

MERRYMAKING FESTIVALS

A photograph of a room with several white and brown garments hanging on lines. A vacuum cleaner is on the floor.

IN THE GARB OF I'TIKAAF

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UBBAAD AND QURRAA'

Ubbaad = worshippers

Qurraa = Qur'aan reciters (qaaris).

“In aakhiruz zamaan (the end of times – times in proximity to Qiyaamah), there will juhhaal ubbaad and fussaag qurraa.”

(Hadith)

The qaaris of show and money, and the halqah thikr, bid'ati worshippers, the mass I'tikaaf crowds, etc. are conspicuous

Signs of Qiyaamah mentioned in this Hadith.

MOCKERY OF IBAADAT FOR NAFSAANI ENDS

Complaining about the merrymaking mock 'i'tikaafs' and other nafsaani shenanigans orchestrated in the Musaa'jid during the Holy Month of Ramadhaan, a Brother from the U.S.A. writes:

"Asalaamualaikum.

What is the ruling on the mass 'i'tikaaf' that takes place in the last ten nights of Ramadhaan?

Some of the Aalims who have set themselves up as Shuyookh of Tasawuf in the U.K will disappear for Umrah for the first 20 days of Ramadhaan (most probably to get away from Fasting for 23 hrs in the mid-summer heat) and then come back to conduct their mass or mess gatherings in the last ten days.

Their action boggles my mind because the last 10 days are the most sacred. Why leave such a Holy Sanctuary as the Haramain Shareefain to conduct the mass proceedings in the U.K. or U.S.?(*The reason for rushing back for the last ten days is the pursuit of the dunya. They are deprived of the mass merrymaking in the Haramain Shareefain. There they will not stand out as 'hadhrats' to be worshipped. They will be ordinary laymen, and in this there is no fun, no acclaim, no aggrandizement and no hadyahs. - The Majlis*)

You have not seen anything like this show which takes place in the last ten days and nights of this auspicious Month. 500 or more persons take part. It is a 'memorable' sight to behold, and to shake your head in bewilderment. Their hadhrat saheb will have his own conspicuous tent, the size of a small room in one corner of Masjid if he is in I'tikaaf, Or in some cases the Masjid is custom built in such a way that the Buzurg will have a small room with a toilet and shower just like in a hotel and Allah knows best

The best part of the pantomime show is at Fajr time, The Salaah of Fajr will always be delayed by 5-10 sometimes even 15 mins.(*This is one of the shenanigans of the imposter 'shaikhs' to have all*

eyes focused on him when he emerges from his cloisture in full regalia. – The Majlis)

In anticipation of the hadhrat saheb to come out of hiding to commence Salaah there will be total silence, it would not be an exaggeration to say that if the Masjid had a hard floor a pin drop would be heard, No one will be making Dhikr at this time and everybody's attention will be focused on the door from which the 'wali' of Allah will make an appearance.

Then finally the door will creak open and the hadhrat with kingly dignity will walk into the Masjid taking baby steps with his elite group and entourage of servants following behind like bridesmaids behind the bride. *(Was this the Sunnah of Rasulullah –sallallahu alayhi wasallam-? The poor hadhrat is blissfully ignorant of the fact that Rasulullah – sallallahu alayhi wasallam – always maintained an unostentatious presence when he was among a group of his Sahaabah . – The Majlis)*

He will in slow motion look at the crowd, then, like the pope blessing his underlings, say 'Asalaamualaikum'. With 500 – 600 or even more chelas/followers in unison chanting "wa alay kumus salaam", it is another 'memorable' episode. After this, the entire congregation will stand up for Salaah. *(In the Musjid the standing up for the Fardh Salaat is initiated by the Iqaamah, not by a man whom people have made an idol. – The Majlis)*

I don't know if i am wrong to say this but it bothers me a lot. Why can't these hadhrat sahebs sit in anticipation for Salaah in the first saff a few moments before Salaah? Why can't these people adopt an approach which resembles humility instead of an approach of Pride? *(They act like Fir'oun. They can't lower their hallucinated dignity by sitting in the saff with the 'rabble' because in this there is no attention drawn to them. Their ego is in demand of inflation. These jaahil peers and shaikhs are ignorant of the Sunnah, hence they set themselves up as 'gods' (Arbaabam min doonillaah).*

I have been told such people have such a high level of humbleness and piety that they are totally oblivious to the fact that 500+ people are there watching. *(If they had genuine tawwadhu' –*

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humility – they would not be following in the shadows of Fir'oun, Haamaan and Nimrood. – The Majlis)

On one hand we have the so called hadhrats of England with their mass 'I'tikaaf' gatherings, and on the other hand we have their American counterparts, the Imaams and trustees of Masaajid, organizing mass/mess so-called 'I'tikaaf parties. Talk about mass deviation. The following are their shenanigans:

A massive tent that costs \$35,000 is erected outside the Masjid. A barrier is then placed inside this tent to separate males and females. *(The scenario of zina having habaailush shaitaan – the traps of the devil – in the same venue of merrymaking – The Majlis)*

A chart/list is placed inside the Masjid for each of the 30 days of Ramadhaan. Brothers are encouraged to put their names on this list to fund the food for that particular evening's 'Iftaar' party. Please note, each night these shenanigans take place, it costs a whopping \$1700 for food that is cooked in the local restaurants to feed 400+ Brothers and Sisters, some of whom Allah Ta'ala has blessed with tremendous wealth. – *They devour carrion and a variety of mushtabah and haraam food with which to ruin their Fast. They are the brothers of shaitaan for squandering so much money when Muslims are starving world-wide. – The Majlis)*

The red herring of "great reward to feed a fasting person in the month of Ramadhaan" is pumped into the minds of the ignorant public to fleece them of the money required to make this happen.

On Jumuah the Imaam preaches the following.

'Brothers and Sisters do not break your fasts at home, we will provide the food for everyone at the Masjid in the Holy month of Ramadhaan, you will gain the benefit of praying the Salaah's of Maghrib, Isha and Taraweeh with Jamaat". *(We are living in the era of the juhala leading the juhala. The public is jaahil, the imams are jaahil, the trustees are jaahil and the hadhrats are jaahil. It is the Reign of Jahaalah predicted in the Hadith – The Majlis)*

How can this so called fikr/good intention of theirs be justified when women also come in droves? *(They have no good intentions. It is the quest for nafsaaani gratification. – The Majlis)*

Even if females didn't attend, it still does not make sense to feed 400 or 500+ people with bloated stomachs every day when the poor displaced Hungry and Homeless Muslims of Burma and elsewhere are suffering with no end in sight. What really makes my blood boil is that the modernist Imaam and his gang of Bid'atee Trustees are absolutely convinced that what they are doing is right."

OUR COMMENT

Allaamah Abdul Wahhaab Sha'raani (rahmatullah alayh), the Wali of Allah Ta'ala of the 9th Islamic century said regarding a 'shaikh' of Tasawwuf who claims to have renounced the dunya but erects for himself a mansion – a super structure as do these dacoits of 'tasawwuf' of this era – to lure people to come to him for 'islaah', is an imposter. The masses should flee from him.

I'tikaaf is the Ibaadat of this Ummah which replaces the *Rahbaaniyat (Monasticism)* which was the valid practice during the time of Nabi Isaa (alayhis salaam), and also during bygone times before him. *I'tikaaf* is a miniature *Rahbaaniyat*. It is renunciation of the dunya and the adoption of *Zuhd (abstinence from most lawful activities)*. It is an occasion of communion with Allah Azza Wa Jal. It is a time of solitude like the solitude of the cave and wilderness where the *Raahibeen (genuine Muslim monks of bygone times)* found solace and comfort in the Remembrance of Allah Ta'ala. The Qur'aan Majeed states: "*Behold! In the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest.*"

I'tikaaf is a time for strengthening the bond with Allah Ta'ala by focusing the mind and heart fully on Him with silent Thikr and Fikr (contemplation) which is the Salaat of the Soul. It is the Ibaadat in which all four *Arkaan (Fundamentals)* of Tasawwuf have to incumbently be given practical expression. These fundamentals are:

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- Reduction in speech
- Reduction in food
- Reduction in sleep
- Reduction in mingling with people.

But, lamentably, in the mock-mass 'i'tikaafs' of merrymaking organized in these times, all four *Arkaan* are eliminated and substituted with their exact opposites.

I'tikaaf has been designed by the Shariah for the acquisition of greater purity of the heart and greater concentration of the mind. For these achievements, solitude, *silent and individual* Thikrullaah and rigid practise on the four *Arkaan* of Tasawwuf are imperative. The Fiqhi validity of *I'tikaaf* is never adequate for the achievement of the spiritual objectives of this wonderful Ibaadat.

The *Raahibs* (*sincere Muslim Monks of bygone times*) devoted their entire lives in caves and in the wilderness, totally renouncing the dunya to gain the spiritual benefits of *Zuhd*. Such benefits are achieved only in an environment of genuine seclusion and solitude. That is the purpose for setting up a small enclosure/tent in the Musjid for the persons of I'tikaaf. Therein do they have to meditate on the solitude of the Qabr and its torments. It was precisely for this reason – to gain the Proximity of Allah Azza Wa Jal – that Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) would, prior to Nubuwwat, spend days and even weeks in I'tikaaf, in solitude and contemplation in the cold Cave of Hira in the wilderness. Allah Ta'ala has made it infinitely easy for this Ummah to achieve Divine Proximity by means of observing *I'tikaaf* in the Musjid. But the essential condition is to observe the *I'tikaaf* in the way it should be observed. The only reason why the venue of the Musjid has been selected for I'tikaaf is to ensure performance of Salaat with Jamaat. It is therefore haraam to abuse the Musjid with merrymaking and picnicking as the hadhrats are scandalously perpetrating nowadays in the name of Islam.

I'tikaaf is not a time for camping, picnicking, merrymaking and gluttony which accompany these mass-mock gatherings which

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they scandalously dub '*I'tikaaf*'. This type of mock '*I'tikaaf*' of waste, ostentation, pride and merrymaking as described by the Brother from the U.S. is not confined to the U.S. and U.K. The same style of *khuraafaat* in the name of '*I'tikaaf*' has become the norm in South Africa as well. In the name of the '*I'tikaaf*', the hadhrats are plundering the morals and Imaan of the lay people. A massive mockery of the Deen is being perpetrated in the Musaajid during the Holy Month of Ramadhaan.

Nowadays, any chap can overnight become a 'hadhrat' of tasawwuf. Their tasawwuf nowadays is generally confined to public halqah thikr, singing nazams, gluttony, merrymaking and mass-mock '*I'tikaafs*'. They block and pollute the Musaajid. They waste the Lillah funds of the public for gratifying their gluttony. They cause stinks and stenches in the Musaajid with their food of gluttony and the effects of constipation, the consequence of their gluttony. They chase the Malaaikeh away and they cause distress to other musallis with all the stench they create in the Musjid.

The *Mu'takaf* (*place of I'tikaaf*) in the Musjid is not a Madrasah for conducting *dars*. It is neither a venue nor a time for delivering lectures. It is not a time for mass activity. It has to be a time of solitude. That is precisely why a small 'tent' is erected in the Musjid for the person of *I'tikaaf*. He has to remain in his tent engrossed in Thikr and Ibaadat in general. He may not wile away the time in conversation to combat his 'boredom'. In fact *I'tikaaf* is the cure for boredom. It is a time for communing with Allah Ta'ala, not for any other indulgences.

I'tikaaf is the best opportunity for giving practical expression to Rasulullah's command: "*Remember abundantly that being which will sever delights, i.e. Maut.*" The person in *I'tikaaf* has to incumbently sit in solitude in his *Mu'takaf* to meditate on Maut. He has to reflect on the solitude of the Grave and its torments. This is among the primary objectives of *I'tikaaf*. The mass gatherings, gluttony, noise, mingling and merrymaking are all nugatory of this *Maqsad* (*Objective*).

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I'tikaaf is not an assembly of people to be subjected to supervised programs and other activities, be these of a Deeni nature. Solitude and seclusion are the fundamental ingredients of *I'tikaaf*. Every individual should conduct himself as he would on the Day of Qiyaamah. No hadhrat will be allowed to supervise any program on that Day. What is transpiring at these mass gatherings where a mess is made of the *I'tikaaf* ibaadat, is hadhrat-worship. The hadhrats are utilizing the last ten days of Ramadhaan for promoting their *nafsaaniyat*. In so doing, they come within the scope of the Hadith in which one of the Signs of Qiyaamah, is:

"The dunya will be pursued with the amal of the Aakhirah."

Ibaadat which is an *amal of the Aakhirah*, is being used by the hadhrats for the acquisition of the dunya and for fulfilment of *nafsaaniyat*.

Never in the annals of Islam, were there such ludicrous '*i'tikaaf*' shows organized as are being perpetrated presently. These gatherings of merrymaking do not have the slightest resemblance with the Sunnah. They eliminate the spirit and ethos of *I'tikaaf*.

In the kitaab, *Lataaiful Ma-aarif*, the objectives of *I'tikaaf* observed by Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) are described as follows:

"And, Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) would observe I'tikaaf in these ten days in which the search for Lailatul Qadr is made, to terminate his (other) occupations, and to free him for the nights, and to be in seclusion for communion with his Rabb, and for His remembrance and for dua. He would prepare an enclosure wherein he would seclude himself from the people. Thus, he would not mingle with the people, not even for teaching knowledge, nor for reciting the Qur'aan (to the people). On the contrary, the most meritorious (afdhal) is to seclude oneself and to be silently engrossed with one's Rabb and in His remembrance, supplicating to Him.

This I'tikaaf has been ordained for observance in the Musaaajid only to ensure that Jamaa-aat (Salaat) are not missed because any seclusion which prevents from Jamaat is forbidden.....

Thus, the Mu'takif imprisons himself (i.e. devotes himself) for the obedience of Allah and for His Thikr, and he severs from himself all activities which divert him from Allah. He focuses with his heart and body on His Rabb and on that which draws him closer to His Rabb. For him (the Mu'takif) there remains no concern besides Allah, and nothing can please him besides Allah."

According to the Hadith, the only objective of I'tikaaf is seclusion for the sake of ibaadat. By ibaadat here is meant original ibaadat – the Remembrance of Allah Ta'ala – for which man has been created as mentioned in the Qur'aan:

"I have not created man and jinn except that they worship Me."

Ibaadat in the context of I'tikaaf does not bring within its scope tableegh, ta'leem and tarbiyat of others. All such acts of virtue are secondary. They are not the *Maqsood* (Objective) of man's creation. They are only the ways and means of achieving the primary *Maqsood*. This fact is adequately illustrated by Allah's command to Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam):

"And when you have completed (your work of tableegh), then exert (yourself in direct Ibaadat)."

