

SECLUSION AS A MEANS OF EDUCATION: A COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN MUSLIM SCHOLARS AND ORIENTALISTS

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ABSTRACT: *This study sheds light on the issue of seclusion as a means of education for Sufis and others. It presents the scholars' concept of seclusion in language and convention. The study investigates some issues related to religious seclusions, demonstrates their conditions and how to perform them, identifies their types and their positive and negative effects, and presents the opinions of Muslim scholars and orientalists on the issue of seclusion. The study found that there are several types of seclusions, some of them can be used for religious purposes, such as Sufi seclusion, others for curative purposes, such as self-control and emotional stability. Sufi seclusions are similar - regarding their conditions and rituals - to some other ritual acts of other religions, particularly Christianity. Sufi Sheikhs established several conditions for seclusion, some of them are of a religious nature and consistent to the approach of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon Him), and others are exaggerated and intense. In addition to the different types of seclusions, the Sufi approaches also vary according to the duration of the seclusion and the type and number of dhikr.*

KEYWORDS: seclusion, means of education, comparative study, Muslim scholars, orientalists

INTRODUCTION

Praise be to Allah and peace and blessing be upon Prophet Muhammad, the Last of All Prophets and Messengers, who was Sent as a Mercy to Mankind. Allah Almighty says in His Book, mentioning seclusion: {And when they meet those who have believed, they say: We believe. And when they are alone with their Satans, they say: verily we are with you, we were but mocking.} Al-Baqara, verse (14). Seclusion is one of the means for I'tikaaf (private devotion in a mosque), through which one devotes himself to worship and suspends any concerns, obstacles, worldly works, distractions and desires. I'tikaaf represents the Islamic seclusion for Muslims, and it must be performed in mosques, in order to maintain congregational prayers and Friday prayers, because the more person secludes for worship, the closer he becomes to Allah and the more he loves Him ⁽¹⁾.

Seclusion was prescribed in order to follow the scientific practice that makes the person reach perfection in piety, overcoming the desires and passions of the self, and overcoming the whispers of Satan. Seclusion also strengthens the spiritual aspect of worship, as the secluded person keeps away from all the pleasures of the world in order to draw close to Allah and obtain a reward. While the Muslim is in

⁽¹⁾ Ibn Jibreen, Abdullah bin Abdul Rahman. (2008). Discussions on I'tikaaf, Cairo: Dar Al-Amal Publishing and Distribution, page (2).

seclusion, he leaves all that is permitted during the normal days of his life, all for the sake of obedience to Allah Almighty ⁽¹⁾.

The issue of seclusions as a means of I'tikaaf is one of the controversial issues that are supported by some scholars and opposed by others. It has arisen a lot of discussions in the Islamic heritage. Therefore, this research decides on this issue and presents the different opinions of the scholars in this regard.

Why this topic?

1. To contribute to the enrichment of the subject of seclusion due to its great importance for the lives of individuals.
2. To shed light on the views of the Orientalists on the issues considered pivotal for the lives of Muslims.
3. The lack of modern and contemporary studies that address all aspects of the subject of seclusion in details.

The Importance of the Study

The importance of this study lies in addressing one of the thorny issues. The issue of seclusion has arisen great controversy among the orientalists, as some considered it the beginning of the attack on the Prophet (PBUH) and then on the religion, particularly as the revelation was revealed on Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) while he was in seclusion worshipping Allah in the cave of Hira.

Study Objectives

This study aims at answering some of the questions related to this issue, including the following:

1. Explaining the concept of seclusion and its types.
2. Identifying whether seclusion is limited to religious seclusions only.
3. Identifying the conditions of religious seclusion and its types.
4. Demonstrating the effects of seclusion.
5. Presenting the opinions of Muslim scholars and orientalists on the issue of seclusion.

Questions of the Study

The study tries to answer the main following question:

How can seclusion be a means of education?

This question implies some other questions:

1. What does seclusion mean?
2. Is seclusion adopted by the Sufis only?
3. Is seclusion adopted by the Muslims only?
4. What are the views of the orientalists on seclusion?
5. What are the conditions and effects of seclusion?

(¹) Al Karbasi, Mohammed Sadiq. (2014). I'tikaaf Legislation, Beirut: Bait al-'Ilm li-n-Nābihīn, page 10.

STUDY METHODOLOGY

This study adopts the descriptive method and the historical method of research, which can be explained as follows:

- 1- To study the jurisprudential views comparatively, discuss them, and afford the argument deducted from such views, by referring to their original sources and comparing them according to the firmness of the proof or what is consistent with the spirit and purposes of Islamic law.
- 2- Stating the name of the surah from which the verse(s) is taken and the number of the verse(s).
- 3- Ascribing the hadiths to their original sources from the books of Sunnah, and referring to their degrees.
- 4- Referring to the language dictionaries to explain the words whose meaning is unclear.
- 5- Identifying the unknown authorities mentioned, to the extent that makes them known.

Study Plan:

This study is entitled: Seclusion as a Means of Education

A Comparative Study between Muslim Scholars and Orientalists

It contains:

Abstract

- Introduction

- Preface: It is entitled: (Definition of Seclusion and How to Perform It): It presents the definition of seclusion in language and convention, introduces the meanings of relevant terms and demonstrates how to perform seclusion that is a means of education.

- First Topic: Entitled (Conditions, types, effects and duration of seclusion).

This topic addresses the conditions that shall be fulfilled when performing seclusion, presents the types of seclusions and their advantages and disadvantages, and demonstrates the scholars' views on its duration.

- Second Topic: Entitled (The Scholars' Views on Seclusion).

It presents the views of the supporters and opponents of seclusion, in addition to the views of the orientalists

Third Topic: Seclusion as a Means of Education

- Conclusion:

It demonstrates the most important findings reached by the researcher.

- References.

- Table of Contents.

Definition of Seclusion and How to Perform It

Preface

Before discussing the issue of seclusion and its related topics, it is necessary to define the concept of seclusion and identify how to perform it, in order to clarify it and understand the scientific material of this research.

Definition of Seclusion:

Seclusion in language:

The term *Khalwa* “seclusion” is introduced in Lisan Al-Arab as follows: “A place or an object is *empty* and is *emptied* if there is no one and nothing in it, and it is described as *emptied*, and when a land is empty we say: *empty abode*, (...) and *empty place*: meaning: there is no one and nothing in it, and *emptied the place*: made it empty”⁽¹⁾, and it is said: “*I was alone with him, and he was alone with him*: meaning, he met him alone, and Allah says: “and when they are alone with their Satans”², and some says that “with” here means with them in the same place”⁽³⁾.

In this meaning, it is also said: *He asked him to empty his seating*, and *I emptied the place* (meaning: I left it), and *I abandoned food*: meaning: I left it, and I abandoned the man, meaning: I left him alone. The poet says:

Why do you free me and leave me alone? Where are your chains?

Did iron become expensive in your town? ⁽⁴⁾.

“And *al-janabah* in Arabic means: the side of everything, having the meaning of turning away from people”⁽⁵⁾, and *Khalwah* (seclusion) is “a dialogue between the secret and the truth, where there is nobody”⁽⁶⁾, and it is a place for being alone with oneself or with otherwise”⁽⁷⁾.

Based on the foregoing, the general definition of seclusion implies several meanings, mainly: Solitude, isolation, devotion and being alone with the self.

Seclusion in convention:

The definition of seclusion in convention does not differ so much from that in language. It is a state of staying away from people for a period of time, during which the person secludes, keeps away from worldly works and devotes himself to saying *Dhikr* (remembrance of Allah) with a heart free of worries,

⁽¹⁾ Ibn Manzur, Jamal al-Din. (2003). *Lisan Al-Arab*. Cairo: Dar al-Maarif, Khā letter, the word stem *Khala* “become empty”, page 1255.

⁽²⁾ Surah Al-Baqara, verse: 14.

⁽³⁾ Al-Razi, Mohammad ibn abi Bakr. (1995). *Mukhtar Al-Sahhah*, Beirut: Librairie Du Liban Publishers. Vol. 1. P. 92.

⁽⁴⁾ al-Jawhari, Abu Nasr Ismail. (1990). *Asihah Taj al-Lugha wa Sihah al-Arabiya* (The Crown of Language and the Correct Arabic). Beirut: Dar El Ilm Lilmalayin Publishers. Ed. 4, Vol. 1. P. 186.

