221445 - Can We Talk during I’tikaf?

the question

Is it true that one should not talk to others during i’tikaf?

Summary of answer

During i’tikaf, you should devote your time to worshipping Allah and should not be distracted by other people in the mosque. But if you speak briefly to some people or someone who comes to visit you, there is nothing wrong with that.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

The purpose of i’tikaf

I’tikaf means staying in the mosque to worship Allah, may He be glorified and exalted.

The purpose of i’tikaf is for the individual to devote his time to worshipping Allah, may He be exalted, far removed from everything that may distract him. Therefore the Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) used to observe i’tikaf in a small tent inside the mosque, so that this place would be only for the person who was observing i’tikaf and he would not be distracted by other people in the mosque, as he could not see them and they could not see him.

Can we talk to others during i’tikaf?

This is what the person who is observing i’tikaf should be keen to do, but if he speaks briefly to some of the people, or someone comes to visit him and he talks to him, there is nothing wrong with that.

But this conversation should be in a low voice, so as not to distract any of those who are remembering Allah, may He be exalted, reading Quran or praying in the mosque.

And this talk should be brief and should not distract him from the purpose of i'tikaf.

Can a woman talk to her husband during i'tikaf?

Al-Bukhari (2035) and Muslim (2175) narrated from 'Ali ibn Husayn that Safiyyah – the wife of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) – told him that she came to the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) to visit him when he was in i'tikaf in the mosque during the last ten days of Ramadan , and she spoke to him for a while, then she got up to leave, and the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) got up with her.

Ibn Daqiq al-'Eid (may Allah have mercy on him) said in al-Ihkam (2/45):

"This hadith indicates that it is permissible for a woman to visit the one who is in i'tikaf and it is permissible to talk to the one who is in i'tikaf."

What should be done during i'tikaf and should not be done?

Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

The deeds of the one who is in i'tikaf may be divided into several categories: those that are permissible, those that are prescribed and encouraged, and those that are prohibited.

- As for those that are prescribed, he should focus on worshipping Allah and seeking to draw closer to Him, because this is the essence and purpose of i'tikaf. Therefore it is limited to the mosques (and cannot be done elsewhere).
- Another category is that which is prohibited, which refers to anything that is contrary to i'tikaf, such as if the person was to go outside of the mosque with no excuse, or to buy or sell, or to have intercourse with his wife, and other deeds that would cancel out i'tikaf because they are contrary to its purpose.

- The third category is that which is permissible and allowed, such as talking to people , asking them how they are and other things that Allah, may He be exalted, has permitted to the one who is observing i'tikaf. (Majmu' Fatawa wa Rasail al-'Uthaymin, 20/175-176)

He also said:

"There is nothing wrong with him talking briefly to his companions who are with him in i'tikaf or who have come in to visit him." (Jalasat Ramadaniyyah, 18/15)

He also said:

"I'tikaf: is what is meant thereby that some friends get together in a corner of the mosque to talk about unimportant matters and that in which there is no benefit, or is the purpose to devote oneself to worshipping Allah, may He be glorified and exalted? The latter is the purpose of it, so beware of wasting this precious time in talking to your friends and wasting time. But if you talk to them sometimes, there is nothing wrong with that, because the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) talked to his wife Safiyyah bint Huyayy (may Allah be pleased with her) at night, then he got up to walk her back to her house." (Al-Liqa ash-Shahri, 70/8)

Shaykh Ibn Baz (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

"With regard to talking in the mosque, if it is about worldly matters and is a conversation between brothers and friends about some of their worldly concerns, if it is brief then there is nothing wrong with it, in sha Allah, but if it goes on at length then it is makruh. It is makruh to take the mosques as places for talking about worldly matters , because they were built for the remembrance of Allah, reading Quran, offering the five daily prayers and other good deeds, such as offering supererogatory prayers, observing i'tikaf and holding study circles.

But with regard to taking them as places to chat about worldly matters, that is makruh, but a little of that, if necessary, when greeting one's brother with salam when meeting him, and asking him how he and his children are, and so on, or talking about worldly matters, so long as that does not go on at length and is done briefly, there is nothing wrong with that." (Fatawa Nur 'ala ad-Darb,

2/706)

For more, please see this category: I'tikaf.

And Allah knows best.