



# The Lighthouse Project

An Interactive Tarbiya Program for MAS Members

**FLY TO ALLAH!**  
A PREPARATION FOR RAMADAN

Episode II  
August 2009

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Preparation for Ramadan

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August 2009, Sha'ban 1430

The Lighthouse Project

A Program of the MAS Tarbiya Department



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## A Letter to MAS Members

Dear brothers and sisters,

Welcome to “*Flee to Allah*”, Episode II of the MAS Tarbiya Lighthouse Project, designed to help MAS members seize the opportunity of Ramadan. The materials in this episode are meant to be studied and implemented in the weeks *before* Ramadan. That means we should hit the ground running from the first seconds of Ramadan—if Allah wills that we live until the eve of that blessed month. Let's make this a Ramadan that changes the face of the earth through our sincerity, our remembrance of Allah, and our pleas in the late hours of the night.

Like every Lighthouse Project episode, *Flee to Allah* is a package of articles, discussion questions, live webinars, and practical tips for members of all levels to use in their usras, halaqas, *MY Connects*, families, and communities to prepare themselves for Ramadan. The package is divided into five beams that can be studied and implemented over the course of a few weeks or a month. Each beam is designed to prepare us to carry the message of Islam and the mission of MAS by instilling [five key tarbiya objectives](#).

Please make note of the webinar dates and be sure to register by visiting <http://blog.mastarbiya.org> or by clicking on the links below (you must register separately for each webinar). Read more about the webinars inside.

**“Prepare Yourself for Ramadan,” Aug. 13, 9:30-11:00 p.m. EDT. Click [here](#) to register.**

**“30 Tips to Interact with the Quran,” Aug. 20, 9:30-11:00 p.m. EDT. Click [here](#) to register.**

The Lighthouse Project is designed to bring MAS members together thinking about the same topics and working on the same page. It is also intended to revive our passion for tarbiya and help local efforts. Our team asks that you please excuse our shortcomings and mistakes, and we hope that you find our humble effort here inspiring and beneficial.

Yours,

MAS Tarbiya

## What is the Lighthouse Project?

The Lighthouse Project is a new, dynamic MAS Tarbiya campaign designed to touch every MAS member. The project will move MAS members, teams, and chapters to strive collectively for a common tarbiya theme for a whole month. MAS Tarbiya will drive the Lighthouse Project through a wealth of resources, practical implementations, online seminars, discussions and inspiring messages.

Month-long Lighthouse campaigns will run several times a year, and will help revive MAS members' passion for self-improvement and deepened understanding. They will be engineered to instill essential understanding and nurture the [five tarbiya objectives](#) in members.

## What is this episode about?

*Flee to Allah* is designed to prepare MAS members to utilize the potential of Ramadan to strengthen their relationship to Allah and their commitment to serving His cause through a movement of believers. This episode will include some tips on what an activist's plan for self-change should look like, how we can aspire to be people of the Quran, the powerful, transforming concept of charity in Islam, and some highlights from the life of one of the greatest companions and leaders, Uthman ibn Affan.

## What should I do with this episode?

Read it, print it out, and share it with your family. Think about the questions raised, read the literature, discuss the content, and implement the practical assignments. Initiate discussions with other members—bring up your questions and thoughts. Provide feedback on related posts on the [MAS Tarbiya blog](#). Think of ways to get your usra, MY Connect, and chapter excited about this episode. Organize a chapter-wide discussion session or give a talk on an aspect of the episode. Use the material to design an evening or before-*taraweeh* development program for the community. The success of this project depends on the creative ways that *you* apply it!



# Beam I

## *Reflect on the Opportunities of Ramadan*

This beam insha'allah will help you anticipate Ramadan and make plans for its coming. Sometimes, as MAS members, we become so caught up in activism and working with people that we forget to develop our own relationship with Allah. Here, we would like to bring the focus back to the basics: our spirituality, worship, and connection with Allah. This will give us a solid spiritual foundation that will then help our work blaze forward. MAS should never lose its strong spiritual connection and the emphasis on freeing the hearts of everything but Allah. Because the mission we carry is so great, a continuation of the mission of our Prophet, it is necessary that our hearts be pure, striving, and completely dedicated to Allah. Our members should always be from the leaders of al-Mutaqeen, those who are God-conscious and pious.