⁽⁵⁾ al-Farāhīdī, al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad. (1980). *Al Ain*. Cairo. Dar Al Hilal Publish House, Vol. 6. P. 147.

⁽⁶⁾ al-Jurjani, Ali bin Mohammed. (1997). *Definitions*. Beirut: Dar Alkitab Alarabe Publishing. P. 33.

⁽⁷⁾ Abu Habib, Sa’di. (1988). *al-Qamus al-Fiqhi: lughatan wa istilahan*. Damascus Dar Al Fikr. P. 122.

under the guidance of a Sheikh who knows Allah, and who keeps him away from ignorance, negligence, and self-concerns, and helps him to regain his activity whenever he loses interest ⁽¹⁾.

The Sufis had many definitions of seclusion, however, they all imply the same meaning: "Keeping away from people and being alone with the self to worship Allah". Abu Othman al-Maghribi said: "Seclusion is to have nothing to say but Dhikr (remembrance of Allah) ("2).

Seclusion as a means of education is not limited to Sufi seclusions or religious seclusions only. Rather, some doctors use seclusion for curative purposes. Curative seclusion helps to control attention and control emotion. Curative seclusion was used for many persons who wanted to get rid of stress, achieve more psychological and emotional balance, and increase their ability to focus, and it had effective results in this area ⁽³⁾. However, we usually refer to religious or Sufi seclusions in particular, due to the various issues related to them, the scholars' controversy in this regard, and because they are more common.

Speaking about religious or Sufi seclusions, we find that other religions adopted seclusion as a therapy and as an approach. For example, some of the Non-Sufis adopt what is known as monasticism. They transmitted this approach from the Muslims with a difference in the method and purpose. Therefore, it is important to note that many of the orientalists' books point out that there is a similarity between the Sufism and Christianity ⁽⁴⁾.

When we examine the meaning of seclusion as adopted by the orientalists(5), we find that it does not differ so much from that meaning, although some of the orientalists exploited the Prophet's seclusion in the Cave of Hira to attack Islam and raise doubts about it. For example, in his book "Life of Muhammad", the Western Orientalist Monsieur Dramangam(6) described the seclusion of the Prophet (PBUH), saying: "Muhammad (PBUH) turned away from people and he liked seclusion. He resorted to contemplation and long thinking during his seclusion in order to promote his mental strengths and his

(1) Raies, Hussain Ali. (2009). Seclusion in Islamic Sufism Thought, University of Diyala, Iraq, p. 6.

(2) Al Sha'rani, Abdul Wahhab. (2007). al-Jawhar al-maṣūn wa-al-sirr al-marqūm fī-mā tuntijuhu al-khalwah min al-asrār wa-al-'ulūm, Cairo: Dar Jawami' al-Kalam, p. 4.

(3) Taha, Ramez. (2018). Islam Called for It and Science Proved Its Usefulness (Seclusion as an Effective Treatment), the website of Dr. Taha Ramez, see the following link: <http://www.ramez-taha.net/alone.html>

(4) Rovin, M. (2018). Islam in the World, (Spiritual Regeneration), and al-Shamrani, E. (2018) Journal of Reading and Knowledge. Issue 199, p. 9.

(5) Such as: Nicolas Dicks, Fevich, Versace, Hu Tengger, Wylander, Prideaux, and others, see:

Emile Der Men and Hem, The life of Mahomet Newxork, 1930, p. 135, Emile DER Men jhem, The Life of Mahomet Newyorl, 1930, p. 129.

(6) Al-Hussaini, Mohammed Rashid. (2012). In Defense of Islam: Debates and Responses to the Orientalists' Fabrications about Islam. Beirut: Dar Al-Kotob Al-Ilmiyah. p. 338.

sense of innovation, so that he would not become tired or bored afterwards. In other words, Muhammad (PBUH) had some issue, and he used to resort to the mountains to fix it"(1).

Some of the orientalist who defined I'tikaaf as seclusion believe that seclusion means isolation, as I'tikaaf is a worship for which a person isolates himself/ herself in a mosque². It is worth noting that some German orientalist limited seclusion to I'tikaaf, particularly during the last days of Ramadan month, when people stay in the mosque and devote all their times for worship, while they are completely awake and without inaction or sleep, where they perform worship in different forms³.

When person secludes for the worship of Allah, he turns away from mundane issues and reaches a state of inner spiritual peace. This demonstrates the benefits of seclusion on the other aspects of life. People who seclude are more able to overcome the problems they face in life, as seclusion develops their skills of anger management, increases their confidence in Allah Almighty, and promotes their spiritual values, such as patience and confidence in Allah⁴.

Some German orientalist argue that seclusion is often performed by the Sufis. They even considered it as an important pillar in self-reformation and self-discipline. However, other orientalist alleged that the Prophet (PBUH) exploited his seclusion in the Cave of Hira in order to compose the Holy Quran. Yet, they did not take into consideration that the Holy Quran is a holy book that was not planned for, as evidenced by its verses that were not revealed in sequence. Further, every surah is revealed for a particular occasion and to clarify and indicate a particular issue⁵.

How to Perform Seclusion:

Before discussing how to perform seclusion, it is important to point out that seclusion is not only for the Sufis. Rather, it is for all Muslims. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) used to seclude in the cave of Hira, as narrated by Imam al-Bukhari from Aisha, the mother of the faithful believers, that she said: The commencement of the Divine Inspiration to Allah's Messenger (PBUH) was in the form of good dreams which came true like bright daylight, and then the love of seclusion was bestowed upon him. He used to go in seclusion in the cave of Hira where he used to worship (Allah alone) continuously for many days before his desire to see his family. He used to take with him the journey food for the stay and then come

(1) It is worth noting that there are some of the fair orientalist who defended Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and refuted such false allegations, particularly Sir William Muir in his book "Life of Mohammad", see:

Sir Wiliam Muir, Life of mohammad, 1912, p. 14.

(2) Al-Sheha, A. (2010). The Key to Happiness, Glossary, P 75.

(3) Abdelwahab, E. et al. (2014). The Algorithm of Islamic Jurisprudence (Fiqh) with Validation of an Entscheidungs problem, Journal Academic Foundation, 4, 2, p 8.

(4) Karakas, A., Eker, H. (2018). The Effects of Itikaf on State-Trait Anger, Intrinsic Religiousness, and Subjective Well-Being, Spiritual Psychology and Counseling, no 3, p 173.

⁵ Mohammed, Ibrahim. (2011). Great Prophet in the Writings of the Orientalists and Arab Thinkers, Cairo: Al Dar Al Masriah Al Lubnaniah, p. 56.

back to (his wife) Khadija to take his food likewise again till suddenly the Truth descended upon him while he was in the cave of Hira. The angel came to him and asked him to read. The Prophet (PBUH) replied, "I do not know how to read." The Prophet (PBUH) added, "The angel caught me (forcefully) and pressed me so hard that I could not bear it any more. He then released me and again asked me to read and I replied, 'I do not know how to read.' Thereupon he caught me again and pressed me a second time till I could not bear it any more. He then released me and again asked me to read but again I replied, 'I do not know how to read (or what shall I read)?' Thereupon he caught me for the third time and pressed me, and then released me and said, 'Read in the name of your Lord, who has created (all that exists), created man from a clot. Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous.'" (96.1, 96.2, 96.3) Then Allah's Messenger (PBUH) returned with the Inspiration and with his heart beating severely. Then he went to Khadija bint Khuwailid and said, "Cover me! Cover me!" They covered him till his fear was over and after that he told her everything that had happened and said, "I fear that something may happen to me." Khadija replied, "Never! By Allah, Allah will never disgrace you. You keep good relations with your kith and kin, help the poor and the destitute, serve your guests generously and assist the deserving calamity-afflicted ones." Khadija then accompanied him to her cousin Waraqa bin Naufal bin Asad bin 'Abdul 'Uzza, who, during the pre-Islamic Period became a Christian and used to write the writing with Hebrew letters. He would write from the Gospel in Hebrew as much as Allah wished him to write. He was an old man and had lost his eyesight. Khadija said to Waraqa, "Listen to the story of your nephew, O my cousin!" Waraqa asked, "O my nephew! What have you seen?" Allah's Messenger (PBUH) described whatever he had seen. Waraqa said, "This is the same one who keeps the secrets (angel Gabriel) whom Allah had sent to Moses. I wish I were young and could live up to the time when your people would turn you out." Allah's Messenger (PBUH) asked, "Will they drive me out?" Waraqa replied in the affirmative and said, "Anyone (man) who came with something similar to what you have brought was treated with hostility; and if I should remain alive till the day when you will be turned out then I would support you strongly." But after a few days Waraqa died and the Divine Inspiration was also paused for a while"(1).

Regarding the seclusion that the People of of the Scripture invented and adopted in seek for the good pleasure of Allah, but they did not foster or perform as they should have done, Allah Almighty says: "But the Monasticism which they invented for themselves, We did not prescribe for them: (We commanded) only the seeking for the Good pleasure of Allah; but that they did not foster as they should have done. Yet We bestowed, on those among them who believed, their (due) reward, but many of them are rebellious transgressors"². Monasticism here means to leave the works of the world, renounce its pleasures, and isolate oneself from people³.

(1) al-Asqalani, Ibn Hajar. (2005). *Fath al-Bārī: Commentary on Sahih al-Bukhārī*, Vol. 1, Chapter: Commencement of Revelation to the Prophet (PBUH), Hadith No. (3), Riyadh; Dar Tiba, p. 53.

(²) Surah Al-Hadid, verse: 27.

(³) Al-Zayat, Ahmed, Abdel Qader, Hamed Al-Najjar, Mohammad. (2008). *Mojam Waseet*, Tehran: Scientific Library, (the meaning of Monasticism).

Regarding how to perform seclusion, Imam Al Ghazali mentioned that seclusion should be performed in a specific manner. It starts when the Sheikh specifies a certain corner for the Murid (seeker)⁽¹⁾ to stay in it alone, and he provides him with his needs of food and drinking, then the Sheikh indoctrinates the Murid some dhikr that the Murid repeats. For example, he may repeat: *Subhan Allah* (Glorified be Allah), and with repetition, the words will be easy for the tongue and the image of the words remains in the heart, then the form and letters of the words disappear and only the meaning of the words remain in the heart². The Murid should watch the whispers of his heart, and get rid of any thoughts related to worldly matters, because when he is preoccupied with them, his heart becomes distracted from Dhikr (remembrance of Allah)⁽³⁾.

First Topic

Conditions, Types, Impacts and Duration of Seclusion

Conditions of Seclusion:

Some of the Sufi Sheikhs set several conditions for the right seclusions that should be fulfilled in order to reach the desired results. Many books addressed such conditions either in details or in brief. These conditions include the following⁽⁴⁾:

1. Before seclusion, the Murid (seeker) must train himself on spending the night in saying Dhikr and accustom himself to less food and solitude.
2. Entering the seclusion should be by his Sheikh's order, after he blesses him and the place in which he is going to perform seclusion.
3. The Sheikh should enter the seclusion before the Murid, pray two units of prayer, and ask Allah to bless and guide the Murid.
4. The Murid should enter the seclusion in the same way he enters the mosque. He should say Basmalah, seeking refuge with Allah from his own evil and asking Him for aid in his affairs.
5. He should not lean to a wall or on something. Rather, he should nod as a form of glorifying Allah, close his eyes and remind himself that Allah is present with whom says Dhikr (remember Allah).
6. He should occupy his heart with the meaning of dhikr with which his tongue is occupied, and to take into account the meaning of *Ihsan* (perfection), which means to worship God as if you see him.
7. He should fast on a regular basis, for the purification of his heart.
8. He should perform ablution continuously.

⁽¹⁾A *Murid* (seeker) is a rank of Sufism. It means the person who learns at the hands of a Sheikh according to a certain approach.

⁽²⁾ Al Ghazali, Abu Hamid. (2005). *The Revival of the Sciences of Religion*. and *al-Mughnī 'an ḥaml al-asfār fī al-asfār fī takhrīj mā fī al-Iḥyā' min al-akhbār*, Zayn Al-Din Al-Iraqi, Beirut: Dar Bin Hazm, p. 692.

⁽³⁾Al Eraqi, Zein Al-Din. (2005). *al-Mughnī 'an ḥaml al-asfār*, ibid, p. 692.

⁽⁴⁾ Al-Awaji, Ghalib bin Ali. (2001). *Contemporary Sects Affiliated with Islam and Islam's Position Regarding Them*. Jeddah: Al-Maktaba Al-assrya Al-Zahabia. Ed. 4, Vol. 1 p. 950, et seq.

9. Seclusion should be performed in a place away from noise, so that the Murid will not be distracted. It should also be performed in a dark place into which the sun rays do not penetrate, in order to block the way to the physical senses and open the way to heart senses.
10. He should not sleep until he falls asleep and it become difficult for it to focus on dhikr.
11. The Murid should not spend the duration of seclusion receiving visits or seeking the blessing of people; and he should avoid the plots of Satan.
12. The Murid should persist to dhikr according to the sheikh's order of dhikr, and resolve to devote himself to work.
13. The Murid should remind himself while he is entering his seclusion that it seems like entering his grave, and should not specify a certain period for his seclusion, so as not to wait for the end of such period.

Types of Seclusion:

The books that referred to seclusion, particularly Sufi seclusions, mentioned several types, as follows⁽¹⁾:

1. Seclusion of Forty Days: This point was referred to above in this Research (2).
2. Fatihat Al-Kitab Seclusion: In this seclusion, the Murid fasts forty days while he is in seclusion. He avoids eating animals' meat and any animal derivatives. This kind of seclusion is clearly similar to some of the Christianity rituals related to fasting.
3. Fatihah Seclusion: During this seclusion, the Murid reads Fatihah Surah throughout the period of seclusion, which is forty days.
4. Basmalah Seclusion: In this seclusion, the Murid says "Bismillah al-Rahman al-Rahim". On the benefit of saying Basmalah, it is said: "If you miss the blessing of *Bismillah al-Rahman al-Rahim* (In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful), you will not be blessed in anything"⁽³⁾. The duration of this seclusion is nineteen days.
5. Al-Yaqouta Al-Farida Seclusion⁽⁴⁾: During this seclusion, the Murid recites this writing two thousand times per day. Its duration is twenty days.

Omar Al Futi says that each type of these seclusions has countless benefits, then he deprives himself from such benefits explaining that he is afraid of the students' satans⁽⁵⁾; by such satans he probably means some of those who use their mind in everything told by them.

⁽¹⁾ Al Futi, Omar bin Saeed. (1973). *Rimāḥ ḥizb al-raḥīm 'alā nuḥūr ḥizb al-rajīm*. Beirut: Dar Alkitab Alarabe Publishing. Ed. 2. p. 169.

⁽²⁾ A *Murid* (seeker) is a rank of Sufism. It means the person who learns at the hands of a Sheikh according to a certain approach.

⁽³⁾ Al Bakry, Mostafa bin Kamal Al-Din. (2013). *al-dhya'a alshmsi a'la alftḥ alkdsi shrh wrd alshr llbkri*. Beirut: Kitab Publishers. Vol. 1, p. 57.

⁽⁴⁾ It is a writing on *Al-Ṭarīqah al-Tijāniyyah* (the Tijānī Path), written by Muhammad Monjei bin Sidi Abd al-Wahid Muhammad al-Nazifi, see: al-Nazifi, Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahid. (2010). *alyakoutah alfridah fi altrikah altjaniah*, Egypt: Cairo Library. Vol. 3.

⁽⁵⁾ Al Futi, Omar bin Saeed. (1973). *Rimāḥ ḥizb al-raḥīm 'alā nuḥūr ḥizb al-rajīm*, ibid. p. 170

Impacts of Seclusion:

Seclusion have some impacts. Such impacts can be classified into positive impacts and negative ones. Imam Al Ghazali presented these impacts in his writing “Benefits and Bad Effects of Seclusion: Revealing its Grace”⁽¹⁾. The following is the most important benefits and bad effects of seclusion. In this point, the researcher is not addressing Sufi seclusions only, but the impacts of seclusion in general as a means of I’tikaaf.

