



Beyond the TAM

A Letter to all MAS members and leaders

Dear members and leaders of the Muslim American Society,

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmtullah wa Barakatuh. I ask Allah that this message reaches you, your families, and your communities in the best of health and iman. Alhamdulillah, TAM has concluded, with close to 700 MAS members attending four regional meetings in Washington DC, Dallas, Los Angeles, and Detroit.

A Transforming Experience

As many of you expressed in your own words, TAM 2009 was a transforming experience. This event showed us how essential our cause is and how important it is to put all our effort behind it. Our mission was never clearer and we were never more determined to accomplish it, with the grace and help of Allah (swt), the one who entrusted us with this mission in the first place.

During the TAM, we focused on our mission as articulated by our leaders, studied its requirements and responsibilities, and discussed the tarbiya effort required to achieve it. All of this effort was aimed at one goal: to make us mission-oriented. We must be mission-oriented in our thinking, mission-oriented in our work, and mission-oriented in our analysis and evaluation of our effort.

During the TAM, something else appeared. It was something that had been in the design of the program and was one of the objectives behind the TAM, besides the understanding and knowledge aspects. We found a strong passion for the mission, strong determination to focus on it, strong energy towards working for it, and a strong conviction that MAS is an effective platform to achieve it. As I witnessed with my eyes and felt in my heart at the four events, the attendees were truly a laser beam, focused, coherent, and full of energy. Their light shines toward one aim: to fulfill their obligation to Allah and to their society by working as hard as they can to achieve the noble mission.

What's after TAM?

Great achievements in history were built on successful moments. Personal achievements are based on good ideas backed with passion and energy to execute. Many of the personal and organizational success stories I hear always include phrases like, "It was this moment that led to my success... It was that event that I attended that fostered all this change... It was this person who transformed my life... It was this group that really affected me."

While that defining moment may be very real and true, there was always follow-up on that moment of success. The positive thought was followed by a positive action, the successful meeting was followed by a plan, and the brilliant idea was followed by an active endeavor. As members of MAS and as leaders of this organization, we are all obligated to build on this success, leverage this focus,

and channel this energy to create real success on the ground. In the LASER analogy, we need to guide, nurture, and leverage these strong LASER beams coming out of these four events.

We do not want TAM to be an event where all of us just get together and feel the warmth of brotherhood. We do not want to make TAM an event where we just dream and feel good about our dreams. We do not want TAM to be just the theory that never affects reality. We love and enjoy the warmth of our brotherhood, we have the right to dream and feel good about our dreams, and we want to understand and learn our theories. However, we also want to transform all that into something that will affect real change in our life and in the lives of those around us, and make a leap on the road of achieving our mission. Only then will the TAM be successful and only then can we claim an accomplishment.

To the chapter presidents and chapter council members: you are the leaders of this work. Nothing is going to happen without real involvement from your part. Please use the energy and leverage the moment. It may not come back. Let us make TAM 2009 the tipping point for our mission insha'Allah.

Behind the Scenes

In the front line of this tremendous success were a few people whom you saw and probably thanked. We all saw our lineup of energetic speakers and moderators who traveled to as many as four cities in five weeks and inspired many of us. This was done after hours of meetings and preparation. In the front line were the chairs of the local committees who did an amazing job of advertising, organizing, and mobilizing. In the front line were the clinics experts who impressed everyone with their skills of presentation and consulting.

Behind the scenes, there were people who put in a huge effort to make this happen. There were people who started meeting on a very frequent and regular basis to build this event from a small and simple mandate given to them by the tarbiya executive team. Their names were probably ignored or buried among the long list of names in the thank you letters. They were the ones who are thanking people and not being thanked. I feel very obligated to mention these names here not only for them to rejoice but for all of you who read this letter to love them and make duaa for them and their families for what they went through to make this event a success. These people in a very specific order are:

Farhad Noorzay - program committee member (on behalf of MAS Youth executive committee)
Maha Ezzeddine - program committee member and TAM communications and promotions lead
Ahmed Eid - TAM video trailers (www.eiddesigns.com)
Sharif Aly - program committee chair
Zia Siddiqui - TAM national chair

There are many others that I do not know about and haven't seen at all who contributed to this event as much as all those people above did. Allah knows them and He, insha'allah, will reward them the best in this life and the hereafter.

May Allah make our effort successful; May He unite our hearts, accept our deeds, gather us always serving Him and serving His creation, and make us live according to what He pleases and die for His cause. May He unite us together in His paradise as he united us working together for His cause, ameen!

Wael Hamza
MAS National Tarbiya Director