

WEEKLY PLANNER

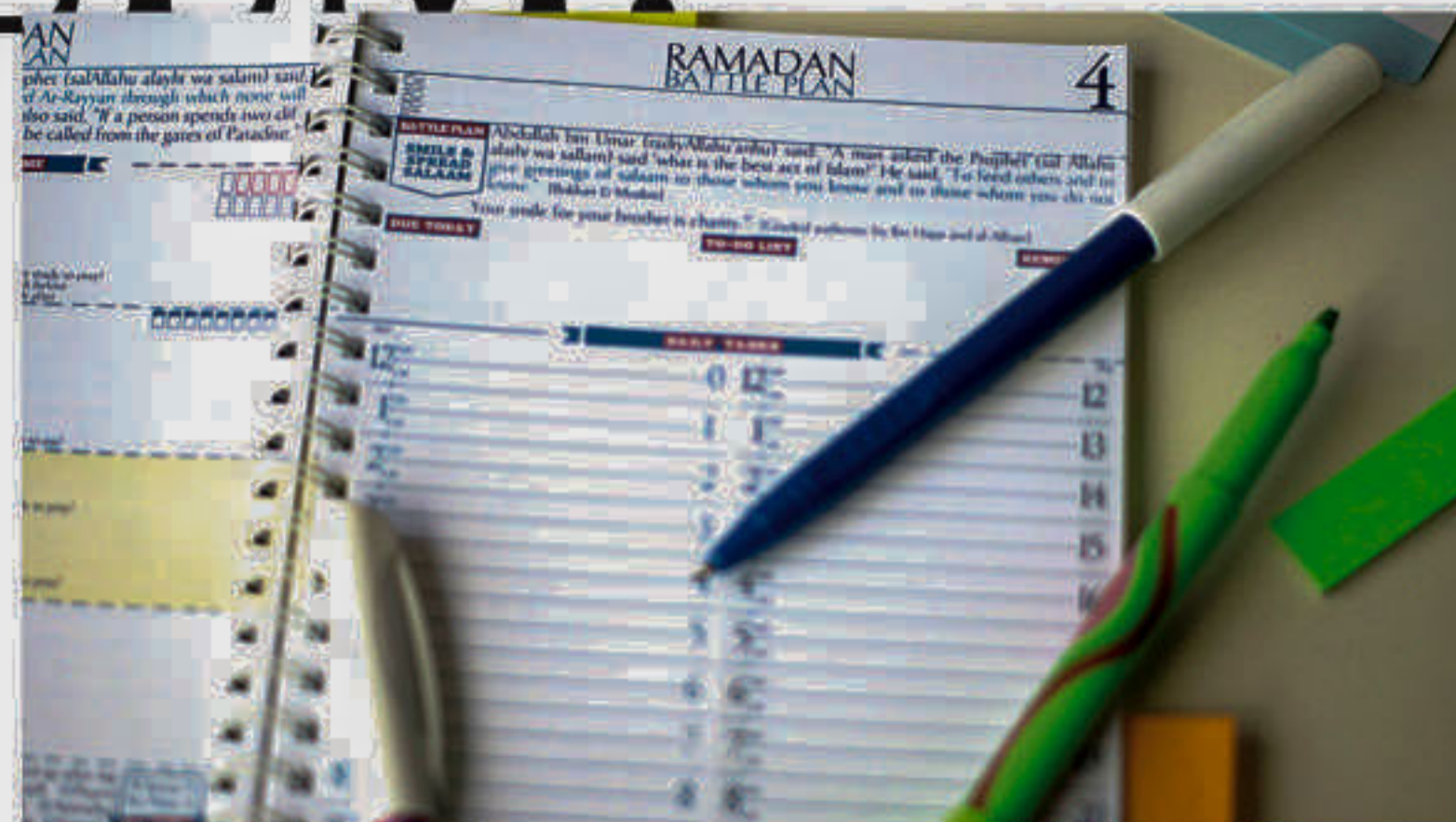
RAMADAN

KAREEM!

Once again we are blessed to have the holy month of Ramadan amongst us. Ramadan stands for abstinence, it stands for restraints; but it is also a time to have scrumptious meals, share gifts amongst family and friends, and indulge in some soul searching. Planning ahead is essential for the entire month to run smoothly. And here we present five dominant characters of our households and share some of their insights for the entire month.

This week: The Father.

Yaqub Ahmed is a retired, government employee and a father of a daughter who is in her twenties. A former business development worker, he now spends most of his time in



Reciting the holy Qur'an at least once in the month and engaging in

leisure. An avid reader and a music enthusiast Ahmed is all set to have a grand Ramadan.

"I am ready for Ramadan" he said in a pensive tone. "As ready as one can get."