The tableegh of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) was his primary obligation. Allah Ta'ala raised him for tableegh of the Deen. All day long Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) was occupied in this lofty Ibaadat of Tableegh. Despite his noble occupation, Allah Ta'ala commanded him to exert himself in the primary Ibaadat of Allah's Thikr during the night time. This ibaadat he had to execute in privacy – in seclusion.

Similarly, the objective of I'tikaaf is the primary Ibaadat of Thikrullah and to prepare for the Aakhirah. I'tikaaf is not the occasion for programs with others. Delivering bayaans is an interference with the purpose of I'tikaaf. It is not an occasion of halqah thikr. In fact there is no practice of congregational thikr in Islam for any occasion. Such collective acts and lectures are nugatory of the letter and spirit of I'tikaaf.

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Besides primary Ibaadat there is no scope in the I'tikaaf for tableegh, lectures, and group thikr. When even secondary acts of ibaadat begate the spirit of i'tikaaf, what conclusion should be drawn from the merrymaking, noise, chatter, conversation (be it of a Deeni nature), gluttony, etc. which are salient features of the mass-mock i'tikaaf functions organized by the shaikhs and molvis of this age? They are making a despicable mess of the Masnoon I'tikaaf.

These functions of mass i'tikaaf are designed for show (riya) and motivated by pride (takabbur). The shaikhs of so-called 'tasawwuf' of this age have not even smelt of the fragrance of Tasawwuf. They are far, very far from even the confines of true Tasawwuf. Their bankruptcy in this sphere constrains them to resort to ostentatious activities for remaining in their 'tasawwuf' business. Thus, they are inordinately eager to expand their circle of mureeds. Some even send out agents to canvass and rope in mureeds. Public halqah thikr sessions, nazam concerts, luring females to their programs, and mass i'tikaaf camping are among their ways of promoting and projecting themselves. Riya, Ujub and Takabbur drips from them. It is clearly visible on their faces and in their misdeeds presented as acts of the Deen. They come within the scope of the Hadith:

“They pursue the dunya with the amal of the Aakhirat.”

A person who is genuinely desirous of observing I'tikaaf, should search for a small Musjid in a quiet area – far from the madding crowd – so that he could engross himself with Allah Ta'ala in seclusion.



SATANISM IN THE GARB OF 'I'TIKAAF' MOCKERY AND PILLAGE OF IBAADAT THE FARCE IN ZAMBIA

A concerned Brother from the U.S.A. writes:

“Recently one brother returned from I'tikaaf from Zambia . The set up was 650 men and several women (wives of the mureeds). Only 200 could fit in the masjid and the remaining 450 were in a tent. The women were doing nafl I'tikaaf in a hall. The Shaikh Zulfiqar Naqshbandi from Pakistan had mureeds from all over the world including ulema from Deoband.

What was disturbing was the affluent brother who sponsored the event runs a soda company. It costs about two thousand dollars for the plane ticket alone. The meal sequence was biryani every day and then at night ice cream, falooda, and other sweets. They had a 'khidmaat jamaat who would roll out the dastkhaans and futons for all the guests. The food was so much and so delicious according to the brother he suffered from diarrhea while he was there.

He was also telling me how the soda was delicious. The brother who runs the soda factory is planning to expand the masjid to accommodate 1000 people next year. There were some other strange and weird things. In order to see the shaikh one had to pass through at least ten persons. He mentioned something very queer. I want clarification on it.

1. He said the shaikh would cast his gaze on a person and he would be inclined to zikr. One Maulana in the past told me that even non-Muslims could do such things. It is not something to be impressed with. Please advise.

2. He talk about the noorani faces of the people serving the people. Is it possible to have a noorani face with so much food and extravagance that the brother gets diarrhoea. How can a face glitter with noor when so

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much doubtful and perhaps haraam food and sodas were consumed? Is there some kind of deception in this show?

3. Does the Shariah allow women to undertake journeys from other countries to sit in I'tikaaf in tents at a venue overflowing with a crowd of men and women? We all know that it is not permissible for women to attend even the Musjid for Salaat, even if stringent conditions are in place. So how is it permissible for them to travel from one country to another with strange men all along the journey to participate in a function which has no substantiation in the Sunnah?

4. The brother got khilifaat also, but in the past 25 years that he has been bayt, the shaikh barely spoke and/hardly corresponded with him. His shaikh barely knows anything about him. He sat with him for 5 minutes. Is it proper to give khilafaat like this.

5. Should I say anything to the brother.” (End of letter)

COMMENT

The show, waste, extravagance and haraam acts organized by this miscreant ‘shaikh’ who lacks understanding in Tasawwuf – who does not know even the essential rudiments of Tasawwuf – are the elements of satanism passed off as ‘ibaadat’ in the garb and name of I'tikaaf. He and all the participants were lost in shaitaaniyat which they advertise as ‘sufi’ism’ or ‘tasawwuf’.

A Muslim whose with unbefuddled brains confronted by the falsehood being passed off as ibaadat in the garb of I'tikaaf, will not fail to discern and understand the evil of the bid'ah and haraam ‘urs’ festival which this cult-leader has organized in Zambia. The Qur'aan and Sunnah urge Muslims to utilize their Aql (the Bounty of Intelligence) to understand and distinguish between right and wrong – vice and virtue.

Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: “Sin is that which agitates the conscience” For the Muslim whose intelligence has not been corroded with evil, there is no difficulty in understanding what is halaal and what is haraam. Hence, Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) ordered us:

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“Seek a fatwa from your heart.” The pure heart of the Mu'min will not fail in providing the correct fatwa and guiding one to the Haq. The genuine noor of the heart is not the deceptive satanic 'noor' on the faces of those who devour mushtabah food so gluttonously as to suffer from the disease of continuous excreting.

Who in Islam had originated these circus performances grotesquely dubbed 'I'tikaaf'? What resemblance does the miscreant's pantomime show have with the I'tikaaf observed and taught by Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam)? The detailed explanation of the external form and of the soul of I'tikaaf are not unknown entities. The kutub of the Shariah explain the method of I'tikaaf. The essential ingredients of the circus shows of the miscreant deviated false 'sufis' of this age are eating, excreting, extravagance, show, pride, and other evils stemming in the wake of the aggravating presence of women.

The fraudulent 'shariah' of the impostor 'sufis' of this age encourages their en- trapped and deceived mureeds to undertake inter-continental journeys, squandering thousands of dollars to attend the mock 'I'tikaaf'. Our Shariah – the Shariah of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) – does not permit such satanism. The 'shaikh' should hang his head in shame if he has any vestige of Imaani haya and ghairat for inviting womenfolk to undertake journeys to attend his satanic demonstration in the name of 'I'tikaaf'. From the moment they leave home until the moment they return home, they are in the process of sinning. They are perpetually under divine curse whilst they are out of their homes. From home back to their home they indulge in sin and transgression, and the imposter 'shaikh' will have to bear the load of all this villainy and immorality which he is organizing for nafsani gratification.

The Rooh and Maqsood of I'tikaaf have been explained earlier in this booklet. Read and understand the meaning of I'tikaaf. Do not fall in the trap of these miserable deceits posing as shaikhs of Tasawwuf. They rob you of your Akhlaaq and even Imaan. May Allah Ta'ala save the ignorant mass from the clutches of these wolves in sheep's skin.

During the Ramadhaan I'tikaaf, Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) was transformed into a different person. He cut all ties with the Sahaabah.

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He terminated all Tabligh and Ta'leem activities, and became engrossed in silent Thikr and Muraaqabah sitting in solitude. There was no gathering, no feasting and no fanfare.

The answers to your queries are in brief, as follows:

(1) Kuffaar, magicians, fussaaf and fujjaar are also capable of administering 'tawajjuh'. Christian faith-healers are well known for this. Hindu sadhus and yogis excel in tawajjuh (casting gazes to bring about temporary effects on the minds of the victims.) Never be misled and duped by such stunts. The criterion of Haqq is only the Shariah, nothing else.

(2) Shaitaan also has 'noor' – a dales and deceptive noor. He is able to present such 'noor' with by means of which he induces in the observer the understanding that it is the noor of Jibreel or the Noor of Allah Ta'ala. Such satanic stunts are practised by frauds masquerading as Sufis and Walis. The 'noor' which they are speaking of is in reality zulmat (spiritual darkness). There is no genuine noor on the faces of people whose occupation in Ramadhaan is to gluttonously eat and excrete. They have no other job.

(3) The worse villainy perpetrated by the 'shaikh' is opening the doors of zina by inviting women to participate in his mock 'i'tikaaf' circus. Only a person devoid of Imaani ghairat indulges in such shaitaaniyat. On the very first occasion when Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) had sat in I'tikaaf, his wife Hadhrat Zainab (radhiyallahu anha) arranged for her tent to be set up near to Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). She had also intended to sit in I'tikaaf. When Nabi-e-Kareem (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) saw the tent, he ordered it to be taken down. So annoyed was he that he himself abandoned the I'tikaaf and made qadha of it in Shawwaal. There was no crowd of Sahaabah in I'tikaaf. The presence of just one lady – his own Holy Wife – disturbed him so much that he abandoned the I'tikaaf. What would Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) say and do if he had to be present to witness the circus with its satanism polluting the Musjid and ruining the morality of hundreds of Muslims during the auspicious month of Ramadhaan in the name of

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I'tikaaf? These fake 'sufis' must drown themselves in shame. Their conduct is absolutely disgusting.

(4) Khilaafat nowadays is an extremely cheap commodity. Khalifas are available for one cent each. The fake shaikh only needs to be buttered and oiled up a bit for acquiring 'khilaafat'. It is a massive fraud perpetrated in the name of the Deen. These fake 'shaikhs' and paper 'khalifahs' are morons bereft of even a little fear for Allah Ta'ala, hence all these shenanigans in the name of the Deen.

(5) You may give this letter to the brother who was entrapped in the pantomime of shaitaan.

We are living in an era in close proximity to Qiyaamah. What we are observing are signs of Qiyaamah predicted by Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). The Deen is being grossly abused and manipulated for worldly objectives.

The emphasis which these bogus 'sufis' accord to their brand of mock 'I'tikaaf' has absolutely no relationship with the Hukm of observing the Masnoon I'tikaaf in Ramadhaan. Imaam Maalik (rahmatullah alay) said: "I wondered about I'tikaaf and the abstention of the Sahaabah from its observance despite the intensity of their concern and obedience to the Sunnah."

In the section, Saunul Musjid (Protecting the Musjid), Shaikh Jamaaluddin Al-Malati Al-Hanafi states in his Kitaab, Al-Mu'tasar minal Mukhtasar min Mushikilil Aathaar:

"What used to be done (i.e. in the Musjid for I'tikaaf) would not prevent the people from Salaat in the remaining section of the Musjid." Now just imagine the chaos in the Musjid jammed to capacity with hundreds of pretenders, with the aggravation of the huge tent to accommodate another 400 men including some women in the name of 'nafl I'tikaaf'. This 'shaikh' has hoodwinked the hundreds of juhala to believe that Nafl I'tikaaf is valid in the tent. They wasted thousands or tens of thousands of dollars in haraam air-fares to participate in the merrymaking mock 'I'tikaaf' circus, hence their brains had to be soothed with the fabrication of 'nafl I'tikaaf' in the tent.

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The usual musallis of the Musjid are impeded in their ibaadat. The scenario is ridiculously abnormal, grossly un-Islamic and totally in conflict with the Sunnah and in violation of the masaa-il and spirit of genuine Sunnah I'tikaaf. The haraam invasion of the Musjid by the campers is Islamically intolerable.

Why did Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) order that the I'tikaaf tents of his Wives (radhiyallahu anhum) be pulled down, then in annoyance he, himself abandoned the I'tikaaf? When he saw that three tents had sprang up in the Musjid, he was disturbed, and with annoyance Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) exclaimed: "What is this? Do you intend goodness?" The situation was becoming abnormal and it would interfere with the Salaat of the musallis, hence, he terminated the I'tikaaf.

What is happening in these mass mock circus 'I'tikaafs' organized by fake 'sufis' who have not as yet set one foot in the Path of true Tasawwuf, is a shocking and a lamentable farce innovated in the name of the Deen.

In Umdatul Qaari, Allaamah Aini responding to Imaam Zuhri's surprise at the abstention from I'tikaaf by the vast majority of people, he says:

"Our Ashaab (the Ahanaaf Fuqaha) said: 'Verily, the majority of the Sahaabah did not observe I'tikaaf. Imaam Maalik said: 'It did not reach me that Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthmaan Ibnul Musayyib nor anyone else from these Aimmah of the Salaf except Abu Bakr Bin Abdur Rahmaan had observed I'tikaaf.'"

The Ummah has abandoned numerous acts of the Sunnah, yet these imposter 'sufis' do not encourage the revivification of the Sunnah. Rather, they invent new bid'at with which they further ruin and destroy the Akhlaaq and moral fibre of the people.

The shaikh who organized the mass, mock i'tikaaf does not appear to have the haziest idea of the objective of I'tikaaf. Allaamah Aini states in Umdatul Qaari: "When Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) saw them (his wives) by him (in I'tikaaf) in the Musjid, then it appeared as if he was in his home together with his wives, hence the Maqsood (objective)

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of I'tikaaf is defeated. And, it (the Maqsood) is seclusion from wives and (severance) from worldly relationships.”

Another probability for ordering the removal of the tents, according to Allaamah Aini, and also according to simple logic, is: “They (the Holy Wives) restricted the space of the Musjid with their tents.” And this posed a great inconvenience to the Musallis. In these circus ‘itikaafs’ such as the show in Zambia and even here in South Africa, the entire Musjid is hijacked and polluted.

Morons cite the erroneous practices of seniors as daleel for bid’ah. The Sunnah of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) cannot be neutralized with the a’maal of the Buzrugs. Their deeds do not constitute the Shariah.

It is haraam to worship the buzrug. Reprimanding this ‘hadhrat’ attitude and stupid blind following of the bid’ah introduced by some hadhrats, especially quack hadhrats of our age, the Qur’aan Majeed states about Bani Isaaeel: *“They took their ahbaar (ulama) and ruhmaan (saints – hadhrats) as gods besides Allah.....”*



THE ‘ITIKAAF FARCE IN STANGER

The whole of the Muslim public is not blind. Many people are appalled at the shenanigans which the bid’ati bogus ‘shaikhs’ are perpetrating in the garb of ‘I’tikaaf’. While the Barelwi Qabar Pujaari bid’atis perpetrate their moulood bid’ah in the guise of ‘Hubb-e-Rasool’ (Love for the Rasool), the new brand of pseudo-deobandi bid’atis indulge in their new-found camping and merrymaking bid’ah in the name of ‘I’tikaaf’ when in reality there is not even a semblance of Masnoon I’tikaaf in their practices of riya, takabbur and israaf.