A. Benefits of Seclusion:

Imam Abu Hamid Al Ghazali classified the benefits of seclusion into religious benefits and worldly benefits ⁽²⁾. The following is a summary of the most important benefits:

1. Devotion to Worship: Through turning away from people, finding pleasure in dhikr (remembrance of Allah) and supplication to Allah, following the approach of the Prophet (PBUH) regarding taking Allah as a *Khalil* (close friend); Prophet (PBUH) says: If I were to choose a *Khalil* (a bosom friend), I would have definitely chosen Abu Bakr as my *Khalil*, but he is my brother and my companion and Allah, the Exalted and Glorious. has taken your brother and companion (meaning Prophet himself) as a *Khalil*⁽³⁾.
2. Avoiding sins caused by dealing with people: The person avoids committing the sins caused by dealing with people, including: Hypocrisy, backbiting, gossip, failing to enjoin good and forbid evil, and acquiring some reprehensible morals ⁽⁴⁾.
3. Preserving religion and soul from temptation and strife ⁽⁵⁾: Seclusion helps in avoiding the risks that may arise as a result of temptation or strife, as proved by the Hadith narrated by Abdullah Ibn 'Amr Ibn Al 'As: When the Prophet (PBUH) mentioned and described temptations he said: “When you see the people that their covenants have been impaired, (the fulfilling of) the guarantees becomes rare, and they become thus (interwining his fingers). I then got up and said: What should I do at that time? He replied: Keep to your house, control your tongue, accept what you approve, abandon what you disapprove, attend to your own affairs, and leave alone the affairs of the generality⁽⁶⁾.
4. Salvation from evil people: There is no doubt that dealing with evil people affects you with some of their evil, as you cannot avoid their harm, either through backbiting, envy and hatred, or ill-

⁽¹⁾Al Ghazali, Abu Hamid, (1988). The Revival of the Sciences of Religion. Ibid. p. 692.

⁽²⁾ Ibid, p. 692.

⁽³⁾Muslim, Sahih Muslim, The Book of the Merits of the Companions, Chapter: The Virtues Of Abu Bakr As-Siddiq (May Allah be pleased with him), Hadith No. 2383

⁽⁴⁾Al Ghazali, Abu Hamid, . (1988). The Revival of the Sciences of Religion, ibid,p. 694

⁽⁵⁾ Ibid, p. 698.

⁽⁶⁾ : Al Zubaidi, Mohammed bin Mohammed. (1994). Entertaining the Pious Gentlemen by Explaining the Revival of the Sciences of Religion, Vol. 7, Beirut: Dar Al-Kotob Al-Ilmiyah, p. 361.

thought, etc. Hence, solitude and seclusion saves from these harms that may affect you as a result of dealing with people⁽¹⁾.

5. Abstention from greed: Seclusion protects you from the greed of the people and makes you avoid being greedy in them as well⁽²⁾.
6. Avoiding the fools and silly people: It is said that seeing the fools is considered as a minor blindness. In this regard, Imam Al-Shafi'i says: "Each time I deal with a fool, I feel that the side of my body that is nearer to him is heavier than the other side"⁽³⁾.

Bad Effects of Seclusion:

The bad effects of seclusion lie in the loss of all religious and worldly intentions that only be achieved through contact, including:

- 1) Teaching and learning: Because the attainment of knowledge is one of the greatest worships, and knowledge is only attained by contact, thus, anyone needs to learn what is imposed on him/ her and then decides to seclude is sinful⁽⁴⁾.
- 2) Mutual Benefit: Seclusion prevents the person from taking advantage of his / her money, knowledge, or fulfilling their needs, and this is a waste of the reward. Likewise, it prevents people from benefiting from each other through earning and other matters that can only be achieved through dealing with people⁽⁵⁾.
- 3) Social Convenience: This is achieved by having social convenience in good-hearted people who aid to the obedience of Allah, and this is a relaxation for the heart, which helps restoring activity for worship⁽⁶⁾.
- 4) Discipline: Dealing with people compels the soul to discipline it by taming the soul to endure harm and oppress the lusts; it is one of the matters that can only be achieved by dealing with people⁽⁷⁾.
- 5) Attaining and making people attain the reward: The secluding person is deprived of performing some matter to be rewarded for; a reward that can only be through dealing, such as visiting the patient, attending funeral rites, etc. Likewise, the secluding person deprives

(¹)Al Ghazali. (1988). The Revival of the Sciences of Religion, *ibid*,p. 699-700.

(²)See: *Ibid*, p. 701.

(³) *Ibid*, p. 702

(⁴) *Ibid*, p. 702-703

(⁵)Al Ghazali, Abu Hamid, (1988). The Revival of the Sciences of Religion, *ibid*, p. 704-705.

(⁶)See: *Ibid*, p. 706.

(⁷) *Ibid*, p. 706

the people of the reward attained as a result of visiting him / her if sick and condoling him / her in calamities, etc. ⁽¹⁾.

6) Modesty: Arrogance may be a reason for choosing seclusion, and it may tamper with the person of seclusion, preventing him / her from modesty, and it is one of the best attitudes⁽²⁾.

7) Experience Acquisition: The acquisition of experiences is only achieved through dealing with people and keeping up with their conditions; the seclusion of the person who does not have experiences is useless ⁽³⁾.

Second Topic

Scholars' Views on Seclusion

The scholars did not disagree about the prescription of the seclusion that means I'tikaaf in Islam, as there are explicit verses regarding it. However, they disagreed regarding the method of performing this seclusion. The following is a demonstration of the most important of these views among Muslim scholars, including the Sufis and others, and the Orientalists, but before that it is necessary to mention the proofs providing for I'tikaaf as mentioned in the Holy Quran, as follows:

I: Providing for seclusion "I'tikaaf" in the Holy Quran.

I'tikaaf is mentioned in the Holy Quran in two types:

1. I'tikaaf in mosques during the Holy Month of Ramadan, and its proof is:

Allah's saying: { Permitted to you on the night of the fasts, is the approach to your wives. They are your garments. And ye are their garments. Allah knoweth what ye used to do secretly among yourselves; but He turned to you and forgave you; so now associate with them, and seek what Allah hath ordained for you and eat and drink, until the white thread of dawn appear to you distinct from its black thread; then complete your fast till the night appears; but do not associate with your wives while ye are in retreat in the mosques. Those are limits (set by) Allah; approach not nigh thereto. Thus doth Allah make clear His signs to men that they may learn self-restraint}(4).

⁽¹⁾ Ibid, p. 706

⁽²⁾ Ibid, p. 707

⁽³⁾ Ibid, p. 708

⁽⁴⁾ Surah Al-Baqara, verse: 187. As for Allah's saying: (but do not associate with your wives while ye are in retreat in the mosques), Ali Ibn Abi Talha narrated Ibn Abbas' saying: This is for a man that performs I'tikaaf in mosque in Ramadan or other months. Allah orders him not to associate with his wife/ wives during the day or night until he completes his I'tikaaf. Men used to associate with their wives if they want once they perform I'tikaaf and leave the mosque. Allah Said: (but do not associate with your wives while ye are in retreat in the mosques), that is: Do not associate with them while you are performing I'tikaaf in the mosque or elsewhere. Mejahid, Qatadah and others used to do that until this verse was revealed. Ibn Abi Hatim said: It is narrated from ibn Masoud, Mohammed bin Ka'ab, Mejahid, 'Ataa, Al Hassan, Qatadah, Al Dahak, Al Sudi, Al Rabie ibn Anas and Muqatel, that they said: It is prohibited to associate with her while he is in I'tikaaf. What Ibn Abi Hatim narrated from them is what the scholars agreed upon: That the person performing I'tikaaf may not associate with his wife/ wives as long as he is performing I'tikaaf in a mosque, and if he needs to go to his house for a necessary need, he may not

2. I'tikaaf in al-Masjid al-Ḥarām and its proofs:

❖ Allah's saying: {and We commanded Ibrâhim (Abraham) and Ismâ'il (Ishmael) that they should purify My House (the Ka'bah at Makkah) for those who are circumambulating it, or staying (I'tikâf), or bowing or prostrating themselves (there, in prayer)} ⁽¹⁾.

