

# This Ramadan, I will ...

A personal plan for the month of Ramadan - By Wael Hamza

**A** very important set of questions comes to my mind every time I hear the hadith of the Prophet (pbuh) in which he said, "The month of Ramadan has come to you, a blessed month ..." Were the several months of Ramadan I went through in my life blessed months? What kind of blessings did they bring to my life and how did they do so?" The more important and more relevant question is, "How can I make this upcoming month of Ramadan a blessed month for me and for those around me?" I know that the Prophet said that Allah sets some people free from the hellfire in every single night in Ramadan. Was I set free at

Trying to answer these questions, I realized that Allah does not choose people randomly for these blessings. I am sure He does not set people free based on their gender, race, or wealth. I am of the belief that the great night of Al-Qadr is a gift Allah gives to some people who show some effort during the month and probably throughout the year. The most important question is how can I make myself subject to all these blessings? How can I make this upcoming Ramadan a real change in my life? In the article, I am sharing with you my personal plan in getting the maximum out of this upcoming Ramadan for it may be the last Ramadan I ever experience.

## What if I do not plan?

You may ask, what if I don't plan for this month? The answer lies in the following few lines. One should understand that the month of Ramadan is a month of preparation for the whole year. It is a strong boost to our level of Iman that will help us move throughout the rest of the year. Missing Ramadan one year is as if we missed preparation for this whole year. Missing many Ramadans is as if we missed a portion of our life. Missing Ramadan throughout our life is as if we missed our whole life. The Prophet (pbuh) was once climbing his three-step minbar, the place he used to stand on to give speech, where he said *Amin* each time he climbs a step. When asked by his companions about why he said so, he mentioned that Jibril

came to him and made three supplications and asked him to say *Amin*, confirming and joining him in these supplications. One of these three supplications was "May Allah humiliate he who reaches Ramadan and did not get his sins forgiven."

any of these numerous nights I went through in the past Ramadans? Am I going to be chosen to be set free in one of the nights of this upcoming Ramadan? I know that there is a night in the last ten days called the night of Al-Qadr that is better than a thousand months. Again, I ask myself, "Did I ever worship Allah in this night and gain the tremendous reward mentioned by Allah and his Messenger?"



## What is so special about Ramadan?

In the month of Ramadan, one can make all sorts of acts of worship and obedience to Allah (swt). Fasting is a very beloved deed to Allah and a sign of sincere intention. The nights of Ramadan are full of mercy and blessings for those who live them. Ramadan is the month of the Qur'an where extra attention should be paid to the Qur'an. The Messenger used to be more charitable in the month of Ramadan than any other times. It is a real opportunity that we have to utilize and I ask Allah to help us. If all of us do the same and try to get the best out of this month, we as a community of believers will show our obedience to Allah (swt) for He may bestow His mercy upon us, our families, our society, and the whole world.

## This Ramadan, I will ...

### Before the month starts

1. I will count my time by minutes, not hours or days for the time in Ramadan is so valuable.
2. I will make sure I go over this plan enough before Ramadan and have the strong determination to implement it.
3. I will keep thinking of Ramadan from now. I will long for it and I will keep asking Allah to enable me to reach it, "O Allah, allow me to live until Ramadan. O Allah, grant me in it fasting and Salah and accept them from me."
4. I will give charity BEFORE Ramadan as Anas Ibn Malik reported. He said that the companions of



the Prophet used to do that to help the poor enter the month of Ramadan being ready.

5. I will start paying extra attention to the Qur'an BEFORE Ramadan starts to ramp up to something better in Ramadan. I am very encouraged to do so knowing that this was the attitude of the companions during Sha'ban as Anas reported.
6. I will look for some educational material to share with my non-Muslim friends if they need to know more about Ramadan, and I will make them available with me all the time.

### On the first night of Ramadan

7. I will reflect on the hadith in which the Prophet said about this particular night. He said, "When the first night of Ramadan comes, the gates of heavens are open and not a single gate is closed, and the gates of the hell are closed not a single gate is open. The devils are chained. A caller will call, 'O you who want to do good, come forth; O you who want to do evil stop.' And Allah sets people free from hell every single night."
8. I will make the duaa (supplication) which the Prophet (pbuh) used to make, "O Allah, start this month with good and Iman, safety and Islam," I will then address the crescent and say, "Your lord and my lord is Allah."
9. I will gather all my family and share with them this remarkable moment. I will remind them with these universal changes and we will all get excited about the month of Ramadan. We will try to celebrate by hanging some decoration. We will try to feel the difference of this beloved month.
10. I will make phone calls to my extended family. I will call my parents and congratulate them. I will

remind them to benefit from the blessed month and I will ask them to make dua for me.

11. I will send emails to all my friends congratulating them with the blessed month. I will ask them to remember me in their dua while worshipping Allah in these beautiful moments. I will post the congratulation on my Facebook, my blog and my google talk picture. I will change my status to, "blessed with the blessed month, in a dire need of Allah mercy." This will help reminding everyone with the moment.
12. I will use the moment to repent to Allah expecting his great forgiveness to cover me in these remarkable moments. I will make a strong determination to quit all my sins and come out of Ramadan a different man.
13. I will not FORGET to make Taraweeh at this night which is the night BEFORE the first day of fasting and is almost forgotten by many people.
14. I will NOT get into long disputes about the method of deciding the beginning of Ramadan and I will follow my local community if they adopt any of the legitimate scholars' opinions in their decision. I will explain briefly to those who waste their time in this dispute that it is better to spend



our time worshipping Allah rather than disputing about something which Allah will not hold us accountable for. I will try to foster unity in my community and between local communities as much as I can.

15. I will make a list of my friends and colleagues who may not know much about the blessings of Ramadan and try to make a plan of how to get them closer to Allah in this blessed opportunity.

## Every single day

### Before Fajr

16. I will start my day a while before fajr. The time before fajr is so valuable. The Prophet (pbuh) said that Allah (swt) descends to the lowest heaven in the last third of the night calling upon his creation, "Is there anyone who wants to ask for something so I give him? Is there anyone seeking forgiveness so I forgive him? Is there anyone who wants to repent so I accept his repentance?" Allah praised high quality believers by the practice of "asking forgiveness during this time."
17. I will make sure I have suhur, the meal before fajr. The Prophet (pbuh) said, "Have suhur for there is a blessing in suhur."
18. I will take 10-15 minutes before fajr sitting alone asking Allah for forgiveness and calling upon him in response to His call. The Prophet said when asked about which part of the night is better in accepting dua, "The last part of the night." I will also make a short night prayer during which I will prostrate and get even closer to Allah as the Messenger said, "The closest the servant of Allah will be is when he is in the state of prostration." I will glorify Allah in my sujud and call upon Him. I will seek His guidance, help, and support in this beautiful time.

### Fajr Time

19. I will try my best to make salat al-Subh<sup>1</sup> in the masjid. I will go to the closest masjid to my house even if it is a little far. I will consider my steps an elevation in my degrees and an expiation of my sins as the Prophet promised. I will feel the happiness and the gratitude of praying in congregation during fajr time, an act which makes me pure of hypocrisy as the prophet mentioned.

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<sup>1</sup> This is the name used for the morning Salah. Fajr salah is often used to mean the two optional salah before Salat Al-Subh.

20. I will remember to make the optional fajr salah which is 2 Rak'at before Salah for the Prophet (pbuh) said, "The two raka'at of fajr are better than this life and what is in it."
21. If I reach the masjid before Iqamah time, I will sit and make dua for the Messenger (pbuh) said, "dua between Adhan and Iqamah is not rejected."
22. I will make sure I do "Khitam Al-Salah," for the Prophet said, "Whoever says Subhana Allah 33 times, Alhamdu Lillah 33 times, Allahu Akbar 33 times, and then completed the 100 by saying "La Ilaha Illah Allah, Wahdahu La sharika lah lahu al-Mulk walau Al-Hamd wa howa 'ala koli shai' quadir," his sins will be wiped out even if they are like the foam of the sea.
23. I will remember to say "Ayat al-Kursi," for the Prophet said if you say it after Salah there is nothing between you and Paradise except death.
24. I will try, especially during weekends, to stay after fajr in the masjid remembering Allah, reciting some Qur'an until 15 minutes after sunrise. I will then make a 2,4,6, or 8 raka'at of Duha salah. I will feel the reward of a complete Hajj and Umra as the Prophet (pbuh) promised.

#### **After Fajr**

25. I will try to sleep a little before going to work.
26. I will go to work and will do my best to excel in my job. I will try to remove the misconception that Ramadan is a month of laziness. I will consider my job an act of worship, simultaneously worshipping Allah by fasting and working.
27. I will get a few minutes in the office where I will relax and try to close my eyes in a half-sleeping mode for that gives me energy as if I really slept for some time. I will need it to resume my day and to relax in preparation for a long night.
28. I will try my best to make Dhur and Asr Salah on time and I will make them in congregation during the weekends.

#### **Iftar time**

29. I will make my Iftar most of the time in the masjid as my community always does. When it is our turn to prepare Iftar, I will take the intention for giving Iftar to all those who are fasting for there is an immense reward in it. The Prophet mentioned, "whoever gives Iftar to a fasting person, will get a similar reward."

30. I will try to go a few minutes before Maghreb so I can spend sometime in the masjid remembering Allah and making dua.



31. I will break my fasting feeling the happiness the Prophet mentioned. The happiness of someone who was allowed to complete his day of fasting and was given the opportunity to eat. I will recall the other part of the happiness the Prophet mentioned when I meet Allah with this day of fasting. These are the two pieces of happiness the Prophet mentioned in his hadith, "the one who fasts has two happiness: one when he breaks his fast and the other when he meets his Lord."
32. I will remember to make dua at this very moment of breaking my fasting for this is a time the dua is accepted as the Prophet mentioned. I will remember my family, my parents, my brothers and sisters, and all Muslims during my dua.
33. I will not eat a lot to prepare myself for taraweeh and I will make sure I eat healthy food.

#### **After Ifar**

34. I will take a short relaxation before taraweeh.
35. I will try my best to make taraweeh in the masjid, every day and I will feel the blessing of praying with the whole Qur'an during the whole month.
36. I will go to sleep after taraweeh and will make a strong intention that my sleep is an act of worship preparing myself for a new day of comprehensive worship.

### Last 10 Days

37. I will try to take a couple of days off from work so I can put more effort in the last 10 days
38. I will make I'tikaf<sup>2</sup>, if not the whole 10 days, as much as I can especially during the weekends. During my I'tikaf, I will increase the night prayer and the amount of Qur'an I recite.
39. I will try to invite my family and friends to I'tikaf since it is really a nice time and a very blessed one.
40. I will try my best in the last ten days to reach the night of Al-Qadr. I will keep doing my best for the whole 10 nights and I will never stop after the 27th.

### Last moments

41. In the last few moments before Ramadan is over, I will reflect on my heart. I will feel the happiness of completing a whole month of comprehensive worship. I will feel the happiness of Eid coming tomorrow. I will also feel the sadness that this great opportunity is about to end and will not come again except in a year or may not come again ever.
42. I will have the hope that Allah accepted from me and forgave my sins. I will feel the hope that I am set free from the hell. I am going to feel the fear that I may not be forgiven or my deeds are not accepted.
43. I will get prepared for the Eid and prepare my family for it. I will do my best to make the day of Eid a day of great happiness and joy to my family and my community. I will help in organizing the Eid salah in my community.
44. I will remember to pay Zakat Al-Fitr before Eid salah for it is an obligation upon every member of the household and it helps our brothers and sisters enjoy their Eid without having to ask for charity.

### Community work

45. I will never forget my family from all this work. I will involve them in all that I do and will encourage them to join the reward.
46. I will be as charitable as I can even if I donate a little, for the Messenger (pbuh) was extra-charitable in the days of Ramadan.
47. I will join my community in organizing charitable campaigns to feed the hungry and give charity to

the poor. I will promote these projects and campaigns.

عَنْ أَبِي مَالِكٍ الْحَارِثِ بْنِ عَاصِمِ الْأَشْجَرِيِّ رَضِيَ  
اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ، قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ وَسَلَّمَ: الطَّهْوَرُ  
شَطْرُ الْإِيمَانِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ تَمْلَأُ الْمِيزَانَ، وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ  
وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ تَمْلَأَانِ أَوْ تَمْلَأُ مَا بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ،  
وَالصَّلَاةُ نُورٌ وَالصَّدَقَةُ بَرَهَانٌ وَالصَّبْرُ ضِيَاءٌ، وَالْقُرْآنُ  
حُجَّةٌ لَكَ أَوْ عَلَيْكَ، كُلُّ النَّاسِ يَغْدُو فَبَائِعَ نَفْسِهِ،  
فَمُعْتَقَهَا أَوْ مُوْبِقَهَا. رَوَاهُ مُسْلِمٌ.

Purification is half of iman (faith). Saying 'Al-Hamdulillah' (Praise be to Allah) fills the scales. Saying 'Subhanallah wa al-Hamdulillah' (Exalted be Allah and Praise be to Allah) fills the space between the heavens and the earth. Salah (prayer) is a light. Sadaqah (charity) is a proof. Sabr (patience) is a shining glory. The Qur'an is an argument either for you or against you. Everybody goes out in the morning and sell themselves, thereby setting themselves free or destroying themselves."

48. I will join my community in organizing open houses during Ramadan, for people are so curious to visit the Islamic centers and meet Muslims during this month
49. I will respond to the invitation of schools to come and share some thoughts and presentations about the month of Ramadan with Muslim and non-Muslim students. I will offer my presentation even if not requested.

### A token of sincerity

50. I will do something I did not share with you and will not share with anyone that only Allah knows about as a token of pure intention and sincere worship.

I ask Allah to help and I ask you to have a similar plan. "O Allah, make us reach Ramadan!"

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<sup>2</sup> I'tikaf is an act of worship where one spends time in the Masjid praying, reading Qur'an and remembering Allah (swt). The Prophet (pbuh) used to do that in the last 10 days of Ramadan. However, it can be done at any time.