A Concerned Brother from Stanger who observed the show, writes: “Please give me the Shariah stance on the following issue:

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In the Stanger Masjid this year, an overseas shaikh (Kamaludden) was invited to spend I'tikaaf for the last 10 days. Almost 300 individuals sat for I'tikaaf (majority from out of town). The following were the salient features of this I'tikaaf function:

Q. *Huge expenses were incurred to feed the large crowd for Sehri, Iftaar and supper. Is this ok in the Shariah when men, women and children in Syria, Palestine, Burma etc. are starving and even dying of hunger? I don't know the cost but one can estimate the cost of Sehri and then Iftaar/supper for 300 men over 10 days. My understanding is that regardless of who paid for the food, is it not an unnecessary expense given the condition of the Ummah? If I am wrong please do correct me.*

A. The 'huge expenses' are pure Satanism (shaitaaniyat), for Allah Azza Wa Jal says in the Qur'aan Majeed: *"And do not waste, for verily, the wasters are the brothers of the shayaateen (devils)."* Wasters being the 'brothers of the devils' are bereft of compassion, hence the plight of the suffering Muslims of Syria, Palestine, Burma and other places – the suffering Muslims who languish in appalling straits of misery, hunger, poverty and gross jahaalat bordering on kufr – is a non-issue for them. Their fossilized hearts lack the capacity for even understanding the pain and misery of the suffering Ummah, and their arid and barren eyewells are incapable of shedding a tear. We thus see these 'brothers of the shayaateen' utilizing the auspicious Month of Ramadhaan' and the Ibaadat of I'tikaaf for making merry, for eating and only excreting. In the aftermath of all this *khuraafaat* organized by the 'buzrugs' and 'hadhrats' who bamboozle the ignorant masses with a display of some *shathiyaat* (some *abracadabra 'tawajjuh' stunts*) is the mass of the excreted mess of the foods of waste which for many culminated in diarrhoea.

These fake 'shaikhs' should hang their heads in shame for utilizing and mismanipulating the Deen for nafsaani gratification and for attaining the objectives of their worldly pursuits. Brother, you are not wrong. Be grateful to Allah Ta'ala for the ability to have understood the villainy, moral and spiritual destruction which these imposter 'shaikhs' commit in

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the name of the Deen. Everyone is, Alhamdulillah, not susceptible to deception.

Q. *The large crowd obviously meant that noise levels in the masjid would skyrocket. At salaah times the noise in the wudhu area was like a circus. If you read your Sunnah salaah close to the wudhu area you could not even hear what you are reading. Talking would go on even while Iqaamah was being recited. I am not saying the Masjid is silent out of Ramadaan, but aren't we looking for trouble when we host such a large crowd? Then certain individuals would loudly exclaim "Shoo", "Shoo" and even speak out loudly and ask those talking to remain silent. This just made an even bigger noise. Announcements were made. Elderly members of the Stanger community were frequently inconvenienced by the huge influx of visitors. Wudhu places were reserved for those in I'tikaaf and numerous announcements were made after Salaah to give priority to the visitors. Those reading on chairs faced great difficulty as they could only read Salaah at the back of the Masjid due to the mureeds of the shaikh rushing for place near the mimbar. Many of those in I'tikaaf were seen smoking e-cigarettes in the masjid area after iftaar. Is this Ramadaan? Is this respect for Ramadaan? Is this the meaning of I'tikaaf?*

A. Allah Ta'ala has ordained that the Musaajid be places of Ibaadat, not venues of merrymaking, camping and picnicking. Defilement of the sanctity of the Musaajid, disturbing the peace of the Musallis, preventing the usual Musallis from performing their acts of Ibaadat with serenity, etc. are major sins. Undoubtedly, the atmosphere created in the Musaajid by the deviate 'shaikhs' with their crowds of ignorant followers, transform the Musjid into a circus. The trustees of the Musjid are partners in the vile sins which are perpetrated by the ignoramus followers on the instructions and on the strength of these misguiding characters who have set themselves up as spiritual guides. They lack in even the understanding of the rudiments of Tasawwuf.

Cigarette-smoking in the Musjid is indeed mind boggling. Shaitaaniyat has assumed the form of 'ibaadat'. Never in the history of Islam were the Musaajid so thoroughly defiled and polluted as is being perpetrated

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presently by the new brand of bid'ati peers who slanderously proclaim allegiance to the School of Deoband when in reality they haven't even smelt of the fragrance of the Tariqah of the Akaabir of Deoband. Every step of these impostors is in conflict with the Sunnah. They know not what is Ramadhaan. They do not have the faintest idea of the meaning of I'tikaaf. They are capitalizing on the Sunnah concept of I'tikaaf to achieve their satanic objectives.

Q. *Is it Sunnah to print posters and invite people from far and wide to come to a place for I'tikaaf? A few hours of bayaans were delivered every day. Is that the point of Ramadaan or is individual ibaadat the aim? The masjid speakers in the back section were always on. So you could not read Qur'aan or make Zikr or read nafl namaaz while the bayaans were going on. Is this Sunnah?*

A. Inviting people from far and wide – from different countries to undertake journeys for I'tikaaf, is not only to be discouraged. It is a haraam act to be condemned. Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) prohibited undertaking journeys to visit even Musajjid except three Musjids – Musjidul Haraam, Musjidun Nabawi and Musjidul Aqsa.

It is shaitaaniiyat to invite and encourage people to undertake journeys to perform a private act of ibaadat such as I'tikaaf which the vast majority of Sahaabah never performed. In fact, Imaam Maalik (rahmatullah alayh) said: *“I pondered in (the matter of) I'tikaaf and the abstention of the Sahaabah from it despite the fact that Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) had always observed it.”*

Do these crank ‘shaikhs’ understand the importance and significance of I'tikaaf better than the Sahaabah thus encouraging Muslims to indulge in a variety of sins which are concomitant to journeys nowadays in order to observe I'tikaaf in another country? We have explained the body and soul of I'tikaaf in this booklet.

Q. *Those intending i'tikaaf were asked to register online. Then there was an 'orientation' meeting in the masjid after zuhr on the day i'tikaaf commenced. Laptops, files etc. were being shuffled*

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around. A survey form was handed out before Eid. Part of the masjid cubicles were announced to be the i'tikaaf admin block. I'tikaaf rules were printed out which you had to agree to abide by. Is this complicated, formal way the way of the Ulama of Deoband? Is this the Sunnah way of observing I'tikaaf? Did Rasulallah (sallallahu alai wasallam) and the Sahaabah observe I'tikaaf in this manner?

A. The registration and office activity paraphernalia which have been added to the mock 'I'tikaaf' pantomime show are haraam rubbish. There is not the slightest relationship between all this rubbish and I'tikaaf which is an act of individual ibaadat to be observed in solitude, seclusion and silence.

Q. *Is it a Sunnah practice to make congregational dua over the speakers before Iftaar? This happened daily in the Masjid?*

A. It is Bid'ah Sayyiah (an evil innovation). There is no basis in the Sunnah for this new innovation fabricated by the imposter 'shaikh'.



A SISTER'S QUESTIONS

A Sister poses the following questions:

"Below is some information which has reliably reached me regarding Maulana Zulfiqar and some of his mureeds. I am greatly disturbed by these things. Despite people speaking greatly of this shaikh, I find it difficult to ignore some of his actions."

Q. *Female mureeds are allowed in the presence of the shaikh. They don niqaab in front of him while he addresses them and casts tawajjuh on them. Please comment.*

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A. The error, deviation and sin of this deviate 'shaikh' are conspicuous. Only those blinded by ignorance and false emotions will fail to understand the evil of these perpetrations of this miscreant 'shaikh' who comes fully within the scope of the Hadith: *"Verily, I fear for my Ummah the aimmah who are mudhilleen (those who mislead)."*

The appearance of females in the presence of the 'shaikh' of ignominy even with niqaab, is haraam. He is a ghair mahram. It is haraam for women to sit in the company of a male regardless of the niqaab. Being a shaikh is not a licence for haraam. A shaikh is not exempted from observing the laws of the Shariah which applied to even Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam).

The '*tawajjuh*' stunts of this character are designed to entrap the ignorant and the unwary. Even if a man transforms stones into gold, flies in the air and walks on water, he will be an imposter and a fake if he is not a strict follower of the Sunnah and a staunch observer of the Shariah. The only criterion by which to ascertain and judge the credentials of a person is the Shariah. Sadhus, yogis and Christian faith-healers also demonstrate these *tawajjuh* stunts. People should not be awed by such conjuring performances of imposter spiritual guides.

Popularity and number of mureeds are common factors with even shaitaan who enjoys greater popularity and whose 'mureeds' are by the billion. It is Waajib to scale the actions and statements of the 'shaikh' on the Scale of the Shariah. This man is guilty of ruining the morals of the females who are mentally enslaved to his misguidance. With his stunts he corrupts the Imaan of Muslims.

Just on the basis of this one act of moral turpitude of this deviated so-called 'shaikh' is he *persona non grata*. It is not permissible to adopt him as a spiritual guide.

Q. *His mureeds who are aalims and aalimahs conduct 'aalim' courses online for all and sundry. They study in the comfort of their homes. In this way anyone can qualify as an aalim. Is this not a dangerous way of imparting specialized Deeni Knowledge at the*

academic level? Is it possible to become a qualified Aalim in this manner?

A. It is not possible to become a *Sanadi Aalim* online. While one may learn some rudimentary masaa-il pertaining to the basics of the Deen, one can never become a qualified Aalim studying in this dumb manner. Mr.Zulfiqar and Mr.Kamaluddeen who conduct this type of online programs are liberals and modernists. They are very far from the Sunnah. They suffer from an inferiority complex which makes them the worshippers of the West. They are overawed by western culture, hence they take pride in their western college donkey degrees which they flaunt to awe other ignoramuses of their ilk.

Q. *Mufti Kamaluddeen, a senior khalifah of Shaikh Zulfiqar, has been frequenting South Africa. This Mufti and his wife conduct lecture programmes at various universities. Is this not encouraging Muslims to attend universities where the environment is immoral and haraam without any doubt? They have programmes for males and females. Why do they have their programmes in places where Allah's Wrath and Curse descend?*

A. They have their programmes at haraam venues because they are *mudhilleen* – misguides who lead Muslims astray. They pave the path of Jahannam for Muslims. Therefore, they place the stamp of approval on haraam, immoral, satanic universities. South Africa has becoming a haven for deceptions and moral dacoits. They love South Africa because of two outstanding features of Muslims in this country: Abundance of wealth, and a glut of stupidity. It is quite a simple matter to overwhelm people of stupidity by a display of some *abracadabra* stunts to fleece them of their money. These quack peers and misguides are ruining the Imaan of the masses and destroying their moral character.



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AN EX-MUREED WRITES

An ex-mureed of 'shaikh' Zulfiqar writes from Saudi Arabia:

Assalamualaykum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh,

"A few years ago Peer Zulfiqar did his daughter's wedding in Dubai where hundreds of khulafa and mureeds from all over the world gathered. They did shopping in expensive malls. Dubai mureeds were imposed duties of khidmat. The wedding reception was held in the most expensive hotel in Dubai.

A person went from Riyadh for I'tekaf in Zambia. Ticket was 5300 riyals (approximately R16,000 rands). The shaikh paid food expenses in Zambia. Daily 3 bayans plus muraqabah. *(The organizer of the circus was a wealthy soft drink manufacturer who footed the bill – The Majlis)*

If on average one person spent 5000 riyals on ticket and there were 700 people including women, that means 3500000 riyals (4 million rands), which is 9.5 core pkr. - 95 million Pakistani rupees just on tickets.

(This does not include the wasteful expenditure for the huge tent to house 400 people, the food expenses, etc. – The Majlis)

In Pakistan there are suffering poor people, widows, orphans etc. Average support for one home per month is 5000 rupees (R1000). A friend in Karachi does this (act of charity). So with this wasted money, they could've provided 19000 families with basic necessities like wheat, daals, etc for the whole month of Ramadhaan. Or they could've supported 1600 families for the whole year. Or 160 families for 10 years.

(But the Satanism in them goaded them to waste this colossal sum of money on eating and excreting – The Majlis)

This is excluding the food expenses and local travelling charges.

The problem is that the molvis and rulers are the same today. They have abundance of funds at their disposal. They live in

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luxuries, they don't care about people. *(They are absolutely corrupt – rotten to the core - The Majlis)*

If peer Zulfiqar used this money to open maktab in rural areas of Pakistan, he could have set up hundreds of maktab with 10 years of salaries safely kept... *(With all the money which was squandered down toilet and sewerage drains during the Zambia fete, 20,000 children totally deprived of the very elementary teachings of the Deen to sustain Imaan, could have been provided Maktab Ta'leem. The Maktab course is two years. The funds wasted in the haraam festival in Zambia were sufficient to save the Imaan of thousands of village children from the depredations of anti-Islam forces such as missionaries and the kufr influences of western modernism. – The Majlis)*

But who cares??? *(They will care the day that Malakul Maut tugs at their souls. The agonies of Maut will make them to care, but it will be too late.- The Majlis)*

Only the rich can afford to go visit the shaykh at 'itikafs' *(mock, farcical functions dubbed 'I'tikaaf – The Majlis)* and weddings and yearly umrahs. So these shaykhs have plenty of fat cows from which they can milk from, and use for their own ends. *(This is the primary objective for organizing all these haraam festivals in the name of the Deen – The Majlis)*

The khulafa and mureeds seem to go every year to spend time in the 'blessed' suhbat for 'spiritual upliftment' but it seems like it is just an excuse to go on a kuffaar-style holiday.

Forget the millions of brothers and sisters around the world who are suffering, a token donation every now and then which is like loose change for them is enough to soothe the conscience *(and dupe the ignorant mureeds trapped in their tentacles – The Majlis).*

If they don't want to support families instead they could've started maktab. One ustadh would cost 5000 rupees per month. Usually

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madrasahs in Karachi pay way less than that. I've seen the payscale 2000 to 8000 Pakistani rupees.

If they pay an ustadh 5000 rupees per month in rural areas it means they could've easily set aside salaries for 1600 ustadhs for the whole year! Next year more can be donated by the rich cows. Imagine 1600 ustadhs getting secure jobs and how much work of deen could've been done (*educating thousands of Muslim children thereby saving their Imaan – The Majlis*)

But they'd rather spend millions on show and gratification of their nafs than care about people in rural areas of Pakistan who don't know even the Kalima. These shaikhs have a lot of time for rich businessmen and "islamic bankers" but no time for poor people. (*This is quite logical. It is these personnel who are the men with the boodle – The Majlis*)

You will never see this shaikh or his mureeds shooing away any rich business man or banker even if they survive on haraam, but you'll see them everyday ignoring and kicking away poor people who come only for guidance."