❖ Allah's saying: {Verily those who disbelieve and hinder others from the path of Allah and from the Sacred Mosque that We have appointed for mankind, equal in respect thereunto are the dweller therein and the stranger. And whosoever will seek profanity therein wrongfully, We shall make him taste of a torment afflictive} ⁽²⁾.

stay in it for a duration more than what he needs for his need, being a call of nature or eating some food, and he is not permitted to kiss or hug his wife, nor to make himself busy with anything except for I'tikaaf, nor to visit a patient, but he is permitted to ask about his health while passing on his way. Moreover, I'tikaaf has other detailed provisions, regarding which the scholars agree to some and disagree to others. We quoted some of such opinions at the end of the Book of Fasting. Therefore, jurists used to follow the Book of Fasting with the Book of I'tikaaf, following the example of the Great Qur'an, as it mentioned i'tikaaf after fasting. Allah's mention of I'tikaaf after fasting implies a guidance to perform I'tikaaf while fasting or during the last days of Ramadan. Further, it was narrated about the Prophet (PBUH): That he used to engage himself in I'tikaaf (seclusion for prayers) in the mosque during the last ten nights of Ramadan, till he passed away. Thereafter, his wives followed this practice after him. Reported from the Hadith of Aisha, the mother of believers (May Allah be pleased with her). In Sahihain (al-Bukhari and Muslim), it is narrated that Safiya bint Huyai visited Allah's Prophet (PBUH) in the mosque while he was in I'tikaf. She had a talk with him for a while, then she got up in order to return home while it was night. The Prophet (PBUH) accompanied her. When they reached the gate of the mosque, opposite the door of Um-Salama, two Ansari met them and passed by them in a hurry, and in another narration: for they were shy to bother the Prophet while he was walking with his wife. He told them: Do not run away! And said, "She is Safiya bint Huyai. That is: Do not hurry up! she is (my wife) Safiya bint Huyai, i.e. my wife. Both of them said: Subhan Allah, (How dare we think of any evil). The Prophet said: "Satan reaches everywhere in the human body as blood reaches in it, (everywhere in one's body). I was afraid lest Satan might insert something thought in your minds." or he said insert "something bad". Al-Shafi'i (May Allah bless his soul) said: The Prophet (PBUH) wanted to teach Muslims that it is important to remove any potential suspicions at once, although the two Ansari men would never think of anything bad about the Prophet (PBUH). And Allah knows better, see: Tafsir ibn Kathir, (1/510).

⁽¹⁾Surah Al-Baqara, verse: 125. When a person performs I'tikâf on something; this means that he/she stays at it. As **Al-Nabigha Al-Dhubiyani said**, said, see: Diwan al-Nabigha al-Dhubiyani (Works of al-Nabigha al-Dhubiyani), p. 63.

⁽²⁾Surah Al-Hajj, verse: 25. As for Allah's saying: (We have appointed for mankind, equal in respect thereunto are the dweller therein and the stranger) means: Those who prevent people from reaching al-Masjid al-Ḥarām, although Allah has made (open) to (all) men, equal is the dweller there and those from remote countries, and this implies that people dwelling throughout Mecca are equal, as Ali ibn abi-Talha narrated that Ibn Abbas said regarding Allah's saying: (equal in respect thereunto are the dweller therein and the stranger); he said: The people of Mecca and other people may stay in al-Masjid al-Ḥarām. Moreover, Mejahid said regarding Allah's saying: (equal in respect thereunto are the dweller therein and the stranger), that this means that the people of Mecca and other people are equal in ranks regarding staying in al-Masjid al-Ḥarām. Likewise, Abu Saleh, Abdul Rahman bin Sabit, and Abdul Rahman bin Zaid bin Aslam said the same; and Abdul Razzaq also said the same, on the authority of Muammar, on the authority of Qatadah: Those dwelling therein and those dwelling elsewhere are equal, see: Tafsir ibn Kathir, (18/596).

II: Scholars' Views on "Seclusion"

Supporters of Seclusion:

Those who supported seclusion argued with what Imam al-Bukhari narrated from Aisha (May Allah be pleased with her), saying: "The commencement of the Divine Inspiration to Allah's Messenger (PBUH) was in the form of good dreams which came true like bright daylight, and then the love of seclusion was bestowed upon him. He used to go in seclusion in the cave of Hira where he used to worship (Allah alone) continuously for many days ..." ⁽¹⁾.

In his book *The Revival of the Sciences of Religion*, Al Ghazali reported many views that support seclusion, including Ibn Sirin's saying: "Seclusion is a worship" and the saying of Omar Ibn Al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him): "Have some time of seclusion", and Al-Fudail's saying: "Allah suffices as a Lover, Qur'aan as a partner, death as admonition", and it is said that Saad Ibn Abi Waqqas and Saeed Ibn Zaid stayed at their homes and did not leave if for Friday prayers or otherwise until they died. Moreover, it is reported that Bishr Ibn Abdullah said: "Know less people, because you do not know what will happen on the Day of Resurrection, so that if it will be a scandal, you will be known by less people", and that Ibn Abbas (May Allah be pleased with him) said: "The best place for you is your house, where you see no one and no one sees you" and Al-Fudail said; "The silliness of the person's mind is proven by his many acquaintances" ⁽²⁾.

These are some of the sayings that Al Ghazali reported in his book from some scholars. Al Ghazali himself says about seclusion: "'In these seclusions, countless benefits were revealed to me. I knew for sure that the Sufis are the best on the path to Allah, they have the best tradition and approach and the most virtuous morals. I can say the even if the most rational people, the wisest and the most knowledgeable scholars would agree to change any of the Sufis' tradition or manners and replace them with something better, they cannot find anything better, because everything the Sufis do is learnt from the light of the niche of prophethood. It is only from that niche that enlightenment can be found on the face of this earth" ⁽³⁾.

Al Ghazali was not the only scholar who supported seclusion in his writings. Rather, we find many of the Sufi and non-Sufi scholars who support seclusion and refer to their benefits for Muslims. Ibn Arabi,

⁽¹⁾al-Bukhari, Mohammed Ibn Ismail, Sahih al-Bukhari, Revelation Book "How Did the Revelation to the Prophet (PBUH) Started", Hadith No. (3)+ al-Asqalani, Ibn Hajar. (2005). Fath al-Bārī: Commentary on Sahih al-Bukhārī, ibid, p. 22.

⁽²⁾Al Ghazali, Abu Hamid, (1988). *The Revival of the Sciences of Religion*. Ibid. p. 687-688.

⁽³⁾Al Ghazali, Abu Hamid, . (1981). *Al-munqiz min al-dalal* (Deliverance from Error) Egypt: Dar al-Kutb al-Hadithah. Ed. 1. p. 131-132.

for example, advises the Muslim has acquired some of the secrets of existence to adhere to seclusion until Allah grants him knowledge and reveals more secrets to him ⁽¹⁾. Abu Yazid Al-Bustami also explains the source of the knowledge they have, saying: "You received your knowledge from the mortals, and we received our knowledge from Allah, the Immortal and the Eternal". Hence, people of ambition can acquire - in their seclusion with Allah Almighty - of knowledge what cannot be acquired by any other person is not in this state"⁽²⁾.

Sheikh Muhammad Al-Safarini explains that people praised this attitude so much; some of them says: When I enjoyed my solitude and stayed home, I became in lasting pleasure and happiness ⁽³⁾.

About the importance of seclusion for the heart, it is said: "Heart looks like stomach; if it is filled with tough mixes it becomes sick and requires a diet represented in reducing the amounts of food and reducing such mixes. The heart is likewise; if it is filled with too much thoughts and senses, it becomes sick and may die; and it needs to escape from such mixes. Thus, if the person turns away from people and secludes for thinking, his heart will be purified. Otherwise, his heart will remain sick until he meets Allah with a heart sick of suspicion and bad thoughts. We seeks Allah's protection"⁽⁴⁾.

The scholars who preferred seclusion to dealing with people argued with some proofs from Qur'an and Sunnah, including Allah's saying: "And I will turn away from you (all) and from those whom ye invoke besides Allah "⁽⁵⁾, and Allah's saying: "If ye believe me, not at least keep yourselves away from me."⁽⁶⁾, and in Surah Al-Kahf: "When ye turn away from them and the things they worship other than Allah"⁽⁷⁾.

