



Letter to TAM '09 Attendees

Dear brothers and sisters, members of the Muslim American Society,
Assalam alaikum wa rahmatullah wa barakatuh.

Welcome to the Tarbiya Annual Meeting (TAM) 2009! I would like to share with you some of my thoughts on this momentous occasion.

Allah's love

The Prophet (pbuh) said that Allah (swt) said, "My love is indeed bestowed on those who love one another for my sake. My love is indeed bestowed on those who visit one another for my sake. My love is indeed bestowed on those who support one another for my sake." We all came to this meeting with one goal in mind, Allah. It is Allah's cause that put us together. It is His love that keeps us together. And for His love, we strive together.

TAM is special

TAM has distinguished itself as one of the unique events in MAS. It is the platform where MAS members come to take on serious intellectual questions. It is the meeting where tarbiya is brought to life, reasserting its crucial role in our mission. It is where MAS members develop essential skills and learn how to apply important tarbiya concepts.

And while we come to TAM to learn and to discuss, it is also a place to renew our commitment to Allah, to His cause, and to the MAS mission. It has become the place where old friends meet, new friendships are made, and the spirit of the movement is felt and embraced. It is where everything is related to the basics. The Quran and the example of the Messenger are related to our lives and our community's situation. It is when the experience of the old meets the zeal of the young, and results in one of the most special, unique dynamics in MAS. TAM is a meeting where challenges are tackled, ideas are debated, and questions are answered. TAM is spirituality, passion, brotherhood, love, passion, and commitment, all wrapped up in one weekend.

M is for Meeting

The TAM is a meeting where we come together as peers. Unlike conventions where charismatic speakers present and the audience listens, TAM is a place where we ALL ask questions and we ALL find answers. All attendees should prepare themselves to participate and contribute, for they may be the ones who benefit each other the most.

This year is unique

TAM 09 comes at a special time. It coincides with the proclamation of the new MAS mission and vision statements. Our beloved society, MAS, is going through significant challenges. The growth and development that MAS underwent in the past few years was not accompanied by a similar growth in membership, development, and maturity. This calls for a critical effort to refocus on tarbiya and make it more relevant to the MAS mission. MAS Tarbiya Department (MTD) was mandated by MAS leadership to take on the responsibility of preparing MAS members for such a mission. TAM 09 is one of the key programs that we are using to further this effort.

A few requests ...

- Come to the TAM with a pure intention, for intention is what counts. Make every minute in this TAM something you would claim as a good deed on the Day of Reckoning.
- Put your heart to work. There are a lot of things you can do with your heart in this meeting. You can fill it with love towards others you meet and see. Let your heart become rooted in our mission and make a strong determination to act upon what you learn. Feel the passion and urgency of our work.
- Do not belittle small actions. Smiling in the face of your brother or sister is an act of charity. Spread peace and “salams” all over the TAM. Introduce yourself to new people and let them introduce themselves to you. Make ten more close friends during this TAM.
- Benefit from every minute. No time should be wasted. Mealtimes, break times, and even hotel room time can be as beneficial as the formal TAM program. Let us learn from each other’s attitude and manners before we learn from the knowledge and the wisdom. There is no time to rest during this weekend. The slogan of TAM 08 was “The time for sleep has gone.” TAM 09 is no different.
- Be your best! You will be speaking, debating, proposing ideas, and challenging others’ ideas. Let us model the best manners and appropriateness when doing so. Let us say “that which is best,” as the Quran advises us.
- Do not decide to sit back, watch, and listen. Every attendee who does that deprives us of something unique and special. Every idea is worthy of discussion, your idea may be the best idea, your question may be in the minds of many others, and your thought may inspire someone else. Do not keep it to yourself. No one will look down on the contribution of anyone else. Yours may be the idea we are all waiting for, and Allah may have put the truth in your words. No question is a silly question, and questions sometimes are more important than answers.
- To the relatively senior MAS members: you will be accompanied by a younger generation. Do not deprive them of your love, dua, and experience. You may find that some of the discussions are already familiar to you. Use the opportunity to renew your understanding, commitment, and passion. Learn new ways of explaining concepts and try

to understand others' perspectives. Use the opportunity to teach the younger generation some of the wisdom you developed over years in this blessed movement. Sense the need to pass the torch to your younger brothers and sisters.

- To the newer MAS members, this is your chance to learn. Show respect to your older brothers and sisters. Learn from their wisdom and value their effort. Do not hold back in asking questions and expressing your ideas. In the TAM, you will find hundreds of years of experience that you can learn from. Do not lose the opportunity. Bring your energy to the table and comfort your older brothers and sisters that the MAS mission will continue to be in good hands.
- Ultimately, for every one of us, TAM should be preparation for action. Throughout the discussions and presentations, be thinking constantly how we can apply what we are learning. Keep a running list of action items that you plan to implement.
- Many of your fellow MAS members will not attend the TAM. Plan to share what you learn and to bring the TAM energy home to your chapters.

Have a safe and blessed journey and use your footsteps, road trips, and flights to prepare, reflect, and renew. I look forward to seeing every one of you in Wash. DC, Dallas, Los Angeles, and Detroit.

Yours,

Wael Hamza
MAS National Tarbiya Director
On behalf of the TAM 09 Team