BASELESS OBJECTIONS AND SPURIOUS ARGUMENTS

A Brother objecting to our criticism of mass. mock 'I'tikaaf' merrymaking functions, wrote:

With all due respect I have read your comments about the mass I'tikaaf programmes taking place in the month of Ramadhaan. Whilst I acknowledge that some of the actions mentioned by you are not substantiated even by our pious elders, I think that you cannot paint all the I'tikaaf programmes with the same brush. Hence, what will you say about the following :-

1. Have you not read the Hadeeth in which Rasulullah sallallahu

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alaihi wasallam stated that he sat for I'tikaaf for the 1st 10 days of Ramadhaan in search of Laylatul Qadr, then for the next 10 days until it was revealed to him that this night comes in the last 10 days; whereupon he stated something to this effect that : "he who wishes, should sit in I'tikaaf with me for the last 10 days." Was this not approval for a group of Sahabah (radhiallahu anhum) gathering together for I'tikaaf with Rasulullah sallallahu alaihi? Would the Sahabah radhiallahu anhum have abstained from sitting in I'tikaaf with Rasulullah sallallahu alaihi wasallam after receiving an invitation like that? Yes of course, Masjid An-Nabawi was not so big in that era to accommodate large crowds.

2. Are you going to place spiritual luminaries such as Hazrat Shaikhul-Hadeeth Moulana Muhammad Zakariyya Saheb rahimahullah and Hazrat Mufti Mahmood Hasan Saheb Gangohi rahimahullah (who used to have thousands of people sitting with them in I'tikaaf with meals provided of course) in the same egg basket as those whom you term as introducing bid'aat in their mass I'tikaaf programmes? Someone mentioned to me that even your esteemed personality was blessed with the good fortune of sitting for I'tikaaf in the khidmat of these great luminaries. If these Buzrug's methods cannot be used as Shar'ie proofs then what will you say about #3, #4, #5 and #6 below?

3. Spiritual luminaries such as Hazrat Masihul - Ummat Moulana Masihullah Saheb rahimahullah established Khanqas for scores of people who would be housed in rooms to participate in Hazrat's Majaalis at designated days and times. Was this system (of having special times for Majaalis and they staying in special rooms for this purpose and the Shaikh making special tawajjuh on his mureeds and granting them khilafat) established from Rasulullah sallallahu alaihi wasallam? If you consider this as a form of Bid'ate - Hasanah and a method or treatment for spiritual maladies could not the same be said for the mass I'tikaaf programmes?

4. Did Hazrat Moulana Husain Ahmed Madani rahimahullah and subsequently his son Hazrat Moulana As'ad Madani rahimahullah

not have mass Itikaaf programmes with Khanqas being established in the Masjid? Did they not have the system where a Qari recited that night's parah of Taraweeh with others listening? Did they not have loud Zhikr and Nafl congregational Nafl Salaah during Tahajjud time? I know you will say that Buzrug's actions do not constitute Shar'ie proof but would a Khalifa of Hazrat Moulana Rashid Ahmed Saheb rahimahullah (Hazrat Madani rahimahullah) do any action contrary to the Sunnah?

5. Mass Itikaaf gatherings also take place at the markaz in Nizamuddin every year. Is that a bid'ah?

6. Was the modern-day Darul Uloom system (where students board and lodge in the Madaaris and attend classes according to a predetermined curriculum) established during the Era of Rasulullah sallallahu alaihi wasallam and Sahabah radhiallahu anhum? Ulema term this as a Bid'ah FOR the upliftment of Deen, hence a Bid'ate-Hasanah. Could not the same be said about the elders' Itikaaf gatherings?

THE RESPONSE

(1) All mass-organized I'tikaaf programmes have to be incumbently painted with the same brush. At the minimum, these functions are Bid'ah. Beyond the minimum limit, they are, in addition to Bid'ah, functions of fisq and fujoor. You have missed the point entirely. Since you have reacted emotionally, you have not understood what has been criticized regarding the mass I'tikaafs. Do read and re-read the criticism of these mass I'tikaafs to ascertain what exactly has been criticized. This is an issue of the Deen, therefore apply your mind constructively with the intention of ascertaining the Truth.

Your citation of the Hadith pertaining to Rasulullah's I'tikaaf confirms that you are unaware of the mode of the I'tikaaf of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and the Sahaabah. Contrary to what you have mentioned, the Sahaabah did not join Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) en-masse for I'tikaaf. In

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fact, the vast majority of the Sahaabah and the illustrious Aimmah of the Taabi-een era did not observe I'tikaaf.

This fact is so conspicuous that it constrained the illustrious Imaam Maalik (rahmatullah alayh) to comment: *"I pondered about I'tikaaf and the abstention of the Sahaabah from it despite the fact that they were devoted followers of the Sunnah."* The Fuqaha confirm that the great majority of the Sahaabah did not observe I'tikaaf.

Imaam Maalik (rahmatullah alayh) further said that it did not reach him that Hadhrat Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthmaan (radhiyallahu anhum) nor the senior Aimmah of the Salaf except Abu Bakr Ibn Abdur Rahman, had observed I'tikaaf. Thus, there was no group of Sahaabah who had joined Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) in I'tikaaf.

Furthermore, Nabi-e-Kareem (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) did not give bayaans during I'tikaaf. There was no festival mood. There were no wedding degs of food. I'tikaaf of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) was not a programme/function which resembles a haraam wedding reception where huge pots of food are prepared for only eating and excreting.

Another fact which you miss is that no one forbids anyone from making ibaadat in the Musjid the whole night from the 1st Ramadhaan until the end of Ramadhaan. What is criticized, is the festival which takes place. The waste is haraam. People spending millions of rands in air fares, coming from different countries to sit in a so-called I'tikaaf with a luminary, are labouring in self-deception. If these outsiders were really sincere, and if their ibaadat was truly for Allah's sake, they would have sat in I'tikaaf in their neighbourhood Musjids.

But there is no fun and no merrymaking sitting in a small neighbourhood Musjid in relative seclusion meditating on Maut, the Qabr and Aakhirat, which were the *A'maal* of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and the Sahaabah when they were in I'tikaaf.

(2) The spiritual luminaries to whom you have made reference are not our models nor our Imaams whom we make Taqleed of. We follow Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and the Sahaabah and the Aimmah Mujtahideen. If the deeds of the spiritual luminaries are in conflict with the Sunnah, and if their deeds lead to bid'ah, as they have, then we set these aside. We do not make taqleed of the errors or perculiarities of spiritual luminaries regardless who they may be. Allaamah Sha'raani (rahmatullah alayh) said:

“He who takes daleel from the obscutities (and errors) of the Ulama, makes his exit from Islam.”

Do not cite spiritual luminaries to us, for we are cognizant of the Qur'aan's castigation of those who make taqleed of even the errors of the spiritual luminaries. Allah Ta'ala criticizing those who follow the spiritual luminaries even in error, says in the Qur'aan Majeed:

“They take their ahbaar (scholars) and ruhbaan (spiritual luminaries) as arbaab (gods) besides Allah....”

Tell us on the basis of the Dalaa-il of the Shariah where we have erred in our conclusions and fatwa. Do not make reference to spiritual luminaries whose amal is not daleel in the Shariah. You quote the spiritual luminaries of this belated age while we quote Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam), the Sahaabah, the Taabieen and the amal of the Ummah of fourteen centuries. Spiritual luminaries are not among the *Dalaa-il* of the Shariah.

(3) The above discussion has dealt with 'spiritual luminaries'. You have again mentioned the same issue. You quote Hadhrat Masihullah (rahmatullah alayh). For your edification, Hadhrat Masihullah (rahmatullah alayh) never sat in I'tikaaf in his entire lifetime. We are discussing mass I'tikaaf. Not khaanqas. Do not detract from the issue with diversions. Do not confuse issues.

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Khaanqas are different issues. Adhere to the topic. Hadhrat Masihullah never sat in I'tikaaf with even one mureed.

Also be informed that Hadhrat Masihullah (rahmatullah alayh) did not operate a customary khaanqah. There are still senior students, mureeds and khalifahs of Hadhrat Masihullah around who can testify for the lifestyle and *Tariqah* of Hadhrat Masihullah (rahmatullah alayh). We are more acquainted with Hadhrat Masihullah's ta'leem than you. So, do not attempt to mislead and deceive an unwary public with the name of Hadhrat Masihullah (rahmatullah alayh).

Hadhrat Masihullah (rahmatullah alayh) made it clear that like, his Shaikh, Hadhrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thaanvi (rahmatullah alayh), he did not operate a *langar khaanah* (a public kitchen for all and sundry). He was averse to the *langar khaanah* system. His primary occupation was Islaah of the Nafs.

(4) We do not follow Hadhrat Husain Ahmad Madani in his personal practices. We do not follow him in his error of making Tahajjud Salaat with Jamaat which is Makrooh Tahrimi in terms of the Hanafi Math-hab. Whilst we have never criticized Hadhrat Madani (rahmatullah alayh) for his error, we are not his muqallideen. Quote the Sunnah to us, not luminaries, or better, do not cite the errors of luminaries as daleel. We state with emphasis that the mass I'tikaaf programmes are bid'ah regardless of who practised it. Short-sighted spiritual luminaries with good intentions initiated the mass I'tikaaf innovation which has today degenerated to the level of shaitaani israaf, fisq and fujoor. Whilst the original error of this practice was initiated by sincere buzrugs with good intentions, this innovated practice has been hijacked by 'sufi' quacks and cranks using the Deen to gain the dunya.

(5) The Tabligh Jamaat markaz is not among the Dalaa-il of the Shariah. It is superfluous to cite the markaz as daleel, for it is not among the Dalaa-il of the Shariah. The Tabligh Jamaat is an expert in the art of compromising the Haqq. Fork-tongued diplomacy spuriously dubbed 'hikmat' is abhorrent in Islam.

(6) You have miserably failed to understand the thrust of our criticism because you are blinded by emotional bias. The establishment of Darul Uloom has absolutely no relationship to the wasteful mass I'tikaaf festivals. You are again confusing issues. The permissibility of Darul Uloom is not a basis for forging permissibility for the waste and all the other evils attendant to mass I'tikaafs. The evils have been pointed out in articles written by other Ulama. Read their articles with an open mind.

The function of the Darul Uloom is or is supposed to be the protection of the original Deen, while the consequence of mass I'tikaafs is the introduction of israaf, fisq, fujoor, bid'ah and the destruction of the letter and spirit of the Masnoon I'tikaaf.

Keep your mind focused on the evils and the haraam activities which are taking place at the mass festivals called I'tikaaf, and fear Allah Ta'ala. May Allah Ta'ala guide us all. Salaam on those who follow Huda (the guidance of Allah).



SOME QUERIES

In your recent article, *Satanism in the Garb of I'tikaaf*, the following is mentioned:

“ In Umdatul Qaari, Allaamah Aini responding to Imaam Zuhri's surprise at the abstention from I'tikaaf by the vast majority of people, he says:

‘Our Ashaab (the Ahnaaf Fuqaha) said: Verily, the majority of the Sahaabah did not observe I'tikaaf. Imaam Maalik said: It did not reach me that Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthmaan, Ibnul Musayyib nor anyone else from these Aimmah of the Salaf except Abu Bakr Bin Abdur Rahman, had observed I'tikaaf.’

Please explain why the majority of the Sahaabah abstained from I'tikaaf. I have also heard that it was not Hadhrat Masihullah's regular habit to sit in I'tikaaf.

OUR COMMENT

It is difficult for us students to venture a reason for the abstention from I'tikaaf by the majority of the Sahaabah and even the Aimmah-e-Salaf of the Taabi-een era. Even Imaam Maalik (rahmatullah alayh) was not able to venture a cogent reason for this seemingly anomalous attitude of the Sahaabah.

In our deficient opinion, the probable reason for this attitude was that despite Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) himself observing I'tikaaf regularly, he did not emphasize its observance for the Sahaabah. In fact, Nabi-e-Kareem (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) mentioned that service to a brother Muslim in need is more meritorious than 120 I'tikaafs. Thus, once when Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Abbaas (radhiyallahu anhu) was sitting in I'tikaaf, he was informed of a need of a certain Muslim. He immediately left his Mu'takaf, went out of the Musjid and hastened to fulfil the need of the one in need. When someone reminded him that he had nullified his I'tikaaf, he mentioned the Hadith of 120 I'tikaaf. Obviously he must have made Qadha of the I'tikaaf.

Rasulullah's instruction to remove the tents of his three wives and also his own tent, and his expression of annoyance when he saw the three tents in the Musjid, and his decision to break and nullify his I'tikaaf on this account, clearly indicate the undesirability of organized mass I'tikaaf as has been innovated nowadays. Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) made Qadha of his I'tikaaf during Shawwaal.

We believe that it was this attitude of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) that the Sahaabah understood, hence they abstained from I'tikaaf. It is not possible for the Sahaabah to have abstained if Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) had encouraged them to observe I'tikaaf. They were devotees of Rasulullah (sallallahu

alayhi wasallam). It is inconceivable that such devotees would have flagrantly violated Rasulullah's command, instruction or encouragement.

Furthermore, the status of I'tikaaf vacillates between Mustahab and Sunnat alal Kifaayah. It is not an ibaadat for mass observance, least of all the type of mess which these mock mass functions entail. The Fiqhi category of I'tikaaf also negates the undue emphasis accorded to I'tikaaf.

To the best of our knowledge Hadhrat Masihullah (rahmatullah alayh) never sat in I'tikaaf. The greatness of Hadhrat Masihullah (rahmatullah alayh) is his meticulous observance of the Sunnah. His simplicity glittered conspicuously.



SATANIC ISRAAF (WASTE) AMID SUFFERING OF THE UMMAH

Israaf (waste/extravagance) is an attribute of Iblees. On the basis of this evil satanic attribute, the Qur'aan Majeed describes the wasters as *Ikhwaanush Shayaateen* (the brothers of the devils). The gravity and notoriety of *Israaf* can therefore not be over-emphasized even if one makes such an endeavour.

Israaf is always evil and destructive, spiritually as well as physically. It is the effect of *takabbur* (pride) and *riya* (show). Only those who have opted for deliberate spiritual blindness will have the capacity to deny the huge shaitaani *Israaf* which occurs at all mass I'tikaaf functions and festivals. The waste is glaringly conspicuous. While I'tikaaf is supposed to be an Ibaadat in which the emphasis is on *Zuhd* (Abstinence/renunciation of the dunya), *Muraaqabah* and *Muhaasabah*, The mock mass 'i'tikaaf' of these days is the very antithesis of the Masnoon I'tikaaf observed by Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and the Sahaabah. These bid'ah i'tikaaf festivals resemble haraam wedding receptions.

Merrymaking in the garb of I'tikaaf

The attributes which are supposed to be cultivated in I'tikaaf are utterly eliminated by shaitaani indulgence in *israaf*, *fisq* and *fujoor* – all of which have been discussed in this treatise. The *fujoor* aspect is specially associated with the presence of women and the haraam *tawajjuh* stunts of the modernist quack 'sufi' who has not yet set foot in the Path of genuine Tasawwuf.