This beam focuses on two main areas: 1) using Ramadan as an opportunity to strengthen our relationship with Allah, and 2) reforming our relationship with the Quran and putting it foremost in our lives.

### Objectives

- To remind MAS members of the importance of their relationship with Allah and the significance of that for Muslims and Muslim workers
- To maximize the benefits from the spiritual opportunities of this month
- To challenge MAS members to be creative and disciplined in their personal development
- To create a spiritual movement in our families and communities during Ramadan
- To strengthen our relationship with the Quran and improve our ability to interact with it
- To learn about the attributes of the people of the Quran and yearn to be from them

## How to get light

1. Read the article entitled *Using Ramadan as a Turning Point* from the resource section.
2. Discuss the article at your weekly meeting (MAS Usra or MY Connect) in one 30-minute discussion session. Use the discussion points below.
3. Read the article entitled *30 Tips on Interacting with the Quran*. Then, discuss it at your weekly meeting.
4. Discuss with your brothers and sisters your plans for Ramadan so that you can be inspired by each other's ideas and ambitions.

## Resources

1. [Using Ramadan as a Turning Point](#), an article by Muslema Purmul (link)
2. [30 Tips on Interacting with the Quran](#), an article by Wael Hamza (link)
3. ["This Ramadan, I Will..."](#) A Sample Ramadan Schedule for MAS Members (link)
4. [In the Shade of Ramadan, Season I](#) and [In the Shade of Ramadan Season II](#), a series of online videos produced by MAS Youth & MAS Media Foundation

### Web seminars

**"How to Prepare for Ramadan" A Webinar by Dr. Imad Bayoun**

Thursday, Aug. 13, 2009

9:30-11:30 p.m. EDT

Space is limited. Reserve your seat by signing up here:

<https://www2.gotomeeting.com/register/939347091>

**"30 Tips for Interacting with the Quran" A Webinar by Wael Hamza**

Thursday, August 20, 2009

9:30-11:30 pm EDT

Register by visiting: <https://www2.gotomeeting.com/register/633780131>

*(you must register separately for each session)*

## Discussion starters

1. Reflect on Ramadan of last year. What worked and what didn't? How did you benefit? How did you fall short?
2. Reflect on death and how this may be your last Ramadan. What will you do differently and how will you make it special?
3. Think of the problems we are surrounded with—poverty, wars, disease, indifference, problems in the Muslim community, problems in MAS, disunity, etc.—how does all that relate to the choices we make in Ramadan?
4. What are other intentions that you can think of to keep in mind when reading the book of Allah in Ramadan?
5. “O people of the Qur'an, adorn the Qur'an with your actions.” What is meant by this statement? How can we adorn the Quran with our actions?
6. What do you think are some of your specific challenges to being consistent with the Quran? Laziness, neglect, lack of discipline, perfectionism, sins, something else?
7. Asma, Umar, and many other companions were heard on occasion reciting one verse over and over and over again, crying from reverence and fear and sincerity. Do you have that kind of relationship with any verse in the Quran? If so, which one? If not, why not?
8. What is the difference between an American Muslim who is an activist in the Muslim community and in the larger society, working hard but maintaining a weak connection with the Quran, and a seemingly similar individual—active, sincere, striving, interacting with all kinds of local and neighborhood initiatives—but in whom the verses of the Quran are written and constantly remembered? How will that difference be reflected?
9. How can we nurture the seriousness towards life that the people of the Quran possess? Is that something easy or difficult to achieve in our culture and society?

## Meet the challenge

1. Develop a personal development program for Ramadan and share some of its highlights with someone (a brother or sister, your spouse, or your usra members) to help keep you motivated and to get feedback.
2. Begin a program of late-night prayer that revolves around the prolonged recitation and contemplation of the Quran. Begin now with twice a week and then in Ramadan increase the frequency. By the last ten days, you should aim to wake up before Fajr and pray for *every* one of those ten days.
3. Within your family, in preparation for Ramadan, agree on a special “Quran Zone” where you will regularly come together to read and reflect, even if only once a week or for ten minutes each day.

## How to share your light

1. Share some of your Ramadan goals by posting your comments on the [MAS Tarbiya blog](#).
2. Mobilize as many people as you can to take this Lighthouse Project episode, study it in their circles of influence, and apply the ideas.
3. Approach your local MAS chapter and request a workshop or spiritual session around Ramadan and how we as MAS members should use it as an exceptional opportunity.
4. Give a khutba or talk on how to become people of the Quran using the material in this beam.



# Beam II

## *Understand the Power of Charity*

The Islamic understanding of charity is a powerful concept that can uplift people, rescue families, and transform societies. It is important as Muslims and MAS members that we understand the profound impact of charity and spread its influence wherever we go. This Ramadan, let us strive to be as the Prophet (saw) was with his charity: like the wind, spreading benefit and sustenance wherever it goes.

We would like to bring to our attention to the indigenous charitable needs of our country, our neighbors and the people of our towns and cities, so that we add them to our list of causes and do not forget them. As Muslims, we are responsible for the poor people in our neighborhoods and our country. Let us help inspire a movement of charity across the United States. This beam works to establish in us the spiritual and intellectual foundation of giving charity to people around us, even if they are not Muslims.

### Objectives

- To increase the share of charitable interest of MAS members (and the rest of Muslims) in America
- To make MAS members aware of the charitable needs of very poor people in America
- To leverage the month of Ramadan to create a charitable movement among MAS members and their surroundings
- To help MAS members perform some informal as well as formal charitable projects during the month of Ramadan

## How to get light

1. Every MAS member should ponder the introduction and objectives above.
2. Read the articles included in the resource section, and discuss the content in a session during your weekly meetings (MAS usra/MY Connect)
3. Take the implementation aspect of this subject very seriously.
4. Share these thoughts with people around you, and give a talk about it in your community if you can. You can use the material attached.
5. Make sure you visit the blog and leave your input and thoughts.
6. Consider hosting a local Revive, Qiyam or monthly meeting about this subject. Invite a local speaker to stimulate more learning.

## Resources

1. [The Islamic Concept of Charity](#), a Lighthouse Project article by Jamaal Diwan
2. [Poverty in America](#), a Lighthouse Project article by Bhawana Kamil
3. [In the Shade of Ramadan: Charity](#), a 5-minute video by Muslema Purmul, part of a series production by MAS Youth and MAS Media Foundation.  
(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f0Hjq31bVws>)
4. [In the Shade of Ramadan, Season 2: Generosity](#), an 8-minute video by Dr. Esam Omeish, part of a series production by MAS Youth and MAS Media Foundation  
(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5cgO-RoPi-U>)

## Discussion starters

1. How would our neighborhoods and communities be different if the Islamic concept of charity was more deeply understood?
2. How do you think successful social reform is connected with charity?
3. What kinds of charity can we do every day to increase the brotherhood and sisterhood between us? How can we extend this spirit of charity to people we may not normally connect with: our neighbors, our co-workers, our teachers, the people we pass on the street?
4. Why does the Quran so strongly connect charity with "those who believe in the truth"?
5. Large segments of the Muslim communities, especially in suburban areas or immigrant communities, tend to be relatively comfortable financially. If we are in such a state, is it possible to nurture a deep and true understanding and empathy for those experiencing poverty?
6. How do we help Muslims become a part of the social fabric in America, to the point that they are deeply concerned for their people in America to the same extent that they may be concerned for those suffering in other parts of the world?

## Meet the challenge

1. Plan what you are going to give in charity this Ramadan, and then push yourself to give even more. Go beyond the limit of what you would normally spend, and remember to give the right that MAS has upon you as a member in your wealth. Also think in terms of giving to the surrounding community from your time, your food, your clothing, and your skills.
2. Try to host or organize a charitable campaign in your community such as the ones organized by MAS Service Corps. (<http://www.masservicecorps.org>)

## How to share your light

1. Many Muslims do not understand the significance and depth of the Islamic concept of charity. Help spread this knowledge and understanding by sharing it in your circles, khutbas, and halaqas.
2. Initiate or add to the discussion in the comments section of the MAS Tarbiya blog.

# Beam III

## *Struggle against Inconsistency & Laziness*



One of the challenges facing Muslims who aspire to serve Allah is the inconsistency and laziness in their effort. The problem becomes more immense for those of us who are active and is one of the main challenges before MAS members. People start their journey of Islamic activism being very active and passionate; they put in a great amount of time, money, and effort. Then, perhaps we move to another city, graduate from college, have one or two bad experiences, become disillusioned, get married or have kids. The energy decreases, the excitement fades, and the effort diminishes.