The scholars who adopt this view supports their opinion by the Prophet's saying - when he was asked: O Prophet of Allah! What is the means to salvation? The Prophet said: "That you suffice yourself your house, control your tongue, and cry over your sins" ⁽⁸⁾.

(¹) Ibn Arabi, Mohi Al-Din. (1985). *Al Futuhāt Al Makkiyya*. Cairo: General Egyptian Book Organization. Vol. 1, p. 31.

(²) Ibid, p. (31).

(³) Al-Safarini, Muhammad Ibn Ahmed. (1996). *Ghidza' Al-Albab Fi Syarh Manzhumat Al-Adab* (The Food of Minds and an Explanation of the Literary Anthology). Beirut: Dar Al-Kotob Al-Ilmiyah, Vol. 2. Ed. 1., Vol. 2. p. 388.

(⁴) Ibn Ajiba, Ahmed bin Mohammed. (1919). *Īqāz al-himam fī sharḥ al-Ḥikam*. Cairo: Dar al-Maarif. Vol. 1, p. 30

(⁵) Surah Maryam, verse: (48).

(⁶) Surah Ad-Dukhan, verse: (21).

(⁷) Surah Al-Kahf, verse: (61).

(⁸) at-Tirmidhi, Mohammed bin Eisa, Sunan at-Tirmidhi, Hadith No. (2406), and he graded it as Hadith Hasan (good Hadith). See: Al-Makki, Muhammad bin Allan. (2017). *Dalīl al-fāliḥīn li-ṭuruq Riyāḍ al-sāliḥīn*, Vol. 4, Beirut: Dar Al-Kotob Al-Ilmiyah, p. 300.

Opponents of Seclusion:

As for those who opposed seclusion, they argue that it is not part of Islam, and that Islam disapproved it. They provided some proofs from Quran and Sunnah. Imam Al-Ghazali referred to such proofs and refuted them.

They argued with Allah's saying: Be not like those who are divided amongst themselves and fall into disputations"⁽¹⁾. However, Al Ghazali says that

this argument is not convincing, because the meaning of the verse is the difference in the sects and opinions regarding the meanings of the Qur'an and the principles of Sharia, and it does not disapprove seclusion⁽²⁾.

Moreover, the supporters of such view argue with the Prophet's saying: " "Whoever disapproves of something done by his ruler then he should be patient, for whoever becomes separate from the company of the Muslims even a little will die as those who died in the Pre-Islamic Period of Ignorance (i.e. as rebellious Sinners)"⁽³⁾. Al Ghazali explains that this argument is not sound as well, as the intended meaning is separation from the company of the Muslims that agreed to a ruler under a Bay'ah (Pledge of allegiance), and this is irrelevant to seclusion⁽⁴⁾.

The supporters of such view argue with the Prophet's saying: "The believer befriends and is befriended. There is no good in those who do not befriend or be befriended"⁽⁵⁾. However, this inference is not sound in this regard, because the said Hadith implies the denunciation of bad manners that results in non-harmony, and this does not apply with seclusion in its recognized meaning⁽⁶⁾.

They also argued that the Prophet (PBUH) forbade abandonment more than once. He (PBUH) said: "Whosoever abandons his (Muslim) brother for more than three days, and then dies, will certainly enter the Hell"⁽⁷⁾.

⁽¹⁾AL-Imran Surah, Verse: (105).

⁽²⁾Al Ghazali, Abu Hamid, (1988). The Revival of the Sciences of Religion, *ibid*, p. 688.

⁽³⁾ al-Bukhārī, Sahih al-Bukhārī, Book of Afflictions, Hadith No. 6682, and see: Al Zubaidi, Mohammed bin Mohammed. (1994). Entertaining the Pious Gentlemen by Explaining the Revival of the Sciences of Religion, Vol. 7, Beirut: Dar Al-Kotob Al-Ilmiyah p. 325.

⁽⁴⁾Al Ghazali, Abu Hamid, (1988). The Revival of the Sciences of Religion, *ibid*, p. 688.

⁽⁵⁾ al-Nishapuri, Abu Abdullah Mohammed. (1990). al-Mustadrak 'alā al-Ṣaḥīḥayn, Vol. 1, Beirut: Dar Al-Kotob Al-Ilmiyah, p. 73.

⁽⁶⁾Al Ghazali, Abu Hamid, . (1988). The Revival of the Sciences of Religion. *Ibid*. p. 688.

⁽⁷⁾ al-Siğistānī, Abu Dāwūd Sulaymān. (1996). Sunan Abu Dawood, Vol. 3, Beirut: Dar Al-Kotob Al-Ilmiyah, p. 284.

And the Prophet's saying: "Whoever abandons his (Muslim) brother for one year, it is sinful as if he sheds his blood"⁽¹⁾. Based on the foregoing Hadiths, the opponents of seclusion denied it and considered the same as complete abandonment. However, the said Hadiths is about to such kind of abandonment that is associated with being angry of people, so they do not apply to turning away from people without having anger against them⁽²⁾.

They also argued with the narration that when a man - who wanted to isolate himself on a mountain to worship Allah - was brought to the Prophet (PBUH), the Prophet said: "Do not do that. Your patience regarding some issues of Islam is better than worshipping Allah alone for forty years"⁽³⁾. However, Imam Al Ghazali explains that this Hadith is intended for not leaving Jihad in the way of Allah⁽⁴⁾.

Based on the above, we find that the Muslim scholars have found it difficult to determine the definitive opinion on that issue, because both sides support their point of view by Islamic evidence from the Qur'an and Sunnah, but we tend to adopt the saying that supports seclusion with the Islamic guidelines, because of the soundness of the evidence of this side and not being opposed, and due to the fact that the evidence of the opponents was not free from opposition and criticism with regard to the grounds of their reasoning that seemed weak, and Allah knows the best.

Orientalists' Views:

Many orientalists were preoccupied with talking about Sufism, so many Orientalist studies had been written on Sufism and Sufis. Some of the orientalists who addressed this issue addressed also the issue of seclusions, as it is one of the important Sufi rituals. Most of the orientalists' views were confined to linking the Sufi seclusion to Christian religious traditions. For example, we find the Orientalist (Massithon) justifying the departure of (Al-Hallaj) to Mecca to perform his seclusion there, by saying that he wanted to follow a Christian method in his preaching "Da'wa" and asceticism, and that he was trying to be the same as the Virgin Mary and the Jesus Christ⁽⁵⁾. In this regard, he says: "Al-Hallaj in Makkah was imitating Maryam Bint 'Imran, and he was preparing himself to be the word of Allah"⁽⁶⁾.

On the other hand, we find that some orientalists who study the Islamic mysticism "Tasawwuf, are denying any connection that link it with Christianity, and linking seclusions with monasticism, one of those orientalists is Dr. (Lings).

(¹)Reported by Abu Dāwūd from the Hadith narrated by Abi Kharash Al-Salami, Ibid, p. 284.

(²)Al Ghazali, Abu Hamid, . (1988). The Revival of the Sciences of Religion, ibid, p. 688-689.

(³)Reported by al-Baihaqi from the Hadith narrated by 'As'as bin Salama, Hadith No. 2078, see: Al Zubaidi, Mohammed bin Mohammed. (1994). Entertaining the Pious Gentlemen by Explaining the Revival of the Sciences of Religion, ibid, p. 267.

(⁴)Al Ghazali, Abu Hamid, . (1988). The Revival of the Sciences of Religion, ibid,p. 689.

(⁵) Zakaria, Hashim Zakaria. (1995). The Orientalists and Islam, Islam Presentation Committee, Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs. p. 242.

(⁶) Ibid, p. 454.

The orientalist “Martin Lings belongs to a school of orientalists who entered Islam with conviction and after a deep study and long scientific research in the field of Islamism “Islamiat”. His embracing Islam was not an conversion from Christianity. The Orientalist Martin Lings was born in Bronage, England in 1909 AD, graduated from Oxford University in the year 1932 AD, in English literature, and he taught intermediate English at Kaunas University in Lithuania, and he converted to Islam early when he was twenty-nine years old in 1938 AD, and he called himself Sheikh Abū Bakr Sirāj ad-Dīn ⁽¹⁾.