Millions of rands of the bounty of wealth are being squandered down the sewerage drains in the orgiastic 'I'tikaaf' programmes of the 'hadhrats' who are paving the paths of Jahannam for their unsuspecting flocks revelling in the festivities organized during the most auspicious days and nights of Ramadhaan. Allah Ta'ala did not bestow wealth to people for wasting on festivities, unnecessary journeys, setting up huge expensive tents and the other wasteful expenditure concomitant with the paraphernalia of the mock mass I'tikaaf festivals.

All over the world, millions of Muslims are languishing in squalor, poverty and appalling jahaalat – total ignorance of the very basic requisites of the Deen so imperative for sustaining Imaan. The suffering of Muslim men, women and children of Syria, Gaza and Burma are currently in the public glare. Yet these quack and crank 'hadhrats' feigning total physical blindness, mislead their followers, casting them into the cauldron of shaitaani *Israaf*. They are spiritually blind as the Qur'aan Majeed aptly depicts them:

“Verily, the (physical) eyes are not blind, but the eyes within the breasts (hearts) are blind.”

It is this spiritual blindness which has calcified their understanding preventing them from progressive thinking, hence they believe that their misdeeds are deeds of virtue, as the Qur'aan Majeed states:

“Say: ‘Shall I inform you about the losers?’ They are those whose effort is wasted in this worldly life whilst they think that what they are doing is goodness.”

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These wasters and indulgers in mock mass 'i'tikaaf' believe that their deeds of waste and sin are acts of virtue. They are in fact the losers in this dunya and in the Aakhirat.

In every remote village of the world where there are droves of ignorant Muslims, the kuffaar missionaries are active in their poselytizing depradations. Millions of ignorant Muslims, especially children in rural villages are the targets of the missionaries, modernism and kufr. Maktabas to educate these children in the elementary teachings of Islam, to enable them to know what Imaan is, to recite the Qur'an, to perform Salaat, etc. are non-existent.

The millions which are wasted on these festivals in the name of 'i'tikaaf, should rather be diverted to establishing Maktabas, feeding the orphans, the widows and the suffering masses of Muslims uprooted from their homes. They live in horrible and heart-rending conditions. Whole families live huddled together under plastic sheeting, not even a decent hut. They scavenge like animals for food, whilst the 'hadhrats' and their flocks indulge in luxuries and festivities, eat gluttonously and excrete. Does their Imaan demand such callous and insensitive conduct? Do they not know that the demand of Imaan has been explained by Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam):

"The Muslimoon (the Ummah of Islam) is like one person. If the eye pains, nthe whole body is affected. If the head pains, the whole body is affected."

What has happened to the brotherly pain which should be in the heart of every Believer – throbbing in his heart at the misery of the suffering Ummah? How can Muslims in Ramadhaan indulge in satanic extravagance when the Ummah is being ground and crushed by suffering and misery. The Ummah is engulfed by the forces of kufr, yet those who indulge in 'i'tikaaf' festivities, happily lose themselves in satanic waste like villains revelling in orgies of drunkenness.

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The colossal *Israaf* of these haraam, bid'ah functions which pollutes the Holy Month of Ramadhaan and defiles the sanctity of the Musaaajid can feed thousands of suffering widows, orphans and others gripped by hunger and poverty. But, this reality simply does not dawn on the fossilized brains of the revellers.

How is it possible for Imaan to tolerate this huge shaitaani *Israaf* amid the misery and suffering of the Ummah? Perhaps the treasure of Imaan has been extinguished.

MR. ZULFIQAR AHMAD - A SELF INTRODUCTION

In the forefront of the new-fangled Bid'ah mass mock so-called 'I'tikaaf' festivals is Mr.Zulfiqar Ahmad. The title, 'Mr.' is not awarded to him pejoratively. Whereas the title, 'shaikh' is unbefitting him, the term, 'Mr.' based on his western kuffaar titles and exploits is an appropriate designation for this man of bid'ah who has led astray numerous unwary and ignorant Muslims.

The western kuffaar 'credentials' which he proudly flaunts consists of a formidable array of flotsam designations which befool only those who lack understanding of the Deen and its objectives. The following are his malafide 'credentials' and qualifications which he, himself advertises to the world for reasons which are too conspicuous for elucidation. Observe his following self-advertised list of malafides for a better understanding who this personality who presents himself as a Naqshabandi shaikh really is.

Silly Scrap Diplomas

- Matric – First Division
- BSC Punjab – First Division
- Honorary Roll of Honour
- BSC Electrical Engineer – First Division
- Special Honour in Computer Project
- Afecto Management Course –MAF

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- Strategic Management Course (Lums)
- Short Course on Library Science (Lums)
- Project Management Course Sweden
- Human Reserves Management Course (Lums)

Kuffaar Sport Diplomas

- Best Performance in Dialogue
- Outstanding School Scout
- Outstanding Performances in Gymnastics
- School Cricket Team Captain
- District Football Team Captain
- College Swimming Team Champion

Mundane Achievements

- Apprentice Electrical Engineering
- Member of Pakistan Society of Sugar Technology
- Assistant Electrical Engineer
- Member of Pakistan Engineering Council
- Chief Electrical Engineer
- Gold Medal for Outstanding Thesis (PSST)
- Senior Member of Instrument Society –America
- General Manager of Planning
- Participant in the Asian Chemical Instrument Conference – Singapore.

These are his worldly qualifications – all of which are scrap in terms of the Shariah – which he flaunts and have advertised to impress and awe ignoramuses suffering from inferiority complex inherited from the colonial British masters and bosses who have moulded the outlook of Mr.Zulfiqar and of others of his ilk.

While Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: “*The world is carrion.*”, Mr.Zulfiqar posing as a Naqshbandi Shaikh of Tasawwuf proudly purrs with his array of scrap mundane credentials. What has constrained this man who claims to be a Sufi advertise his major sins of participation in kuffaar sport attended by a host of fisq and fujoor activities? He has in fact brought shame to the

Naqshabandi Silsilah of which he is grotesquely ignorant. No Shaikh of Tasawwuf will proudly flaunt his sins of the past nor exhibit kuffaar mundane achievements which have absolutely no relationship with Tasawwuf and Islam.

The *tawajjuh* stunts which he perpetrates to impress the ignorant are most unbefitting for a man who proclaims himself to be a Shaikh of Tasawwuf. Whilst *tawajjuh* is an occult practice, it has no relationship with Tasawwuf. He has descended to a despicable ebb of *fisq* with his stupid *tawajjuh* performances perpetrated on females whom he ushers into his presence in total conflict with the Shariah. The argument that the women are donning niqaab when they sit in front of their *guru* who mesmerizes them with some satanic performance, is devoid of Shar'i substance.

It is haraam for a man to have a group of women sitting in his presence. The evil and prohibition are aggravated when the man casts mental spells on the brains of the weak females when he implants his obnoxious haraam gaze on them. The Naqshabandi Tariqah is one of the authentic Four Silsilahs of Tasawwuf. It does not impart the lesson of rubbish and haraam. It does not propagate satanism and bid'ah. It does not advocate violation of Hijaab nor of any rule of the Zaahiri Shariah.

Muslims should not dwell in self-deception as a result of the performances of Mr.Zulfiqar. Tasawwuf is not theory. It is practical Islam which is 100% in conformity with the Shariah. Never be duped into accepting a person on the basis of supernatural stunts he may be able to display. Even if a man transforms stones into gold, flies in the air and walks on the water, never be awed, and never accept him as a Man of Allah if his way of life is in conflict with the Shariah.

Mr.Zulfiqar, in addition to flaunting scrap, kuffaar credentials, is exhibited on the zina media of the kuffaar such as facebook, youtube and the like. A man of Tasawwuf is supposed to be a man of Allah, not a man of carrion – a man of the dunya. Describing the Man of Allah, Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said:

“He is one who reminds you of Allah when you look at him; your knowledge (of the Deen) increases when he speaks, and his deeds remind you of the Aakhirat.”

But this man, instead of diverting the focus of Muslims from the dunya, and creating concern for the Aakhirat, seeks to impress Muslims with scrap kuffaar credentials.

Ikhfa' (concealment) is a special attribute of the Naqshabandi Tariqah which emphasizes the imperative need for silent Thikr in contrast to the Chishtiyyah Silsilah. The theme of *Ikhfa'* is not restricted to Thikr. It is supposed to permeate all spheres of life. Departures from the norm of *Ikhfa'* are valid only if countenanced by the Shariah. But all the publicity and *abracadabra* stunts and performances of this miscreant 'shaikh' are in violent contradiction of the teachings of the Naqshabandi Silsilah.

With his mass mock 'I'tikaaf' festivals he has ruined the Imaan of innumerable Muslims. Hoisting bid'ah in Deeni guise is among the worst acts of treachery against Allah Ta'ala. While the Barelwi grave worshippers are notorious for bid'ah, this era has given birth to pseudo-deobandi miscreants who mislead the Ummah with their nafsaniyat projected in the hues of Deeni acts. In their treachery against Allah Ta'ala, they are now surpassing the Barelwi bid'atis.

It is not permissible to be initiated into the circle of Mr.Zulfiqar as mureeds. Those who are already trapped in his den of *dhalaal* (deviation) should honourably sever their relationship. There is no goodness following a man of bid'ah. On the contrary, Imaan is severely damaged by such a relationship. Allah Ta'ala has bestowed *Aql* – intelligence imbued with Imaan – to Muslims. This divinely inspired intelligence should not be wasted in futility and rubbish. It should be constructively employed to understand and to differentiate between vice and virtue – Haqq and baatil.

“Only those of Intelligence derive lesson.”
(Qur'aan)

A SPURIOUS OBJECTION

A resident of Lusaka, Zambia, in defence of the mass I'tikaaf held in Ramadhaan in Zambia, by Mr. Zulfiqar Ahmad, writes:

Assalaamualyikum wa rahmatullahi wabaraakatuhu.

I am a resident of Lusaka,Zambia.

I am writing with regards to the article that appeared on www.themajlis.co.za dated 28th July 2015 entitled "SATANISM IN THE GARB OF ITIKAAF: MOCKERY AND PILLAGE OF IBAADAH THE FARCE IN ZAMBIA"

Before I begin, I would like to state that I understand that the response to the letter that was given by The Majlis was based on the information provided by the brother who wrote the letter (lets call him Bakr).

However, it appears that the brother who was narrating the itikaaf incident to Bakr (lets call him Zayd) had not revealed all the necessary details regarding the itikaaf. Zayds information regarding the itikaaf is vague and it is also his personal opinion. As a result, it is very easy for a person reading the letter to jump to incorrect conclusions.

I therefore felt obliged to clarify the contents of the letter written by brother Bakr as narrated to him by brother Zayd.

I hope and pray that the contents of this email are reproduced so that the misconceptions and misunderstandings surrounding Shaykh Zulfiqar and the itikaaf in Zambia are clarified.

I will reproduce brother Bakrs letter and I will insert my findings/clarifications in CAPITAL LETTERS wherever I deem it necessary to do so.

The reproduced letter with clarifications:

Merrymaking in the garb of I'tikaaf

“Recently one brother returned from I'tikaaf from Zambia . The set up was 650 men and several women (wives of the mureeds). Only 200 could fit in the masjid and the remaining 450 were in a tent. The women were doing nafl I'tikaaf in a hall.

(BROTHER ZAYD MADE IT SOUND LIKE THE MEN AND WOMEN WERE TOGETHER IN ONE PLACE. THIS WAS NOT THE CASE. THE WOMEN WERE IN A HALL LOCATED IN A DIFFERENT LOCALITY APPROXIMATELY 15 KM AWAY FROM THE MASJID (MASJIDE UMAR) AND TENT.

YES, THERE WERE 200 MUTAKIFS DOING SUNNAH ITIKAAF IN THE MASJID. THOSE IN THE TENT WERE IN NAFAL ITIKAAF. HOWEVER, THE TENT WAS NOT THE VENUE FOR ITIKAAF. THE TENT WAS USED FOR SLEEPING AND EATING PURPOSES FOR THOSE WHO WERE IN NAFAL ITIKAAF. THESE BROTHERS WOULD ACTUALLY BE IN THE MASJID FOR NAFAL ITIKAAF MOST OF THE TIME AND THEY WOULD ONLY GO BACK TO THE TENT FOR SUHOOR, IFTAAR AND TO SLEEP.

THE MUTAKIFS IN THE MASJID WOULD ROLL UP THEIR BEDDINGS AND WOULD PLACE THEIR BELONGINGS ELSEWHERE SO AS TO CREATE SPACE IN THE MASJID FOR ANY COMING BROTHES TO PRAY, THUS MINIMISING ON THE INCONVENIENCE CAUSED TO OTHER MEN WHO WERE NOT IN ITIKAAF BUT WOULD COME TO THE MASJID TO DO IBAADAH.

EVEN WHILST THE MUTAKIFS IN THE MASJID WERE SLEEPING, THEY USED TO LEAVE SPACE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE MASJID SO THAT OTHERS COULD MAKE IBAADAH IF THEY WANTED TO.)

The Shaikh Zulfiqar Naqshbandi from Pakistan had mureeds from all over the world including ulema from Deoband.

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What was disturbing was the affluent brother who sponsored the event runs a soda company. It costs about two thousand dollars for the plane ticket alone.

(THE BROTHER WHO RUNS THE SODA COMPANY IS NOT THE SPONSOR OF THE ITIKAAF. YES HE IS VERY CLOSE TO SHAYKH ZULFIQAR. HOWEVER, HE DOES NOT SPONSOR THE MUTAKIFS. THEY COME ON THEIR OWN WILL, PAYING FOR THEIR OWN TICKETS)

The meal sequence was biryani every day and then at night ice cream, falooda, and other sweets.

(BIRYANI WAS NOT SERVED EVERYDAY. YES THERE WERE SMALL SNACKS SERVED AROUND 11PM FOR THOSE THAT WERE HUNGRY. HOWEVER, NO ONE WAS OBLIGED TO EAT.)

They had a 'khidmaat jamaat who would roll out the dastkhaans and futons for all the guests.

The food was so much and so delicious according to the brother he suffered from diarrhoea while he was there.

(BROTHER ZAYD MAY HAVE OVEREATEN HIMSELF AND POSSIBLY THE FOOD MAY NOT HAVE AGREED WITH HIM. AS A RESULT, HE HIMSELF SUFFERED FROM DIARRHOEA. WE CAN NOT GENERALIZE WITH REGARDS TO THE OTHER MUTAKIFS AND CONCLUDE THAT THEY ALSO ATE SO MUCH THAT THEY HAD DIARRHOEA.