There are many reasons for this to happen, and it is important to catch ourselves when we are being inconsistent and becoming lazy. Inconsistency has harmful consequences for us as individuals, for MAS as a group, and for the greater society. Fortunately, every illness has a cure and there are ways to avoid and cure this affliction. This beam will address the negative qualities of laziness and inconsistency and help MAS members overcome them.

### Objectives

- To bring the awareness of MAS members to this very negative and dangerous quality
- To help them understand inconsistency, be aware of its consequences, find out how to cure it
- To inspire MAS members to use the advantages of Ramadan to combat laziness

## How to get light

1. Every MAS member should read the summary and objectives above.
2. Read the article below in the resource section or delay this reading to the day of the discussion
3. The discussion should take place in a 20-40 min. session in a MAS self-development program (usra, connect, etc.)

## Resources

1. [The Obstacles of Inconsistency & Laziness](#), an article by Anees Shaikh

## Discussion starters

1. Is it your norm to be energetic and consistent, with only moments of laziness, or to be dormant most of the time and only active in spurts?
2. What are some contemporary tools and methods that can help us build consistency in our worship, practice, and activism? Calendars? Self-help books? Exercise? What else? What have you found helpful?
3. Can you think of examples of people you know who were steadfast and consistent for many, many years? How did they maintain their commitment and consistency?
4. Think of realistic examples of how someone like you or me could fall unknowingly into the trap of 1) focusing on only one or a few aspects of Islam 2) losing sight of the mission and intention 3) exaggerating practice.
5. What kinds of negative thinking and mind traps make us inconsistent and have short, bursts of enthusiasm in worship or Islamic work followed by periods of inactivity?
6. Think of a few things that you are consistent with, and a few things that you are not (but wish you were). Try to identify patterns and discover new approaches to building consistency and positive habits. Look for new ideas and sources of inspiration instead of just staying in the same place.

## How to share your light

1. Implement in your daily routine at least one half-hour of serving Allah (swt) by contributing to MAS work every day. A half-hour, every day by every member, can lead to a complete rebirth of MAS. Find something that you can do at home on the days when there are no meetings or when the only time you can spare is at midnight or after Fajr (teach Quran in a MAS center, help manage chapter finances, write an article, compose a reflection or a khutba, connect with usra members, translate a book into English, or, if you have no ideas, ask MAS Tarbiya what you can do!). Do *something* every day, and resolve to make that something that you will continue for the rest of your life.
2. Increase work that is done collectively so that you are more likely to keep up with it (prayers, fasting, etc.). Pick a few brothers or sisters in your circle of friends and family to check on often, see how they are doing in their faith and their practice, and encourage them to stay consistent and enthusiastic.



# Beam IV

## *Strive to Convey Islam*

The month of Ramadan is also the month of calling people to Allah - *dawah*. While we increase in our worship, we also must increase in the effort we put into *dawah* because this will insha'allah dynamically enhance our Ramadan experience as we strive for Him and attempt that which we may find difficult and challenging. The people around us are so curious to learn and know about Islam - they are waiting for the message and sometimes it is we who are holding the message back.

"To convey Islam with utmost clarity" is an Islamic obligation and a critical element in MAS' mission. We can do this first by being walking examples of the guidance of Islam everywhere we go. All MAS members should also work to directly convey the message through example, interaction, communication and education. MAS chapters should consider running a set of formal events to introduce Islam to their communities through open houses and other creative ideas. Ramadan gives us an easy "excuse" to reach out to our neighbors and community members! MAS Tarbiya urges members to use the blessed month's opportunity to get out of our comfort zones and interact with people around them, introducing the values of Islam to our centers, workplaces, public schools, and streets.

### Objectives

- To bring attention to the very important part of our mission: conveying Islam with utmost clarity
- To fulfill objective number five of the five objectives of MAS Tarbiya Department: Bearers of a message
- To widen the understanding of the phrase "Flee to Allah," from the individual level to the level of society
- To bring to our members' attention to the many forms of conveying Islam, in addition to formal preaching
- To challenge MAS members, teams, and chapters to explore innovative ways to convey Islam
- To maximize the benefit of the blessed month of Ramadan and to take advantage of the curiosity of people around this month

## How to get light

1. Every MAS member should read the summary and the objectives above
2. Read the article on conveying Islam in Ramadan in the resource section.
3. Visit the [MAS Outreach website](#), explore their programs, and develop a plan for implementing the ideas in this beam during Ramadan.

