I`tikaf (devotional retreat) means staying in the mosque to worship Allah, may He be Exalted.

Therefore going out of the mosque is contrary to the idea of i`tikaf, unless the individual goes out for some essential purpose, such as relieving himself or to eat if he does not have anyone to bring food to him, or if he stipulated in his intention to observe i`tikaf that he would go out to do some righteous deed or permissible deed.

Two things are exempted from that:

1. Going out for essential reasons, such as relieving himself if there are no facilities for that purpose in the mosque, or going out to bring food if there is no one who can bring it to him.

That also includes going out to pray Jumu`ah if there is no Jumu`ah in the mosque where he is

observing i`tikaf. So his i`tikaf is not invalidated by his going out to pray Jumu`ah. This is the view of the Hanafis and Hanbalis, in contrast to the Malikis and Shafa`is, who say that he must go out for Jumu`ah, yet he invalidates his i`tikaf by doing that.

See: *Bada'i` as-Sana'i`*, 2/114; *al-Insaf*, 3/372; *Adh-Dhakhirah*, 2/536; *Al-Majmu`*, 6/513.

2. If he stipulated, when beginning his i`tikaf, that he would go out to do a righteous deed, such as delivering the Jumu`ah khutbah, or visiting a sick person, or attending a funeral; or that he would go out for a permissible reason, such as to take a shower, sleep or eat in his house.

Al-Bahuti (may Allah have mercy on him) said in *Ar-Rawd al-Murbi`*, p. 245: The one who is observing i`tikaf should not go out of the place where he is observing his i`tikaf except for essential reasons, such as bringing food and drink because there is no one to bring them to him, or being overcome by the urge to vomit, urinate or defecate, or if he needs to do wudu' or ghusl, or to go and wash something that he needs that got contaminated with impurity, and to attend Jumu`ah prayer or to give testimony if that is required of him. But the best is not to go early for Jumu`ah and not to stay too long afterwards...

And he should not visit a sick person or attend a funeral, as he is obliged to observe the i`tikaf without interruption, so long as he is not specifically required to do those things because there is no one else who can do it, unless he stipulated when starting his i`tikaf that he would go out to visit a sick person or attend a funeral. Similarly, he should not go out to do any righteous deed that he does not have to do and things that he can avoid, such as eating supper and staying overnight in his house. And he should not go out to engage in trade or earn income by doing handicrafts in the mosque, or go out to do whatever he wants. End quote.

It says in *Matalib Uli an-Nuha*, 2/242: When a person first vows to observe i`tikaf, he may stipulate that he may go out to do things that he does not have to do, such as attending Jumu`ah prayer, giving testimony, visiting the sick and attending a funeral; and any righteous deeds that he is not specifically required to do, such as visiting a friend, upholding ties of kinship, and washing a deceased person; or actions that he can do without and that are not acts of worship, such as

stipulating that he can eat supper and stay overnight in his house, because observing the i`tikaf becomes obligatory once he forms the intention, like an endowment (waqf), and it becomes as if he vowed to devote the time that he spends there (in the mosque) as i`tikaf, and because there is a need to eat supper and stay overnight at home, and he cannot appoint someone else to do those things on his behalf. End quote.

Shaykh Ibn `Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him) said in his *Ash-Sharh al-Mumti`*, 6/523: From the words “unless he stipulates” we learn that it is permissible to stipulate that before starting to observe i`tikaf. Hence when he intends to begin his i`tikaf, he may say: I intend to observe i`tikaf except, O Lord, if I go out to visit a sick person or attend a funeral.

But this is not appropriate, and it is better to maintain the i`tikaf (and not interrupt it), unless the sick or dying person has a right over him, in which case stipulating this condition is better, meaning that the sick person is one of his relatives regarding whom not visiting them when they are sick may be regarded as severing ties of kinship. In that case, he should make this stipulation. And the same applies to attending a funeral. End quote.

Based on that, if Friday prayer is offered in the mosque where you are going to observe i`tikaf, then your going out to deliver a khutbah elsewhere is not a must, even if you are expected to do that, because your going out to deliver the khutbah will interrupt your i`tikaf, unless you stipulated that before starting your i`tikaf.

II.

If you did not stipulate that you would go out to deliver the khutbah, and your i`tikaf is voluntary, then there is nothing wrong with you going out and interrupting your i`tikaf.

Ibn Qudamah (may Allah have mercy on him) said in *Al-Mughni*, 3/195: But if the i`tikaf is voluntary, and he wants to interrupt it to visit a sick person or attend a funeral, that is permissible, because each of these actions (i`tikaf and visiting a sick person) is voluntary, and neither of them is a must. But the best is for him to remain in his i`tikaf, because the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) would not go and visit a sick person (whilst observing i`tikaf), and that was

not obligatory for him. End quote.

III.

You must go back to the mosque as soon as you finish what you stipulated to do, because if you are late, even by a few moments, your i`tikaf will be rendered invalid.

It says in *Sharh Muntaha al-Iradat*, 1/505: The one who is observing an obligatory i`tikaf, if he goes out for a valid reason, must return as soon as that reason no longer applies, because the ruling is connected to its reason. Therefore if he delays his return and does not return as soon as it becomes possible for him to do so, even if it is only a short delay, it is similar to his going out for something that he could avoid, and in that case, his entire i`tikaf is rendered invalid.

Conclusion:

Your going out to deliver the Jumu`ah khutbah in another mosque is permissible, because your i`tikaf is Sunnah and recommended (mustahabb) – and not obligatory – but it renders your i`tikaf invalid, unless you stipulated that you could go out for that purpose before starting your i`tikaf.

And Allah knows best.