SHAYKH ZULFIQAR HAD STRESSED GREATLY ON 3 THINGS DURING THE ITIKAAF : QILLATE KALAAM, QILLATE TA'AAM AND QILLATE MANAAM.

HE GREATLY STRESSED TO THE MUTAKIFS THAT THE MASJID IS THE HOUSE OF ALLAH SWT AND NOT A PLACE OF MERRYMAKING AND MINGLING. HE ALSO ADVISED THE

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MUTAKIFS TO CONSIDER THE TIME SPENT IN ITIKAAF AS VALUABLE AND THAT THEY SHOULD USE IT FOR TILAAWAT, ZIKR, DUAA, MURAAQABAH AND NAWAAFIL SALAAT.)

He was also telling me how the soda was delicious.

The brother who runs the soda factory is planning to expand the masjid to accommodate 1000 people next year.

(THE BROTHER WHO RUNS THE SODA COMPANY IS NOT PLANNING TO EXPAND MASJIDE UMAR.)

There were some other strange and weird things. In order to see the shaikh one had to pass through at least ten persons.

(SHAYKH ZULFIQAR PREFERED NOT TO BE DISTURBED DURING ITIKAAF.HE DETESTED THAT THE MUTAKIFS TALK DURING ITIKAAF.WHY THEN WOULD HE EVEN WANT TO MEET WITH PEOPLE?!)

He mentioned something very queer. I want clarification on it.

1. He said the shaikh would cast his gaze on a person and he would be inclined to zikr. One Maulana in the past told me that even non-Muslims could do such things. It is not something to be impressed with. Please advise.

2. He talk about the noorani faces of the people serving the people. Is it possible to have a noorani face with so much food and extravagance that the brother gets diarrhoea. How can a face glitter with noor when so much doubtful and perhaps haraam food and sodas were consumed? Is there some kind of deception in this show?

(AS MENTIONED BEFORE, BROTHER ZAYD HIMSELF MAY HAVE OVER EATEN. THIS DOESN'T MEAN THAT ALL THE MUTAKIFS AND KHUDDAMS ALSO OVER ATE. THE MUTAKIFS WERE ADVISED TO EAT LESS SO AS TO NOT DEFEAT THE

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PURPOSE OF FASTING. THE FOOD AND SODA WERE 100% HALAAL).

3. Does the Shariah allow women to undertake journeys from other countries to sit in I'tikaaf in tents at a venue overflowing with a crowd of men and women? We all know that it is not permissible for women to attend even the Musjid for Salaat, even if stringent conditions are in place. So how is it permissible for them to travel from one country to another with strange men all along the journey to participate in a function which has no substantiation in the Sunnah?

(SHAYKH ZULFIQAR HAS NEVER INSTRUCTED THE WOMEN TO SIT FOR ITIKAAF IN TENTS CLOSE TO THE MEN, LET ALONE MINGLE WITH THE MEN.

THE WOMEN TRAVELLED WITH THEIR HUSBANDS /MAHAARIM.

AS MENTIONED EARLIER, THE WOMEN WERE NOT AT THE SAME VENUE AS THE MEN. THEY WERE APPROXIMATELY 15 KM AWAY FROM THE MASJID AND TENT.

SHAYKH ZULFIQAR IS VERY PARTICULAR ABOUT HAYAA AND PARDAH AND HE GREATLY STRESSES ON THESE TOPICS.

INFACIT, MOST OF THE WOMEN IN LUSAKA STARTED DONNING THE NIQAAB AFTER THE COMINGS OF SHAYKH ZULFIQAR .

THOSE THAT PERSONALLY KNOW SHAYKH ZULFIQAR WILL ATTEST TO THE FACT THAT THEY DONT KNOW OF ANYONE WHO IS MORE PARTICULAR ABOUT THE RULES OF SHARIAH AND THE SUNNAH THAN HIM.HE ALWAYS ENCOURAGES HIS MURIDEEN AND PEOPLE IN GENERAL TO FOLLOW THE SHARIAH AND ADOPT THE SUNNAH INTO THEIR LIVES.).

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4. The brother got khilifaat also, but in the past 25 years that he has been bayt, the shaikh barely spoke and/hardly corresponded with him. His shaikh barely knows anything about him. He sat with him for 5 minutes. Is it proper to give khilafaat like this.

(I HAVE NO SAY IN THIS REGARD AS I COULD NOT CLARIFY THIS STATEMENT. HOWEVER I AM AWARE THAT SHAYKH ZULFIQAR GREATLY STRESSES ON RAABITAAE SHAYKH. I KNOW FOR A FACT THAT ALL HIS OTHER KHULAFAA USED TO CONSTANTLY KEEP IN TOUCH WITH HIM VIA EMAIL, LETTERS AND PHONE CALLS PRIOR TO GAINING KHILAFAH. IF HE WAS IN THEIR AREA, THEY WOULD CERTAINLY GO VISIT HIM. INFACT, HIS KHULAFAA STILL MAINTAIN CONTACT WITH HIM .)

5. Should i say anything to the brother.” (End of letter)

I END HERE TOO.

JAZAKUMULLAH

WA MAA TAUFEEQEE ILLAA BILLAAH.

BROTHER IN ISLAM

MA'AS SALAAM.

OUR RESPONSE

(1) Even if the women were at a different venue away from the Musjid, it is highly improper to invite women out of their homes, and worse, from other countries, to undertake journeys to observe Naf'l I'tikaaf. If a woman is desirous of observing I'tikaaf, she should demarcate a small section in her home and remain there for I'tikaaf. It is haraam for women to undertake journeys for an act which the Shariah does not impose on them at all. From the time they leave home, they are involved in sin at almost every step of the journey.

The venue for the women's 'I'tikaaf being elsewhere does not mitigate the bid'ah of the mass I'tikaaf, nor does it justify the presence of the

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women at the tent/hall to observe nafl I'tikaaf far, very far from their home sanctuaries. The Shaikh purports to be a Deobandi, yet he fails to understand the simple mas'alah that women are not allowed to emerge from their homes to attend the Fardh Salaat in the Musjid despite the fact that this was allowed during the time of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam), but banned by the Sahaabah.

What Imaani logic permits the separation of a women from her husband in a foreign county to enable her to go to a tent 15 km away from him to sit in a mock 'nafl I'tikaaf'. From whence did the shaikh acquire this mas'alah? Whose sunnah is he following?

Brother, your attempt to justify the bid'ah festival with the argument that the women were in a tent 15 kilometres away is devoid of Shar'i substance.

(2) The venue of I'tikaaf is the Musjid, not the tent. There was absolutely no need for crowds of people to travel to Zambia for observing Nafl I'tikaaf. Did the hundreds of people undertake journeys to come and sleep in a tent under guise of observing the last 10 days of Ramadhaan in I'tikaaf? Could they not observe valid Nafl I'tikaaf in the Musajid in their own localities? By what stretch of Shar'i reasoning did they waste so much money, and travel to Zambia to observe nafl I'tikaaf?

(3) Your explanation about the campers making space for the usual musallis is untenable. The 200 persons filled the Musjid to capacity. No matter how much they may have cramped themselves, the reality of the Musjid being unnecessarily overcrowded cannot be refuted with honesty. Furthermore, we have observed with our own eyes in a Musjid in India where a very prominent Buzrug held his mass I'tikaaf, one could hardly find space during the day time for Salaat. Literally one had to walk over sleeping 'mu'takifeen' who blocked the entire area of the Musjid. This problem is not restricted to the Musjid in Zambia. It is an evil in all Musjids where mass I'tikaaf takes place. The shaikh has become a cult leader.

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(4) Regardless of who paid the airfares. The fact remains that huge amounts of money were squandered for an event not ordered by the Shariah. Why did the shaikh not advise his mureeds to contribute the money to the suffering Ummah? The shaikh is not ignorant of the plight of the Syrian refugees, of the Rohingya brutalized Muslims, etc. He is responsible for the huge waste of money, etc. How much did it cost to hire the tents for the men and the women?

(5) Brother Zayd, the one who narrated the festival, is in fact a khalifah of Mr.Zulfiqar Ahmad. Whether you are speaking the truth or whether Zayd or whether he is lying or you, the fact of the mass I'tikaaf remains. It is a bid'ah innovated by the so-called sufis of this age. If these shaikhs had a proper understanding of Tasawwuf, they would never have embarked on their bid'ah 'mass itikaaf' festivals for which there is no basis in Islam.

(6) The emphasis of the shaikh on the three things is devoid of reality. In fact, in the light of the colossal Israaf, his statements are hypocritical. His advices are empty words devoid of substance because he is the organizer of the festival which entails so much waste and merrymaking. The shaikh should recall the wedding which he had organized in the most expensive hotel in Dubai and what it entailed. His advices at the mass I'tikaaf are all hollow.

(7) One brother who attended says that the soda man intends expanding the Musjid to accommodate 1000 persons. You say it is not so. Who speaks the truth? Anyhow, whether he expands the Musjid or not, the mass I'tikaaf is bid'ah. It cannot be justified.

(8) If the shaikh is a lover of solitude and detests speaking whilst in I'tikaaf, how does he justify logically his mass I'tikaaf? How does he justify the journeys which men and women undertake at great expense, inconvenience and commission of haraam along the journey? Mass bid'ah I'tikaaf is not the way of a Man of Allah who loves *khalwat*. These excuses all fall within the scope of the Aayat: *"In fact, man has awareness over his nafs even though he puts forth excuses."*

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(9) His weird act is casting *tawajjuh* on females – haraam *tawajjuh*. This is among his practices. The women here testify to this act. A 'shaikh' who practises *tawajjuh* on females is not to be trusted.

(10) All sodas are haraam.

(11) Mr. Zulfiqar is in fact responsible for the journeys undertaken by the women regardless of the presence of their mahrams. It has not been alleged that the women travelled without their mahrams. You are diverting the issue with confusion. The issue is that women have undertaken journeys for a festival not imposed or ordered by the Shariah. The shaikh is responsible for the entire mess. He should not now plead innocence. The women journeyed to attend the festival he had organized.

(12) The niqaab is not the be all of Purdah. The primary demand of Purdah is for women to remain at home, not to undertake journeys in an immoral world to sit in some type of nafl I'tikaaf with a crowd of other women in a tent thousands of miles away from home and separated from her husband.

Furthermore, a man who practices *tawajjuh* on women cannot lay claims to hayaa.

(13) With regard to khilaafat – in this era this is a very cheap commodity. Just any Tom, Dick or Harry is appointed 'khalifah'. There is a glut of khalifahs. They are available very cheaply.

In conclusion, be aware that the vindication you have proffered is baseless. The little discrepancies which you believe were reported by Zayd do not detract from the fact that the mass I'tikaaf festivals which 'shaikhs' of this age are organizing all over the show are acts of bid'ah. The very concept of mass I'tikaaf is bid'ah even if we have to assume that waste does not occur.

Mass I'tikaaf oversteps the limits of the Shariah. The shaikhs who are responsible for these mass festival functions should spend some time to learn the masaa-il and the aadaab of I'tikaaf. They will render themselves

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and the Ummah a favour if they learn to perform I'tikaaf the Sunnah way, not in ways innovated by Buzrugs.

It is our dua that Allah Ta'ala guides us, for you and for the shaikh.



ANOTHER BASELESS ARGUMENT IN SUPPORT OF 'ITIKAAF' FESTIVALS

A supporter of mass I'tikaaf, writing in support of the 'i'tikaaf' festivals which have been innovated fourteen centuries after Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam), says:

From your recent articles, it appears you are of the opinion that the mere performance of i'tikaaf by a sizeable group of people in a masjid is bid'ah. You have based this opinion on some statements of Imam Malik rahimahullah ta'ala in which he narrates the practice of the Salaf as being to generally abstain from i'tikaaf. And you have also based this opinion on a hadith in which the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) expressed his displeasure at three of his wives preparing to engage in i'tikaf with him. However, other scholars have opposed the view of Imam Malik. Hafiz Ibn Hajar mentioned after quoting the statement of Imam Malik:

"It appears that he intended a specific description of i'tikaaf. Or else, we have related from numerous Sahabah that they performed i'tikaaf."

Ibn Abi Shaybah narrates in his Musannaf from numerous personalities of the Salaf that they engaged in i'tikaaf, including the Sahabi, Hazrat Abdullah ibn Umar (radiyallahu anhum).

Moreover, many of the commentators have explained that the reason why the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) was displeased by his wives performing i'tikaf with him on that one occasion was that they were trying to compete with each other for closeness to the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) which is an incorrect intention for i'tikaaf.

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Most importantly, there are some reports from the Salaf showing that at times groups of men would perform i'tikaaf simultaneously in a single masjid.

Ibn Abi Shaybah narrates in his Musannaf with an authentic chain:

The Sahabi, Hazrat Qutbah ibn Malik (radiyallahu anhu), narrated that: "Hazrat Umar (radiyallahu anhu) observed a group of people performing i'tikaf in a masjid while they were screened (by a veil). He found this strange and said: What is this? They said: We are only using it as a screen to conceal our food/our eating. He said: Then, put the screen over it, but once you have eaten, remove it." (Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaybah, Shirkah Darul Qiblah, 6:306)

Here, Hazrat Umar (radiyallahu anhu) did not find it strange that a group of people was performing i'tikaaf together in a single masjid. He only found it strange that they were using a screen to cover themselves. But when the mu'takifeen explained to him why they did this, he approved of this practice also. Hence, this proves that not only did a group of men from the Salaf at times perform i'tikaaf together in the same masjid, but that Hazrat 'Umar (radiyallahu anhu) tacitly approved of it. It even shows that they would eat together as a group behind a veil.

Ibn Abi Shaybah also narrates in his Musannaf:

Hazrat Hudhayfah ibn al-Yaman (radiyallahu anhum) came to Hazrat Abdullah ibn Mas'ud (radiyallahu anhu) and said: Should I not cause you to be surprised at a group of people performing i'tikaaf between your house and the house of al-Ash'ari? Meaning, at the masjid. Hazrat Abdullah ibn Mas'ud said: "Maybe they are right and you are mistaken (at your surprise)." (Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaybah, Shirkah Darul Qiblah, 6:308)

The reason Hazrat Hudhayfah ibn al-Yaman (radiyallahu anhum) expressed surprise at the i'tikaaf is that it was done outside of the three holy masjids. However, according to Hazrat Abdullah ibn Mas'ud (radiyallahu anhu), Hazrat Hudhayfah ibn al-Yaman (radiyallahu anhum) was mistaken, and it was correct to perform i'tikaaf in a masjid outside of the three holy masjids. Importantly, neither of these two prominent Sahabah expressed surprise that a group of men, numbering more than one or two, had gathered together in a single masjid to perform i'tikaaf.

On the basis of this amal from the Salaf, how can we still declare it a bid'ah for a group of people to perform i'tikaaf in the same masjid?