In sum: The issue of seclusions as a means of education is one of the issues that have raised a lot of controversies among the Arab Muslim scholars and among the orientalists as well. Therefore, there are many supporting and opposing writings and views on this issue. In all cases, there is no doubt that seclusion is an essential part of Islam. It is a life approach through which the Muslim can reach the highest degrees and become closer to Allah Almighty.

Third Topic

Seclusion as a Means of Education

If we contemplate the meaning of “seclusion”, it can be defined as follows: “A state of turning away from people for a period of time, during which the person secludes, keeps away from worldly works and devotes himself to saying Dhikr (remembrance of Allah) with a heart free of worries...”⁽²⁾; thus, it does not differ so much from the meaning of I’tikaaf, which can be defined as follows: “Staying for a long time in the mosque for worshipping Allah Almighty”⁽³⁾, as both is based on two main things: Turning away from people and staying in the mosque to remember Allah Almighty. In this regard, it shall be clarified that sometimes the orientalists’ point of view about seclusion contradict with the reality, as the orientalists think that seclusion requires the isolation of the ascetic in caves or dark rooms in all circumstances, but this belief is not correct in all cases, due to the fact that seclusion may be through devotion to worship Allah in the mosque, or anywhere, even if in the home, as long as it fulfills the meaning of seclusion, which is the isolation and devotion to worship Allah Almighty, and it may be in an isolated place as a treatment for some conditions, as mentioned by Imam Al Ghazali. The methods of

(¹) Murad, Ahmed. (2013). Martin Lings .. The author of the best book in *al-Sīrah an-Nabawiyyah* (prophetic biography), Al Ittihad Magazine, available on the following link:
<https://www.alittihad.ae/article/70959/2013/%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%AA%D9%86-%D9%84%D9%86%D8%AC%D8%B2--%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%AD%D8%A8-%D8%A3%D9%81%D8%B6%D9%84-%D9%83%D8%AA%D8%A7%D8%A8-%D8%B9%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D8%A8%D9%88%D9%8A%D8%A9>

(²)Raies, Hussain Ali. (2009). Seclusion in the Islamic Sufi Thought. Ibid, p. 6.

(³) Al-Khudair. Abdulkarim. (2019). The Provisions of Fasting, Night Prayer, I’tikaaf and Zakat Al-Fitr, Riyadh: Dar Al Watan Publishing. Ed. 1. p. 79.

fulfilling seclusion are to be determined by the surrounding circumstances and nature, and according to the circumstances of each society, as long as it achieves its purpose⁽¹⁾.

Seclusion is considered to be one of the very important matters in the Muslim's life, so no matter how a Muslim is a worshiper, he shall seclude with himself in order to judge it "Soul-judging", and think about the creations of Allah Almighty and the indications of His greatness. If seclusion is of a great importance in the Muslim's life, then it shall be more important for the preacher "Da'ei", as it leads to the abandonment of some soul-evils that can only be abandoned by seclusion, such as hypocrisy, arrogance and envy. Seclusion is considered a cure for all of these evils. Seclusion helps the Muslim to contemplate the weakness and true fact of his soul and the extent to which it needs the Allah Almighty's care and success. Seclusion makes the hearts revive with the light of gratitude, as it strengthens the love of Allah in the heart, and this love is the basis of every sound vocation (Da'wa). Such love does not come from mere mental faith only, due to its weak influence on hearts, and if it has a great influence on the hearts, the orientalists would have been from the first to believe in Allah, and their hearts would overflow with his love. It is necessary to know that the way to possess such love is to believe in Allah then faith is the excessive thinking and contemplation of Allah's greatness and a lot of remembrance of Him by the heart and tongue, which is only can be achieved by seclusion, that is the best and great way, through which ones can achieve the same unlike the mere rational understanding. Al-Shatibi distinguished between the ordinary Muslims and true Muslims, so the ordinary ones are those who carry out and perform the yoke of worships "ibadat" motivated by the general nature of being Muslims, while the true ones are those who carry out and perform worships with a motive that is stronger than mere thinking and understanding. Muslims have unanimously agreed to take the means to achieve these emotional motives, and the majority of scholars call it Sufism "Tasawuf", while some call it the science of behavior, and some call it perfection "Ihsan". The seclusion of the Prophet (PBUH) was a means of achieving the same motives. The meaning of seclusion cannot be understood to go caves and mountains and be away from people, because it is contrary to the guidance of the Prophet (PBUH), and medicine is to be taken by a measure, otherwise, it may turn into a disease. If you see some of the righteous "Salheen" doing it, then this is due to a special case, and their action is not an evidence against all the human being⁽²⁾.

Seclusion leads to closing the gates of sensation, freezing body movements, and keeping a person away from the temptations that cause him to be headless. Seclusion also leads the person to renounce the world, and to be prepared for the mercy of Allah Almighty to descend upon him. Imam Al Ghazali defined seclusion by saying: "As for seclusion, its benefit is that it leads to the removal of concerns and the control of hearing and seeing, and this can only be achieved by seclusion in a dark house, so the person must wrap his head in his collar or be wrapped in a cloth or a garment, in such a case he hears

(¹) Ibn Sayyed Ali, Sayyed Nour. (2008). *Islamic Sufism That Many Imposters and Opponents Don't Know*. Beirut: Dar Al-Kotob Al-Ilmiyah. p. 87.

(²) Al Faqir, Noah Mostafa. (2013). *alla'la' almnirah fi ththib alsirah*, Ed. 2, Amman: Amwaj for Printing, Publishing & Distribution, p. 25.

the call of truth and witnesses the majesty of the Godhead “Hadra”⁽¹⁾, Seclusion may be a remedy in some cases, and this is not at all as the late Sufis see, but rather they left the affairs of isolation and seclusion to the present circumstances and natures⁽²⁾.

Abu al-Hassan al-Shazli said that the benefits of seclusion include enabling the Murid to take advantage of the *Mawahib* (grants) of Approach, which are four as follows: Having the truth revealed, mercy bestowed, love realized, in addition to honorable mention⁽³⁾. Seclusion for the Sufis is a way to receive knowledge from Allah and attain divine disclosures, as inspiration is considered as a source of reception for the Sufis

The Sufis argue with the Hadith of the seclusion of the Prophet(PBUH)⁽⁴⁾ for the prescription of seclusion in Islam. In this regard, Al Futi says: “The Hadith of the start of revelation to the Prophet

⁽¹⁾Al Ghazali, Abu Hamid, (1988). *The Revival of the Sciences of Religion*, ibid.

⁽²⁾Ibn Sayyed Ali, Sayyed Nour. (2008). *Islamic Sufism That Many Imposters and Opponents Don't Know*, ibid, p. 87.

⁽³⁾Eisa, Abdul Qader. (2001). *Facts about Sufism*, Dar Al Irfan for Printing & Publishing, Agadir, p. 133.

⁽⁴⁾This Hadith is narrated by Imam al-Bukhārī from Aisha (May Allah be pleased with her): “The commencement of the Divine Inspiration to Allah's Messenger (PBUH) was in the form of good dreams which came true like bright daylight, and then the love of seclusion was bestowed upon him. He used to go in seclusion in the cave of Hira where he used to worship (Allah alone) continuously for many days before his desire to see his family. He used to take with him the journey food for the stay and then come back to (his wife) Khadija to take his food likewise again till suddenly the Truth descended upon him while he was in the cave of Hira. The angel came to him and asked him to read. The Prophet (PBUH) replied, "I do not know how to read." The Prophet (PBUH) added, "The angel caught me (forcefully) and pressed me so hard that I could not bear it any more. He then released me and again asked me to read and I replied, 'I do not know how to read.' Thereupon he caught me again and pressed me a second time till I could not bear it any more. He then released me and again asked me to read but again I replied, 'I do not know how to read (or what shall I read)?' Thereupon he caught me for the third time and pressed me, and then released me and said, 'Read in the name of your Lord, who has created (all that exists), created man from a clot. Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous.'" (96.1, 96.2, 96.3) Then Allah's Messenger (PBUH) returned with the Inspiration and with his heart beating severely. Then he went to Khadija bint Khuwailid and said, "Cover me! Cover me!" They covered him till his fear was over and after that he told her everything that had happened and said, "I fear that something may happen to me." Khadija replied, "Never! By Allah, Allah will never disgrace you. You keep good relations with your kith and kin, help the poor and the destitute, serve your guests generously and assist the deserving calamity-afflicted ones." Khadija then accompanied him to her cousin Waraqa bin Naufal bin Asad bin 'Abdul 'Uzza, who, during the pre-Islamic Period became a Christian and used to write the writing with Hebrew letters. He would write from the Gospel in Hebrew as much as Allah wished him to write. He was an old man and had lost his eyesight. Khadija said to Waraqa, "Listen to the story of your nephew, O my cousin!" Waraqa asked, "O my nephew! What have you seen?" Allah's Messenger (PBUH) described whatever he had seen. Waraqa said, "This is the same one who keeps the secrets (angel Gabriel) whom Allah had sent to Moses. I wish I were young and could live up to the time when your people would turn you out." Allah's Messenger (PBUH) asked, "Will they drive me out?" Waraqa replied in the affirmative and said, "Anyone (man) who came with something similar to what you have brought was treated with hostility; and if I should remain alive till the day when you will be turned out then I would support you strongly." But after a few days Waraqa died and the Divine Inspiration was also paused for a while". Revelation Book “How Did the Revelation to the Prophet (PBUH) Started”, Hadith No. (3)