## Resources

1. [Ramadan: The Month of Dawah](#), a Lighthouse Project article by Zaiid Abbasi
2. [Social Awareness](#), a 5-minute video, part of an online video series *In the Shade of Ramadan, Season Two* by MAS Youth and MAS Media Foundation

## Discussion starters

1. What can I do personally to convey Islam to people around me?
2. What is unique in Ramadan that makes it an ideal opportunity to convey Islam?
3. Is there a creative way that my family, usra, and I can use the opportunity of Ramadan to convey Islam to my neighbors and colleagues? How can I teach my children or the youth I mentor to feel responsible for conveying Islam?
4. What holds us back –as individuals and as a community- from conveying Islam? How can we address these issues?
5. How do we go about taking *dawah* from a much-talked about concept and priority to real and practical action plans?
6. How can I mobilize the community around me to join this effort?

## Meet the challenge

1. Find a way to incorporate *dawah* – calling others to Allah – in your Ramadan plan, on both the individual and the collective level.
2. Discuss plans for your chapter to step up its *dawah* efforts and develop a plan to reach out to the community in Ramadan.

## How to share your light

Help educate the community about the criticalness of engaging in *dawah* throughout Ramadan—developing their understanding of *dawah* and activism as part and parcel of spirituality. Help MAS members become foremost in their understanding and utilize Ramadan to help *dawah* become one of our foremost priorities.

# Beam V

## *Emulate Uthman ibn Affan*

Our beloved role model to emulate in this episode is Uthman ibn Affan, the man whom the angels were shy of and the man to whom the Prophet (saw) married two of his daughters. Uthman embodies many of the characteristics and principles that we explored in the episode, *Flee to Allah*. He possessed the most excellent of character, deep *haya'* – modesty- before Allah (swt) and was one of the foremost givers in charity.

## How to get light

1. Read the two articles in the resource section, use any other resources you have access to, and dedicate a session in your weekly study circle to live with Uthman ibn Affan and extract lessons from his life.
2. Try to explore the personality of Uthman using other sources and audio lectures. Aspire to become an expert on his life so that you can emulate his characteristics.

### Objectives

- To nurture a love for one of the greatest companions, know his achievements, and aspire to emulate his character
- To understand how generosity and charity can affect the course of history
- To help members evaluate themselves according to Uthman's standards and utilize Ramadan to align their development with Uthman's exemplary characteristics

## Resources

1. [Uthman ibn Affan of the Two Lights](#), a Lighthouse Project article by Safaa Alshiraidah.
2. [Uthman ibn Affan, The Man with the Two Lights](http://www.islamonline.net/english/Journey/2005/11/jour03.shtml), a two-part article by Islamonline.net (<http://www.islamonline.net/english/Journey/2005/11/jour03.shtml>)

## Discussion starters

1. What about Uthman affects you most deeply?
2. How can we nurture a sense of modesty and humility as Uthman had? Are modesty and humility attainable or must you be born with those traits?
3. Uthman had a deeply loving relationship with his wife Ruqayyah, the daughter of the Prophet. Poets used to describe the two believers as the perfect example of a harmonious couple. What characteristics did Uthman have that can help us become better spouses?
4. What is so significant about the pledge that the Muslims made during Hudaibiyah that Allah (swt) would reveal such powerful verses about that situation?
5. What can we learn from Uthman's behavior and approach to the events leading to his martyrdom?
6. When examining the personality of Uthman, in what ways do you think Islam creates consonance between gentleness and strength?

## Meet the challenge

1. Remember the extraordinary generosity of Uthman on the day of preparing the army that would face the Romans. Contemplate on how that generosity earned him a place in Paradise, and reflect on how we can achieve a similar level of generosity and detachment from material wealth.
2. Try to emulate the *haya'* of Uthman in the month of Ramadan.

## How to share your light

1. Share your knowledge of the life and merits of Uthman ibn Affan in your khutbas, reflections, and study circles.
2. Share your reflections and feedback on the [MAS Tarbiya blog](#).