Jazakallahu khayran

OUR RESPONSE

(1) Your inference regarding a 'sizeable group of people' observing I'tikaaf is incorrect. At no stage did we claim that a 'sizeable group of people' observing I'tikaaf is bid'ah. We are also unaware of the meaning of 'a sizeable group'. The supporter has not explained his ambiguity. Our target of criticism is the *mass organized festivals held congregationally under the auspices of a hadhrat who himself is lost in nafsaniyat*. There is a difference between 'mass' and 'sizeable'. Furthermore, the Shar'i ruling of *Sunnat alal Kifaayah* precludes a mass festival. No mass I'tikaaf was organized by Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam), the Sahaabah, the Taabi-een, Tab-e-Taabieen and the Fuqaha of the Ummah. These mass I'tikaafs are a recent innovation which have no basis in the Sunnah nor in the fourteen century history of Islam..

(2) Since you have injudiciously applied your intellect, you have abortively attempted to scuttle the statements of Imaam Maalik (rahmatullah alay) who flourished in an age in close proximity to the Sahaabah. He lived in Madinah which was the home of numerous very senior Taabi-een Fuqaha. He was more aware of Rasulullah's I'tikaaf practice than Haafiz Ibn Hajar who trailed behind him about eight centuries later.

The importance of Imaam Maalik's statements on this issue may not be discounted as drivel, nor may their importance be minimized on the basis of Ibn Hajar's statements.

Imaam Maalik's statement on this issue has greater credibility than the opinion of Ibn Hajar. Furthermore, permission for the bid'ah mass I'tikaaf festivals of our era cannot be based on Ibn Hajar's statement. There is nothing in his statement to justify the evil

which is being perpetrated nowadays by mobs indulging in gluttony and defilement of the Musaajid.

(3) You mention that some scholars have opposed Imaam Maalik's view. Such opposition may not be interpreted as a licence for the bid'ah and israaf mass i'tikaaf festivals of this day, and against which our criticism is directed. If you apply your intellect judiciously, without blind emotion, you will not fail to understand what exactly is our target of criticism. You have opted for blindness, hence you ignore all the haraam *khurafaat* attendant to the i'tikaaf festivals. Instead of faulting Imaam Maalik (rahmatullah alayh), why do you not open your eyes to attend to the evils accompanying the mass i'tikaaf functions?

On what issue did some scholars oppose Imaam Maalik? On the issue of mass I'tikaaf? The difference with Imaam Maalik does not pertain to mass I'tikaaf? It relates to the non-observance of I'tikaaf by the Sahaabah claimed by Imaam Maalik. It appears from the statement of Imaam Maalik that the Sahaabah had abstained from I'tikaaf whereas Ibn Hajar says that more than one Sahaabah (not numerous) had observed I'tikaaf. Mass I'tikaaf is not in this equation.

It is quite possible that Imaam Maalik was referring to the senior Sahaabah abstaining from I'tikaaf, hence he mentioned the names of the first three Khulafa'. Abstention of all the Sahaabah does not necessarily flow from Imaam Maalik's statement. Whatever the meaning may be, the issue between Imaam Maalik and 'some scholars' has no relevance to the kind of mass, wasteful, bid'ah I'tikaaf innovated recently.

(4) Ibn Hajar's statement: *"It appears that he (Imaam Maalik) intended a specific description of I'tikaaf."*, is an opinion ventured about eight centuries after Imaam Maalik's categorical statement. Furthermore, Ibn Hajar was unable to elucidate the '*specific description*' suggested by him. His interpretation is palpably invalid. It is a shot in the dark. With such ambiguity, the categorical claim of such a great Imaam as Imaam Maalik (rahmatullah alayh) may not be scuttled.

(5) It is extremely far-fetched to accept that Imaam Maalik (rahmatullah alayh), the illustrious Imaam who lived in Madinah in close proximity to the age of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and surrounded by numerous of the most high ranking Taabi-een Fuqaha, was unaware of the state of the Sahaabah regarding I'tikaaf observance. If he was unaware, what makes Ibn Hajar, eight centuries later, more aware? It is obvious that the narrations of I'tikaaf which reached Ibn Hajar, did reach Imaam Maalik (rahmatullah alayh). Despite this fact, he stated the attitude of the Sahaabah in general towards I'tikaaf, and such attitude of the Sahaabah was the effect of Rasulullah's ta'leem. It is inconceivable that the Sahaabah who were the devotees of Nabi-e-Kareem (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and who sacrificed their lives to meticulously observe every detail of the Sunnah would not have engaged in I'tikaaf *enmasse* if this had been the spirit and desire of Rasulullah's I'tikaaf.

The attitude of the Sahaabah regarding Taraaweeh Salaat is most significant. Although Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) did not observe Taraaweeh in the formal manner we know today, the Sahaabah, especially Hadhrat Umar (radhiyallahu anhu), went to great lengths to establish Taraaweeh Salaat in the formal manner in which the Ummah has always been performing it. But no such concern has been accorded to I'tikaaf by the Sahaabah and the Taabi-een despite the fact that Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) observed it unfailingly every year. *"Ponder! O People of Intelligence" (Qur'aan)*

It really has no weight, and cannot be presented in negation of the claim made by Imaam Maalik. It is surprising that the objector without any Shar'i basis, attempts to negate with Ibn Hajar's doubtful opinion Imaam Maalik's statement made eight centuries before. In presenting Ibn Hajar's opinion, the objector has displayed clear emotional bias for the mass i'tikaaf bid'ah.

(6) The contention of Hafiz Ibn Hajar pertains to an entirely different issue. While Imaam Maalik (rahmatullah alayh) maintains that the vast majority of the Sahaabah did not observe I'tikaaf despite their devotion to the Sunnah, Ibn Hajar claims that I'tikaaf

was observed by 'more than one' Sahaabi. The brother has incorrectly translated with the term 'numerous'. '*Ghayr waahid*' does not mean *numerous*. It means *more than one*. At most it could mean *several*.

Should we temporarily accept the term, *numerous*, then too, the brother's argument is baseless. Even on the basis of Ibn Hajar's comment, the brother's argument is spurious. It is devoid of Shar'i substance for the simple reason that our criticism is not directed at *numbers per se*. The concern is related to the evils related to the mass performances in the name of I'tikaaf.

The 'several' Sahaabah or the 'numerous' Sahaabah who had observed I'tikaaf, did not do so congregationally under the domination of a hadhrat nor was their I'tikaaf an occasion of merrymaking and gluttony. Each one engaged in his own ibaadat in solitude. The satanic extravagance, the journeys of even females, the smoking in the Musjid, the show, and peer-worship did not accompany the I'tikaaf of the Sahaabah. Their I'tikaaf was pure Ibaadat.

(7) Ibn Abi Shaybah does not narrate the I'tikaaf of "numerous of the Salaf". Of the Sahaabah, he mentions only Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Umar (radhiyallahu anhu). He mentions only three among the Taabi'een who had observed I'tikaaf. This is a far cry from 'numerous'. The term 'numerous' has also been intentionally employed to mislead unwary readers.

It should be understood, that there is no contention regarding observance of I'tikaaf which is Sunnat alal Kifaayah. The argument relates to the nonsense which the hadhrats and their mobs of mureeds perpetrate nowadays in the name of I'tikaaf.

(8) The objector mentions the "incorrect intention" of the Holy wives of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) for his displeasure when he had observed the three tents in the Musjid. If the intention of the Noble Wives was "incorrect", to a far, far greater degree are the intentions of today's hadhrats and their mobs of juhhaal murideen not only incorrect, but corrupt. The misdeeds which they perpetrate in the Musaajid during the holy days and

nights of Ramadhaan vividly display the corruption of their intentions.

Furthermore, while Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) had ordered the removal of the I'tikaaf tents of only three persons who were observing I'tikaaf, and he himself nullified his I'tikaaf, the hadhrats of today have hundreds of juhala with them in the Musaa'jid. When Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) had expelled from the Musjid three of the most pious beings (His Wives), there is a greater need to expel the mobs of holidaymakers from the Musaa'jid.

(9) The objector, without applying his mind, quotes the following narration from Ibn Abi Shaybah:

“Hazrat Umar (radhiyallahu anhu) observed a group of people performing i'tikaaf in a masjid (should be in the Musjid, for it was Musjid Nabawi) while they were screened (by a veil). He found this strange (He found it detestable), and said: ‘What is this?’ They said: ‘We are only using it as a screen to conceal our food/our eating.’ He said: ‘Then, put the screen over it, but once you have eaten, remove it.”

Commenting on this narration, the objector says: “Here, Hazrat Umar (radhiyallau anhu) did not find it strange that a group of people was performing i'tikaaf together in a single masjid. He only found it strange that they were using a screen to cover themselves.”

In this there is no daleel for the mass i'tikaaf festivals of this age. A group of people observing I'tikaaf in a Musjid is not the problem. If they eat together, it is not an issue of contention. The objection and complaint are directed at the circus performance of the hadhrats and their mureeds - at the huge waste of money travelling by planes from different countries to converge on the venue where the hadhrat, and even imposter hadhrat, has set himself up for 'i'tikaaf'. The complaint is against the women undertaking journeys to participate in the i'tikaaf festival of the ghair mahram hadhrat. The complaint is against the massive circus tents set up outside the Musjid to cater for the holidaymakers. The complaint is against the cigarette and hookah-

smoking which have now been initiated. Soon the Musjid will be filled with tobacco smoke. The complaint is against the light banter, the noise, the blocking of the Musjid space, the waste of food, the gluttony, the sins which especially women have to commit at the airports and along the journey, etc., etc.

It is indeed only a calcified intelligence which ignores all these evils, and tries to justify the mass festivals on the basis of the small group of people who had observed proper I'tikaaf 14 centuries ago. Their I'tikaaf was a Masnoon Ibaadat devoid of all the evils which accompany today's mass pantomime 'i'tikaaf' shows.

(10) Hadhrat Umar's surprise further confirms that the screen was a new development. However, since it was devoid of evils, and since a valid reason for proffered, he allowed it. If the objector is sincere, he should consult his heart and seek a fatwa – what would Hadhrat Umar's attitude have been if he had to witness the mess of mass i'tikaaf with even droves of women jetting in from other countries? What would have been his reaction when he had banned even the most pious women of the Ummah from coming to even Musjid Nabawi for the Fardh Salaat? Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) ordered the sincere person: *“Seek a fatwa from your heart.”* There is no need to cite Ibn Hajar's conjecturing to understand the evil and bid'ah of the mass i'tikaaf functions organized nowadays.

(11) The objector's citation of the Hadith of Hadhrat Huzaifah (radhiyallahu anhu) has absolutely no relevance to the issue of contention, viz., mass festival I'tikaaf. The narration pertains to a difference of opinion between the two senior Sahaabah – Hadhrat Huzaifah and Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhuma). Whereas, according to Hadhrat Huzaifah (radhiyallahu anhu) as well as other Sahaabah and some senior Fuqaha of the Taabi'een, I'tikaaf is valid in only three Musjids – Musjidul Haraam, Musjid Nabawi and Musjid Aqsa – according to Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) and the Jamhoor, it is valid in all Musaajid where the five daily Salaat are being performed.

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The objector committed chicanery by abstaining from citing the full Hadith. Hadhrat Hudhaifah (radhiyallahu anhu), refuting the stance of Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) retorted: *"What! Do you not know that verily, there is no I'tikaaf except in three Musesajjid – Musjidul Haraam, Musjidul Aqsa and the Musjid of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam)? I do not care whether I make I'tikaaf therein (i.e. the Musjid in which the people were observing I'tikaaf) or in their market place."* That is, it is the same. The I'tikaaf is not valid

There is no justification in this Hadith for the mass bid'ah I'tikaaf being observed nowadays. A handful of people was in I'tikaaf in the Musjid mentioned in this Hadith. There is no resemblance between the valid I'tikaaf which the people were observing and the festivals of today organized by the hadhrats for their droves of mureeds, including women.

(12) Making another spurious assertion, the objector says: *"...neither of these two prominent Sahaabah expressed surprise that a group of men, numbering more than one or two, had gathered together in a single masjid to perform I'tikaaf."*

His statement is designed to pull wool over the eyes of the ignorant and unwary. At no stage did we claim that I'tikaaf by more than one or two persons is not permissible. In fact, in the Musjid directly under our control here in Port Elizabeth, a dozen persons annually sit in I'tikaaf. This is not a congregational gathering. Everyone observes I'tikaaf alone. Their food comes from their homes. Their I'tikaaf is not organized under the auspices of some hadhrat. There are no bayaans, nazams and women in this I'tikaaf.

(13) The objector having read our articles with an emotional bias, has failed to grasp the point. He has failed to understand what has been criticized. There is no objection to a group of men observing I'tikaaf decently according to the Sunnah in a Musjid. He has intentionally opted for blindness, hence he ignores all the evils accompanying the mass i'tikaaf circus shows. There is a very big difference between a group of men observing I'tikaaf as it should be observed, and a mass festival in the name of i'tikaaf.

(14) The attitude of the Sahaabah relative to I'tikaaf is stated in a nutshell by Hadhrat Abu Hurairah (radhiyallahu anhu). He said: *"Never do I make a vow, and never do I observe I'tikaaf."* This knocks out the bottom from the mass mock 'I'tikaaf' of the hadhrats of this age.

Whatever the objector has said is baseless and devoid of Shar'i substance.

THE REWARD OF A THOUSAND I'TIKAAFS

What is the purpose of observing I'tikaaf? Most of those who participate in the mass merrymaking I'tikaaf festivals, do not observe I'tikaaf for the Pleasure of Allah Ta'ala, and for achieving greater proximity to Allah Ta'ala, and for thawaab in the Aakhirah. They join the festival solely on account of 'saint-worship. Since their hadhrat will be spending his I'tikaaf in a Musjid, be it ten thousand kilometres from his home, the mureed will indulge in extravagance in order to travel to the peer sahib. If their Hadhrat would not be observing I'tikaaf, there would be no festival, no merrymaking and no mass I'tikaaf.

They will waste large sums of money travelling by plane and indulging in the many sins stemming from intermingling of the sexes along the journey to participate in the festival. But it will not dawn on them to rather contribute the money or part of it to aid the suffering servants of Allah Ta'ala and gain thereby the thawaab of a thousand I'tikaafs. In fact, if these mureeds do not join the hadhrat in I'tikaaf, the vast majority would not sit in I'tikaaf in their hometowns, and even the hadhrat will then be disillusioned and remain in his homeplace to observe I'tikaaf in his neighbourhood Musjid if he is indeed sincere in his Ibaadat. If there will be no crowds of worshippers to hail him, the hadhrat will not journey alone to Zambia to sit in I'tikaaf alone. The mass I'tikaaf is merely a stunt for the acquisition of worldly and nafsani objectives.