(PBUH) is the Sufi's main argument for supporting Khalwah (seclusion) for the Murids"(1), and we do not disagree with them in this regard. Rather, we disagree with them regarding how to perform seclusion. There is a big difference between the seclusion referred to in this Hadith and between the Sufi seclusion. They are not similar at all. The love of seclusion that was bestowed by Allah Almighty upon the Prophet (PBUH) was intended for preparing the Prophet (PBUH) to convey the mission of Islam; further, such seclusion was performed by the Prophet (PBUH) before he was commanded to convey the mission. (2).

Based on the above, it becomes clear to us that the legitimate "Shari'" seclusion is the same meaning and practice of i'tikaaf "a period of private devotion in a mosque", so adhering to the ethics and etiquette of i'tikaaf while being in seclusion is essentially i'tikaaf, and the Muslim's stay in the mosque for worship only with the intention of i'tikaaf is i'tikaaf in itself,. It shall be noted that seclusion from the non-Sufi scholars' point of view is different from seclusion from the Sufis' point of view in some matters. Despite the fact that the objective behind seclusion from the point of view of Muslim Sufi scholars and others is to discipline the soul and educate it in obedience to Allah and worshiping him, which is indisputable. The difference lies in the conditions that the Sufism set in their seclusion of some things as a completion of all meanings of i'tikaaf, such as refraining from speaking and dealing with people. The evidence of such claim that the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) used to engage himself in I'tikaf (seclusion for prayers) in the mosque during the last ten nights of Ramadan(3)till he passed away; thereafter, his wives followed this practice after him⁽⁴⁾. Further, the mother of the believers, Aisha (may God be pleased with her), used to comb the hair of the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) while he was in i'tikaaf⁽⁵⁾, and here is no harm with some of his companions visiting him, and the evidence for that saying is that the wives of the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) used to visit him and talk to him, and the mother of the believers, Safiyya (May Allah be pleased with her) once visited him while he was engaging in i'tikaaf in Ramadan, and when she was to leave he go with

(1)'Arjoun, Mohammed al-Sadiq. (1995). Muhammad, the Prophet of Allah - the Approach and Mission. Damascus Dar Al-Qalam, Damascus, Ed. 1. p. 470.

(2) Al-Awaji, Ghalib bin Ali. (2001). Contemporary Sects Affiliated with Islam and Islam's Position Regarding Them. Ibid, 948 -949.

(3)Abdullah Ibn Omar (May Allah be pleased with them both) narrated: "Prophet (PBUH) used to perform I'tikaf during the last ten days of Ramadan" al-Bukhārī, Mohammed Ibn Ismail, Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, **2/713 Hadith No. 1922**

(4)Aisha (May Allah be pleased with her), the wife of the Prophet (PBUH) narrated that the Prophet (PBUH) used to perform I'tikaf during the last ten days of Ramadan until he died. Then his wives used to perform I'tikaf after his death. al-Bukhārī, Book: I'tikaf, Chapter: I'tikaf (Seclusion in the Mosque) During the Last Ten Days of Ramadan, Hadith No. (1922).

⁽¹⁾Aisha (May Allah be pleased with her) narrated: "The Prophet (PBUH) used to bend his head to me while he was in I'tikaf in the mosque and I would comb and oil his hair during my monthly periods." al-Bukhārī, I'tikaf Book, Chapter: A menstruating woman is permitted to comb the hair of a man in I'tikaf. Hadith No. (1924).

her to the door of the mosque(1), which indicates that there is no harm with that(2), and rather there is no harm with the one who is performing I'tikaf to visit some of his companion, if necessary, which was evident by the fact that the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) used to enter his house while he was performing i'tikaaf, but when necessary(3). Based on the above seclusion was made as a means for i'tikaaf, as Sufis adopted it to discipline the soul, and repent to Allah Almighty, especially in a time when there are many afflictions and major sins.

CONCLUSION

The topic of seclusion "khulwah" is considered one of the most important topics discussed by the orientalist, and it has aroused the interest of a large number of them as a psychological treatment. The adoption of Sufi methods for it by performing seclusion to its proper Shari' aspect, which is very close to the meaning of i'tikaaf, had helped them in research in this area. Shari' seclusion differs greatly from the meaning and concept of seclusion in the other religions. Despite the fact that the objective behind seclusion is to discipline the soul and train it to the obedience to Allah and the worship of Him, some religions have misunderstood and used it as monasticism in Christianity. Seclusion is a means of i'tikaaf and education from the point of view of the Sunnis "Ahlu Sunnah Wal Jama'a".

STUDY FINDINGS

The most important findings of the research:

- 1) Seclusion have many types, some of which were used in religious matters, such as Sufi seclusion, and some were used for curative purposes, for restraint and obtain emotional stability ...etc.
- 2) Sufi seclusions are similar in their conditions and the way of its performance with some acts of worship in other religions, especially Christianity.

(¹) Ali Ibn Al Hussain (May Allah be pleased with them both) narrated that Safiya, the wife of the Prophet (PBUH) told him that she went to Allah's Prophet (PBUH) to visit him in the mosque while he was in I'tikaf in the last ten days of Ramadan. She had a talk with him for a while, then she got up in order to return home. The Prophet (PBUH) accompanied her. When they reached the gate of the mosque, opposite the door of Um-Salama, two Ansari men were passing by and they greeted Allah's Prophet. He told them: Do not run away! And said, "She is (my wife) Safiya bint Huyai." Both of them said, "Subhan Allah, (How dare we think of any evil) O Allah's Prophet (PBUH)!" And they felt it. The Prophet said (to them): Satan reaches everywhere in the human body as blood reaches in it, (everywhere in one's body). I was afraid lest Satan might insert an evil thought in your minds. al-Bukhārī, I'tikaf Book, Chapter: Mu'takif going to the gate of the mosque. Hadith No. (1930).

(2) Ibn Baz, Abdul-Aziz Bin Abdullah. (2000). A Collection of Various Fatwas and Articles, Vol. 15, Dar Al Qassim Publishing, Riyadh, p. 441.

(3) On the authority of Urwa and Umrah bint Abdul Rahman, that Aisha (May Allah be pleased with her), the wife of the Prophet (PBUH), narrated: "The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) used to put his head into (the window of my house) while he was in the mosque (performing I'tikaf) and I would comb his hair. When he was in I'tikaf, he would not enter the house except for some need." Hadith No. (1925)

- 3) The Sufi sheikhs set many conditions for seclusion, and there were many types of seclusion in their sect according to the duration of the seclusion, the type and number of remembrance “Dhikr”.
- 4) The effects of these seclusions varied between positive benefits and negative harms.
- 5) The views of the scholars differed regarding seclusion. Some of them support it while the other oppose it, and their opinions were varied, and we consider the first saying that supports seclusion with the religious guidelines, taken into account that seclusion is a means of education and being closer to Allah, and that it takes place for a period and then the Muslim leaves after that and returns to his community to participate in the life various activities after being provided with a card Positive motivation from the seclusion.
- 6) There were many books and references that talked about seclusion, which varies between books that opposed it, and books that supported it, most of which were the works of Sufi scholars, and the books of orientalists who wrote about this issue.

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