

MY PLANS FOR THIS RAMADAN By Ayub Hamid

I would like to share with you a simple sample plan which I have been following over the years so that you can use for that purpose:

This Ramadaan, I shall start with establishing a close relationship with the Qur'aan. I will give the top priority to knowing and understanding the contents and message of the Qur'aan. I will recite and study the Qur'aan with translation and tafseer regularly and steadily throughout the month, inshaa'Allaahu, from a good, authentic translation and tafseer by a reputed scholar. From the start and right to the end of Ramadaan, I will not sleep after Fajr, but instead study the Qur'aan until I am ready to go to school or work. Throughout the day, I will find time to revise and re-learn the Soorahs and Aayaat I already know. Once that is completed, I will learn at least one Aayah a day from a Soorah that I do not already know. This Ramadaan, I will sleep early, soon after Taraweeh Salaah. I will go to bed with clear and conscious intention of fasting the next day, as well as with the intention of getting up early for Tahajjud. Then, while remembering Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aala, I will fall asleep. I will get up well before Suhoor time, thanking Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aala for giving me life, offer Tahajjud and then make special Du'a for the mercy of Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aala on our Ummah, Allah Ta'aala's help for its success and well being, and Allah Ta'aala's interference to foil the plans of Shaytaan. I will also make special Du'a that Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aala protects this Ummah, my loved ones and me from the Dajjal and his Fitnah.

For the month of Ramadaan, I will not watch TV at all, with a view of kicking this habit completely. My knowing of what is shown in the news does not affect any affairs of the world. Watching the news causes only frustration, despair and anxiety. If I do not watch for a month, it will not have any impact either on me, this Ummah or the world at large. I would rather spend the month on my personal improvement, personal spirituality and building a close, personal relationship with Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aala, rather than on an activity where I cannot make any difference. (Unless I am one of those few Muslims who write letters, articles / anchors, paper editors / columnists, politicians and media in general to make Islamic points or to stand up for the Ummah. If I am one of those, I should continue this Jihaad in Ramadaan). While fasting, I will make a special effort to speak only to add value and to say only what is true, factual, positive, meaningful and useful. When I do not have anything good and useful to talk about, instead of saying anything else, I will remember Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aala through the beautiful words taught by our Prophet Sal-Allaahu alayhi wa sallaam, while paying attention to their meanings and feeling the impact of the words on my heart, my mind, my thoughts and my attitude. Or, if I do not know them, I will learn those words of remembrance or prayer. Or, I will spend those moments to recite the portions of the Qur'aan that I know or learning those I do not.

I will not lend my ears to anything that is useless, indecent, negative, spiteful or inappropriate. In my car, I will listen to the Qur'aan or some good speech of a reputed scholar. At my computer I would repeat the same piece over and over again, I will use it to help me learn a few verses or a Soorah. Similarly, while riding the transit or subway, I will use my pocket-sized Qur'aan or book of Prophet Sal-Allaahu alayhi wa sallaam's adi'yah (plural for du'a) to recite, practise or revise those I know or to learn those I do not know.

This Ramadaan, I will particularly watch my gaze. While glancing on a member of opposite sex, I will move my gaze away before I start evaluating or assessing the attractive features of looks, appearance or personality or before I start paying attention to or begin enjoying those attractions.

I will not participate or listen to the comments of illicit nature that my colleagues, peers or friends make. While remembering Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aala in many other ways, I will more frequently ask for Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aala's mercy in the first 10 days of Ramaadan (Yaa Hayyu Yaa Qayyoomu, bi-rahmatika astagheethu), invoke Allaah's forgiveness in the second 10 days (astaghfirullaah-al-Azeem-alladzi laa ilaaha illaa Huwa-al Hayyu-l-Qayyoomu wa atoobu ilayh) and seek salvation from the Fire in the last 10 days (Rabbanaa aatinaa fi-ddunyaa hasanatanwa fil-aakhirati hasanatanwa qinaa adzaab-annaar). During the last ten nights, I will frequently make the Du'a: Allaahumma innaka 'afuwwun, tuhibbul 'afwa, fa'fu 'annee.

This Ramadaan, I will be exceptionally charitable. The tears that fill my eyes when I see the scenes of devastation, disease, starvation, agony, displacement, killings, blown up bodies and severed limbs of poor, helpless people of Afghanistan, Palestine, Iraq, Chechnya and Kashmir will ameliorate my heart and open my purse. I will send all my Zakaah to them right at the beginning of Ramadaan through trustworthy Islamic charities.

In addition to my Zakaah, I will pay whatever I can spare from my family's necessities for helping those in dire need. If I have been paying my Zakaah to my relatives, this Ramadaan, I will help my relatives from my other savings and resources, so that I can pay Zakaah to the victims of state terrorism. I will avoid spending money on my home decoration or getting new clothes for Eid or buying more video games and toys for my children, so that those who are in more need than me and my family can be helped. I will even pay my Fitrah very early in Ramadaan so that it can reach those displaced from their homes before the severity of winter.

Also this Ramadaan, I will be generous and forgiving to my family, friends and the Muslim community at large. I will clear my heart from anger complaints, suspicion, jealousy, grudges or dislike against any of them. I will be extra kind, accommodating, courteous, supportive and helpful to my non-Muslims neighbours and colleagues. I will find ways to have them participate in the blessings of Ramadaan and happiness of Eid by sharing my food specialties with them or giving gifts and chocolates to them. This Ramadaan, I am going to take my vacations in its last 10 days, so that the precious opportunity offered by those days can be fully utilized for developing my spiritual relationship with Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aala. I will kick at least one of my bad habits such as arriving late for appointments or breaking promises. I will show up or do what I indicate I will do and I will show up or do so on time.

If I am a smoker, this Ramadaan, I will not smoke even after Iftaar, before Suhoor or at night. I will keep my mouth odour free for prayers and Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aala 's remembrance and my lungs, blood and heart from disease. For my studies, I will keep timings that are consistent with the spirit of Ramadaan, i.e. sleep early and get up very early. Instead of staying up late at the risk of missing Suhoor or Fajr, I will adjust my body clock to Islamic lifestyle instead of the western lifestyle. When I get up to study at 2 or 3 a.m., I will start with two Raka'at of Tahajjud and then continue with my studies. After Fajr, I will still spend 15-20 minutes on the study of Tafseer and recitation of Qur'an every day.

If we succeed this Ramadaan in living as planned above, we will be able to look back and rejoice and feel inner joy and true happiness knowing that our Eid day will be the day of celebrating rewards from Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala.