



JAKARTA: People ride motorcycles at Bekasi, outskirts of Jakarta, Indonesia, yesterday. The mass exodus out of the capital and other major cities in the world's most populous Muslim country is underway as millions are heading to their hometowns to celebrate Eid Al-Fitr this week which will mark the end of the holy fasting month of Ramadan. — AP

WHAT AFTER RAMADAN

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It is a good idea to review your life before and after Ramadan to determine the impact of the honorable month of Ramadan upon your life. Ask yourself if you have observed fasting correctly or you were of those who gained nothing of their fasting except thirst and hunger and nothing from night prayers except wakefulness.

One of the indications that our fast was accepted by Allah ie, was done correctly and was free from any violations, is to be guided for more righteous deeds after Ramadan. One of the indications that our fast was rejected by Allah is to return back to bad practices after Ramadan and benefit nothing from our fasting. As Ibn Al-Qayyim said: "Part of the reward of your good deed is to be guided for more good deeds. And part of the punishment of your bad deed is to follow it with another bad deed." You can further ask yourself if you have truly succeeded in improving the quality of your life style as a believer during Ramadan. The answer is definitely yes.

(1) If you come out of Ramadan with love in your heart toward Allah and His messenger more than anything else in the world.

(2) If you have become more accustomed and more comfortable with acts of worship than before Ramadan.

(3) If fasting Ramadan helped you to develop a taste of dislike for bad deeds and make you long for more good deeds. Allah says in Quran Surat Al-Hujurat (49-7): "It is, Allah who endeared the faith to you and beautified it in your hearts and He has made hateful to you disbelief, transgression and disobedience. And such are those who are rightly guided"

(4) If you come out of Ramadan more consistent in words and actions. Allah says in Quran Surat As-Saff (-): "O You who believe why do you say that which you do not do? It is the most hateful in the sight of Allah to say that which you do not do." If you have really grown in righteousness during Ramadan you should draw nearer to the straight path of Allah and farther away from the crooked way of ignorance and disbelief; and nearer to the obedience of Allah and farther away from His disobedience than at the beginning of the month. You can make every Ramadan a turning point in your life so that you improves the quality of your life style as a believer year after year. And thus you grow in righteousness closer and closer to Allah till you meet with Him.

Be wise

Be wise and maintain your spiritual gains of Ramadan. Do not be foolish and lose the gains you have been work-

ing hard to earn in Ramadan. Do not destroy the shelter of Taqwa that you have been building during Ramadan. Continue with those good practices you earned in Ramadan all the year round. Stick to those good practices you acquired during Ramadan. However, set reasonable, practical goals for your self so that you will be able to continue and will not stop after some time. A Hadeeth says : "The best of good deeds in the sight Allah is that which lasts even if it is little." Moreover do your best to replace those bad habits with good habits so that Allah may grant you success.

1. Perfect your prayers

Offer your prayers in time, fulfilling all their requirements. Get into the habit of offering night prayer and other optional prayers.

2. Establish the habit

For example, fasting every Monday and Thursday every week, three days in the middle of each month, and six days of the month of Shawwal (to make up for any mistakes or imperfection of fast of Ramadan).

3. Keep living with Quran

Recite some Quran on a daily basis. Not necessarily one part. Put schedule to review the Quran you memorized on a regular basis. Study Tafseer of Quran in order to be able to apply Quran in your life. May Allah make Quran the comfort of our eyes and the pleasure of our hearts.

4 Keep Growing in knowledge

Remember that the first revelation of Quran is : "Read in the name of your Lord". Allah taught us the Duaa' : "O My Lord let me grow in knowledge". Fix some time for reading and learning. Study a Surah of Quran. Memorize some verses, supplications, and Hadeeth. Study a book; it is preferable to do this in a group. Join a Halaqah (a group) for Islamic studies. Give lessons if you are qualified to.

5 Keep together

Ramadan was a great occasion to renew good ties with our families and friends. Do your best not to sever these ties after Ramadan. Always show kindness, mercy, and affection toward all those around you. Show respect to their rights and honor. Do not hesitate to offer your help to people around you no matter how little it may be. Remember it is the intentions that count. Any good, no matter how little it is, is a great achievement if it is accompanied with intention

to please Allah. Be a big brother/sister. Be a source of enlightenment for all of those around you. The list of things you can do to help people around you is endless. Do not underestimate your abilities.

6 Exercise your willpower

Learn from the experience of fasting to exercise willpower and self control. Learn to say: "No" not only to food, drinks, and desires but also to everything that may distract you from the straightway of Allah.

7 Be smart

Do your best not to slip back to bad practices after Ramadan such as :missing a prayer, praying quickly, backbiting, bad eating habits, wasting time in idle talks and nonsense TV programs. Keep away from shameful sins and immoral practices as you were exactly doing during

Ramadan.

Missing the wisdom

Unfortunately there are many people who derived little benefits from fasting of Ramadan. Do not be of those who worship Allah in Ramadan and then forget Him in the rest of the year. Once the month passes they return back to their previous life of disobedience and surrender to their desires, to their weakness, to lack of control, to life of irresponsibility, to the temptation. That is why the Mosques which were full in Ramadan are almost empty in the rest of the year as if there is no need for worshipping Allah. Those who forget that Allah is always there watching us recording our deeds; they should remember that the Lord of Ramadan is the Lord of all the months of the years; and returning back to disobedience after Tawbah (repentance) in Ramadan is one of the most hateful deeds.

US REMAINS IRAN'S 'GREAT SATAN' DESPITE DEAL

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And despite Khamenei's public antipathy, it was he who approved secret talks with the US in 2012 that would eventually lead to the open diplomacy that resulted in the nuclear deal. He has since said repeatedly that Iran's interests differ from America's in the Middle East, in particular over Tehran's backing of Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad. US support for the Saudi-led Arab bombing campaign against Shiite Huthi rebels in Yemen has further widened the regional policy divide. But other Iranian officials, notably President Hassan Rouhani, have said the nuclear deal can lead to wider cooperation and the government has said there is no bar to US firms investing in Iran.

Secret talks in 2012

In strife-torn Iraq, Ammar Al-Hakim, who leads the Supreme Iraqi Islamic Council (SIIC), a powerful Shiite militia, said a nuclear deal would result in "key effects in all regional events". And long before the Vienna accord, the Islamic republic has proved itself to be pragmatic when it comes to its national interests. It held joint discussions with Washington on the fight against the Taliban in Afghanistan in autumn 2001. But any prospect of significant cooperation was extinguished months later when then US president George W Bush dubbed Iran part of an "axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of

the world". Somehow, olive branches have since appeared.

In 2009, then US under secretary of state William Burns met with his counterpart Saeed Jalili on the sidelines of nuclear talks in Geneva, in a first such encounter since 1979. And secret talks approved by Khamenei in Oman in 2012 led to the official dialogue and final nuclear deal with the P5+1 group of Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States plus Germany. "Relations with the US have changed and for the first time since 1979 there is a different atmosphere," a reform-minded analyst in Tehran said, describing the nuclear deal as "a game of dominoes." "It will create further opportunities for cooperation, including in the fight against IS in Iraq where US air strikes have complemented Shiite militias on the ground," he said on condition of anonymity.

The United States has denied any "interaction" with Iranian-backed militias in Iraq, while Tehran has often said Washington's effort is half-hearted and came too late. But even when there appears to be scope for mutual benefit, tensions resurface. As recently as last month the US said it still considered Iran a "state sponsor of terrorism", citing Iran's involvement in other regional countries. And Iran is considered along with Syria, Lebanon's Shiite party Hezbollah and the Palestinian Hamas movement, as the "axis of resistance" against Israel, which Tehran does not recognize.— AFP

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