Once Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Abbaas (radhiyallahu anhumaa) was in I'tikaaf in Musjid Nabawi. A man entered and sat down. Hadhrat Ibn Abbaas (radhiyallahu anhumaa) noticed a cloud of worry on his face. On enquiring of the reason for his grief, the man said that he

was unable to pay the debt he owed a certain person. Hadhrat Ibn Abbaas (radhiyallahu anhumaa) said that he would intercede on his (the debtor's) behalf.

So saying, he went out of the Musjid. The man reminded him of his I'tikaaf. Hadhrat Ibn Abbaas (radhiyallahu anhumaa) said:

“I did not forget. I have heard from this Being in this Grave (i.e. Rasulullah – sallallahu alayhi wasallam) - and much time has not yet passed (since his demise) –saying: ‘He who goes to attend to a need of a brother, and he strives for its attainment, it is better for him than spending ten years in I'tikaaf. He who spends one day of I'tikaaf for the Pleasure of Allah, Allah will create a barrier of three ditches between him and the Fire. The distance will be more than the distance between the heaven and the earth.”

The hadhrats and their flocks of vainglorious mureeds are lost. They dwell in bewilderment in their realm of nafsaniyat. Whilst the Ummah suffers under the yoke of poverty and jahaalat, the fraudulent ‘sufis’ of this age excel in eating and excreting. Their nafsaniyat and bid'aat are named ‘i'tikaaf’. Who are they deceiving with the ‘i'tikaaf’ cover?

If the sincere ones duped into a brand of miscegenated ‘piety’ apply their intelligence constructively to attain the truth, they shall, Insha-Allah, not fail to see beyond the veneer of deception to understand the massive farce of the circus of these mass i'tikaaf bid'ah and israaf functions which have of recent gained ascendancy.

Our sincere advice for them is to remain in their hometowns; not to become the brothers of the shayaateen by wasting the bounty of wealth to undertake expensive and sinful journeys for an act which they should observe in their neighbourhood Musajjid should they truthfully desire to observe I'tikaaf. If they have too much wealth, it should not be wasted. There are avenues for genuine spending in Allah's Path to gain His Pleasure and Thawaab-e-Jaariyah.



THE MUSAAJID ARE NOT CAMPING GROUNDS

AMONG THE SIGNS of the Impending Hour of Qiyaamah according to Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) is: "Voices will be raised in the Musaaajid."

The materialization of this prediction could be witnessed nowadays in all the Musaaajid, and the worst perpetrators of this crime are the people of the Deen – Ulama, Tabligh Jamaat members and the like. It appears that they suffer from the misconception of the permissibility of audible and even loud conversation accompanied by even mirth, if the talk happens to be of Deeni hue. This malady and signs of Qiyaamah are aggravated in particular in such Musaaajid where I'tikaaf is observed by a crowd of mureeds. The Musjid is then desanctified with sumptuous feasts accompanied by a banter of light talk, even worldly talk and laughter, which are all acts negatory of the sanctity of the Musjid. In fact such haraam indulgence obliterates from the mind the remembrance of Allah Ta'ala and the Aakhirah for which objectives the Musaaajid are established.

The feasting in the Musaaajid in the manner in which it takes place on occasions of mass I'tikaaf has degenerated to a despicable level. The mirth, discussion, over-eating, sumptuous dishes and the continuous banter transform the I'tikaaf into a mundane activity, and the Musjid into a camping ground. Musallis who do not participate in the mass I'tikaaf, but who frequent the Musjid for Salaat, are decidedly disturbed by the mannerism of the Mu'takifeen (those who observe I'tikaaf). The attitude of the I'tikaaf participants, especially at the time of feasting, creates the impression that they believe that they own the Musjid, are in control of the Musjid, and that they alone have the right to the Musjid, hence they care not a hoot for anyone who happens to be engaged in Nafl Salaat, Tilaawat, etc. The non-participating Musalli is expected to vacate the Musjid and

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perform his ibaadat at home while the campers believe it to be their right to feast, make merry and dominate the Musjid.

Another haraam act to which the Mu'takifeen have become insensitive is that they have become oblivious of soiling the Musjid when they feast. They hopelessly fail to fulfil the huqooq (rights) of the food and Dastarkhaan (the cloth on which the food is spread). After having filled and over-filled their bellies with an excess of delicious and sumptuous foods, they very unceremoniously roll up the Dastarkhaan for dumping. The haqq of the Cloth is not fulfilled. Its haqq requires that it be firstly 'cleaned' of all food morsels in a respectful manner; that the morsels not be dumped or washed down the drain; that it (the Cloth) be immediately washed and ceremoniously stored. All these etiquettes (aadaab) are integral constituents of Shukr (Gratitude to Allah Ta'ala) for the wonderful Bounty (Ni'mat) of Food.

It is essential for the Mu'takifeen to understand that frugality in food consumption is a necessary requisite of the spirit (Rooh) of I'tikaaf. However, the manner and attitude of those observing I'tikaaf convey the distinct impression that they are camping, hence the merrymaking in the Musaajid. When the crowd of Mu'takifeen sits down to eat, their attitude should be one of silence and humility. There should be no raising of voices, no unnecessary banter and absolutely no mirth. An observer viewing the scene should be awed by the silence, dignity and decorum of the Mu'takifeen. It is indeed lamentable that so many musallis feel the need to complain about the attitude and acts of the Mu'takifeen in general, and in particular of those who observe I'tikaaf in congregational form.

Members of the Jamaat are well aware of the three modes of Masnoon eating when consuming the Ni'mat of food. In fact, one mode is so humble that the Fuqaha have advised that it should not be adopted in public. The purpose of mentioning this fact is to remind the teachers of the three modes of sitting that Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said that he was a slave of His Master (Allah Azza Wa Jal), hence he loved to sit like a humble slave when the Master bestows to him the wonderful Ni'mat of food. Mirth, loudness and ghaflat (a happy go lucky

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attitude) especially at the time of eating are the ways of men such as Fir'oun, Haamaan and Qaaroon.

When eating generally, especially during I'tikaaf in the Musaajid, the attitude of humility adopted by Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) at the Dastarkhaan should be uppermost in the mind. The focus must incumbently be on Allah Ta'ala and the provision of the Rizq in front of you. The mind and the tongue should not dwell on anything else. Shukr for the Bounty of Food is not at all fulfilled by mere verbal profession – by moving the lips and tongue with the Masnoon Dua bereft of the rooh that should accompany the Dua.

It is essential for the elders of the Jamaat and for the Musjid trustees and for the Ulama in general to remember this Naseehat, the Aadaab of the Musjid, the Aadaab of the Food and the Sanctuary of the Musjid and the Signs of Qiyaamah, and to impart the Necessary n Ta'leem to their subordinates to ensure that the Musjid is treated in the manner Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) commanded. All the aadaab of the Musjid are recorded in the kutub of the Shariah for easy reference. May Allah Ta'ala endow us all with the taufeeq of giving practical expression to our preaching.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. What is the Shar'i status of group-I'tikaaf. In a Musjid in Lenasia about 300 people invade the Musjid for I'tikaaf every year. They cause considerable inconvenience to the regular musallis. They take over the Musjid. There is much feasting taking place. The scenario appears like a holiday camp. Please comment.

A. This is another merrymaking bid'ah. They neither understand the meaning of I'tikaaf nor have they dreamt of its spirit. It is not permissible to swamp a Musjid in this manner.

In fact, Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) had discouraged this sort of I'tikaaf when he once observed I'tikaaf 'tents' having been set up in the Musjid. Ibaadat too has now been transformed into fun and merrymaking events of riya – show and ostentation.

Q. In some places during the last ten days of Ramadhan, group I'tikaaf programmes are organized. Large numbers of people occupy the Musjid for I'tikaaf. Congregational thikr takes Place. Food is provided for the whole group. Durood Shareef majlis also takes place. Here where I am, this question cannot be asked because the mureeds of the sheikh will shoot one down and interpret the question as disrespect for the sheikh. Please clarify in the light of the Shariah whether these group I'tikaaf programmes are permissible.

A. The group form of 'I'tikaaf' which has gained momentum where the halqah thikr shaikhs visit and establish bases, has exceeded the bounds of the Shariah and has entered into the domain of bid'ah. In most places the I'tikaaf has been reduced to merrymaking functions whereas I'tikaaf is supposed to be in seclusion and solitude as much as possible. The manner in which these public group I'tikaafs is conducted defeats the objective of I'tikaaf. These functions resemble feasting at wedding gatherings. They have degenerated into bid'ah. It is precisely for this reason that you are unable to pose the query. The wayward mureeds believe that their shaikh's I'tikaaf function is waajib, hence they take offence when questioned. Furthermore, there is no origin in the Sunnah for this practice. These functions also disturb the other musallis and interfere with their freedom and their few minutes of solitude (Nafl I'tikaaf).

If Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) had been alive today, he would have expelled all these bid'atis from the Musaaqid

Q. Many youngsters these days are sitting for I'tikaaf. It seems to have become a trend for a group of friends to sit together. We have heard and seen how I'tikaaf has become a party for them. Some have even went to the extent of taking a Hooka pipe into the I'tikaaf tents for smoking. A person argues that although the Ibaadat of I'tikaaf is to be done in seclusion, isn't there great benefit in the Ulama conducting programmes in the Musaaqid as is the norm nowadays. There are Tafseer, Islaahi and even Seerah programmes conducted especially in the last 10 days.

Atleast those youngsters and other Mu'takifeen can gain some benefit if there is a Taleem programme of some sort instead of them socialising away their time. Please comment on this argument.

A. I'tikaaf is not for teaching, giving bayaans and passing on benefit to others. I'tikaaf is strictly for personal ibaadat to be done in strict seclusion and solitude.

The arguments presented are spurious and deceptive. Perceived benefits may not be used to override the Shariah. Shaitaan had misled the Ummats of bygone times with the idea of 'benefits' and new acts of 'worship'. Gradually the entire Shariats of the previous Ambiya were mutilated beyond recognition. The Purity of the Deen and Sunnah may not be adulterated and distorted with practices which people perceive as beneficial. Our obligation is to act in accordance with the Shariah. It is not our obligation to hanker after people who have selected the path to Jahannam with their indolence, lethargy and indifference to the Deen. If any practice brings about change in any teaching of the Shariah, it will be an evil bid'ah regardless of how shaitaan has adorned it and no matter what benefits are perceived therein.

Q. Some brothers from the U.S.A. go to Madinah specially to observe the I'tikaaf of the last ten days of Ramadhaan. Is this advisable?

A. It is not advisable. The brothers should remain in their hometowns for I'tikaaf. It is not advisable to spend so much money and to undergo journies and become involved in sins unintentionally along the route for making I'tikaaf in the Haram Shareef. The brothers lack in understanding. They should put their money to constructive use. There are millions of suffering Muslims on whom the money could be spent, thereby gaining tremendous Amounts of thawaab, far, far in excess of the thawaab for undergoing a journey to sit in I'tikaaf in Madinah Munawwarah. The thawaab of assisting a Muslim in need is the equivalent of a thousand I'tikaaf. Thus Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn

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Abbaas (radhiyallahu anhu) nullified his I'tikaaf specifically to aid a brother in distress.

Q. What is the ruling of mass I'tikaaf without merrymaking?

A. Mass I'tikaaf activities even if unaccompanied by merrymaking are improper. Ibaadat has to be incumbently discharged in the Masnoon manner. It is not permissible to attach a new dimension to Ibaadat.

Mass I'tikaaf is a new dimension, hence bid'ah. Firstly, I'tikaaf should not be organized. People should not observe I'tikaaf in congregation with their sheikh. The Sahaabah did not observe I'tikaaf in congregation with Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam).

I'tikaaf is Sunnat alal Kifaayah. It is highly improper to block the Musjid with large numbers of mu'takifeen. The spirit of I'tikaaf is destroyed and the musallis are greatly inconvenienced by the occupying crowd which conveys the idea of an invasion having taken place. A large crowd performs as if they own the Musjid.

If a number of people of their own accord, without the I'tikaaf being a congregational activity, sit in I'tikaaf each one making his own food arrangement, then they may not be debarred. However, the trustees are entitled to prevent such a large number of even those observing I'tikaaf individually if the peace of the Musjid is disturbed. The basis for this prevention is Rasulullah's command to remove the three tents in Musjid Nabawi which were set up for I'tikaaf. The issue here is not the specific reason which Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) had for preventing the I'tikaaf. Of importance is the fact that it is permissible to prevent persons from I'tikaaf for a valid reason.

It is improper for a Shaikh to organize a mass I'tikaaf. He should observe I'tikaaf alone, and seclude himself from his mureeds during the I'tikaaf which is not an occasion for ta'leem and tabligh. It is an occasion of Muraaqabah, Muhaasabah and Thikrullah in seclusion and in solitude.

Q. What is surprising to me is that some great Ulama of the recent past had condoned mass I'tikaaf. Surely they were not

ignorant of the Shariah. Some mureeds said that their Shaikh was mentioned as a Qutub by Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) in a dream which a pious Aalim saw. Now when such a Qutub observes mass I'tikaaf, how should we understand it? Please explain this conundrum

A. Our criterion is not the actions of Ulama and the Qutubs. Our criterion is the Shariah. The truth is that even great Ulama are sometimes short sighted. Whilst they are pious and great, they lack faqaahat. They are unable to foresee the evils which their newly invented practices will lead to. While the Buzrugs permit occasionally a good nazam, the Fuqaha emphatically proclaim nazams/nasheeds/qasedahs HARAAM. The Fuqaha were the Guardians of the Shariah. We follow the Fuqaha, not every practice of the Buzrugs. Any practice of a Buzrug or a Qutub which conflicts with the Shariah must be set aside.

The Shariah is not the product of the dreams of the Auliya nor of their mukaashafaat. The Shariah is the product of the Wahi delivered to us by Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). We are under obligation to follow the Shariah, not the dreams and kashf of Buzrugs. It does not matter even if a Buzrug flies to the Arsh, we shall not be awed by such a feat. Our obligation is to maintain the purity of the Shariah. We do not worship our Auliya. Allaamah Sha'raani (rahmatullah alayh) said: "Whoever cites as proof the isolated acts (obscurities and incongruencies) of the Ulama, has made his exit from Islam."

Some of the bid'ah practices of the Barelwi Qabar Pujaaris were in fact introduced quite innocently and sincerely by Buzrugs. But look at what these grave-worshippers have done to the initial practices of the Auliya. And look at the haraam festivals and merrymaking which are polluting the Musaaqid nowadays in the name of I'tikaaf. If a Buzrug had not initiated the practice of mass I'tikaaf, this Ibaadat would not have developed into a bid'ah nor would the Musaaqid have been polluted as is the current state of mass I'tikaaf affairs. The slightest deviation from the Sunnah is fraught with grave Imaani perils.

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