First there is the spiritual enlightenment that must be achieved and Ahmed wants to start from the basics. But rather than chalking a strenuous, stringent lifestyle during the month he says he will try to keep things simple.

"Tarawi has always been an integral part of my observance of Ramadan. I usually go to the Baitul Mukarram mosque for tarawi, as I like the way they prolong the recitation. True it takes longer but it is enlightening," Ahmed said.

"To reap the best from the month, I make provisions for the entire month even before it starts" said the retired Colonel. He informed that setting aside the budget and doing

Of course reciting the holy Qur'an at least once in the month and engaging in charity also rates high on his list. "Thursday nights are very important for me. I have made a practice of seeking a higher level of spirituality on Thursday nights. I want to continue this."

Ahmed sets aside Fridays for doing the groceries and also the Eid shopping. "Although Fridays pass by in a rush and going out shopping on this day is an ordeal, I prefer to do this on that day because all other members of my family have the day off. After a tough day shopping, the whole family can at least have iftar together once a week."

Colonel Syedul Kabir, now a retired army officer, has a different approach to spending the month. He encourages his whole family to observe Ramadan in a befitting manner. Being the head of a family, Col Kabir also has to keep many things in mind before the forthcoming Ramadan.

"To reap the best from the month, I make provisions for the entire month even before it starts" said the retired Colonel. He informed that by setting aside the budget and doing all the chores beforehand helps him avoid the rush during the month. "I intend to complete shopping before Ramadan starts, to avoid traffic and the discomfort of shopping while fasting" he said.

"Ramadan is the most sacred month in the Islamic calendar and I would like to observe Ramadan carefully. I will try to observe more of the Sunnah and pay the Zakat for the year" says Col Kabir. "I will try to make best use of the time, pray and beg to almighty Allah to seek his mercy and forgiveness." Asked what they prefer for iftar and sehri, the two heads

of households gave divergent answers. While Ahmed was all for healthy iftar options, Col Kabir preferred to indulge during the month. "I am very traditional when it comes to iftar; I love everything spicy and fried. Not the best option but still..."

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business iftar meals and also from friends and family" said Ahmed. I need to set aside at least two to three days from the month to dine out at restaurants" he continued. This also includes taking out family members a few times. This has been a novel addition to recent trends. And both men have adapted to them.

A lover of books and music, Ahmed has set out times for his indulgences in the coming month. I am currently researching on Hajj and reaping a lot of pleasure by studying the different aspects of the holy pilgrimage. "I plan to go for

"These days during Ramadan we get a lot of invitations for business iftar meals and also from friends and family" said Ahmed. I need to set

the Hajj this year and so I plan to catch up on my religious reading" he said with sparkling eyes. "I also like Sufi music and poetry. Ramadan is never the same without Jalaluddin Rumi or Al Gazzali by my bedside."

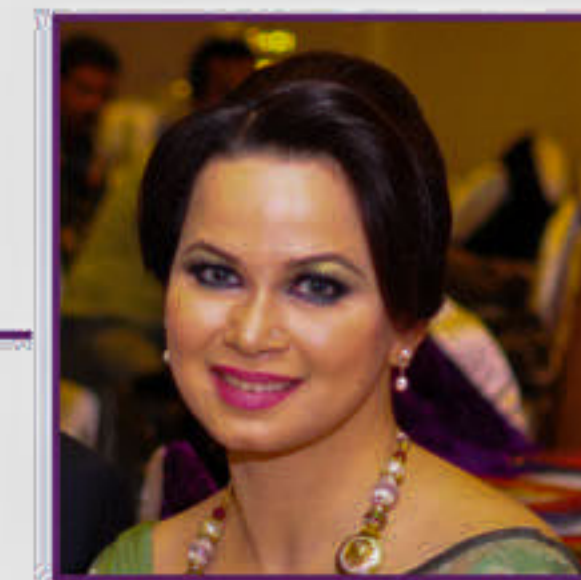
As far as Eid is concerned, the two stalwarts of the family once again had different plans. Ahmed, a widower has only a daughter to think of. "I expect something from my daughter and also plan to give her something in return. But apart from that, my Eid shopping is very limited" he said.

But at the Kabir household the matter is anything but. "I love shopping with my family and children. They usually have a long list and I have already allocated a budget for their spree."

"But I also try to instil the values of giving and make a deliberate effort that my three daughters will give away at least some part of their belongings to the underprivileged. This of course, is aside the Zakat" he reiterated.

By Mehnaj Kabir

Photo: Collected



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WHAT ARE FRECKLES?



Freckles are little brown spots on the skin that are caused by the sun. We all have pigment-producing cells in our skin called melanocytes. When our melanocytes become damaged by the sun or any other insult to the skin, we produce freckles, which are simply abnormal collections of melanin pigment in the skin.



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