

## Valedictory Speech of outgoing NASFAT President - Bro Niyi Yusuf

In the name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful. I bear witness that there is no one worthy of worship but Allah (SWT) alone, I bear witness that Muhammad (SAW) is His servant and the seal of His Messengers. I seek refuge from Allah against shaytan, the accursed. Whomsoever Allah guides will never be led astray, and whomsoever Allah leaves astray, no one can guide. I greet you all in the best form by saying Assalam alaykum waraamatulahi wabarakatuhu.

Al-Ḥamdu lillah rabbil-'ālamīn! All praises, all salutations, all glory, all honour and all adorations belong to Almighty Allah, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds, the Most Gracious, the Exceedingly Merciful, Master of the Day of Judgement. Whatever Allah wishes, no one can deny. Allah is the One we worship and whose help we seek, we beseech Him to show us the straightway and keep our feet steadfast in His deen. Amen.

It is with immense pleasure and gratitude that I stand before you today as we gather to celebrate the accomplishments and journey of our dear Society, the Nasrul-Lahi-L-Fatih Society (NASFAT). Your presence here is a testament to the love, strength, unity and brotherhood that define our Ummah. I extend a warm welcome to each and every one of you who has joined us physically and virtually on this special occasion. Today is not just an ordinary day; it is a day of reflection, gratitude, fellowship, and renewal.

I thank Allah for His mercies, blessings, guidance and favour over the last 1,567 nights of my tenure as the President of the NASFAT Society, from October 20, 2019 to February 4, 2024. I'm grateful for His guidance which enabled me discharge the multifaceted and onerous responsibilities as President of our dear society to the best of my ability. As with everything that has a beginning, there is an end, except Allah. For Allah is Al-'Awwal, The First, without a beginning. Allah is Al-'Akhir, The Last, without an end. I am deeply thankful that my tenure is ending on a very positive note. Al-Ḥamdu lillah rabbil-'ālamīn!

I acknowledge with deep heartfelt gratitude the unconditional acceptance and support I received from the elders, leaders, youths, women, members, friends, and supporters of NASFAT Society across locations. I thank them for their unflinching support and trust in the direction provided by the National Executive Council as we charted unfamiliar terrains including navigating the turbulence of covid-19, starting online asalatu, enduring two economic recessions, cash scarcity, insecurity and kidnapping, removal of subsidies, rising inflation, cost of living crisis including many other global and local events that happened in the last 4 years which significantly challenged our imagination, stretched our resources, tested our capacity and for which we had to carefully manage and navigate. Al-Ḥamdu lillah rabbil-'ālamīn for Allah's Guidance!

I appreciate and specially thank all my colleagues in the National Executive Council (NEC), the Zonal Executive Councils, and Branch Executive Councils for tolerating my fastidious nature over the last 224 weeks. It has been a privilege leading these Executive Councils and being the chief visioner. Thank you for allowing me to push us to move beyond our comfort zone to innovate, disrupt and embrace change, sometimes at great personal expense. Thank you for accepting my multiple challenges and trusting my direction even when what we needed to do was poorly defined, and the task may seem daunting. Your support made possible the seemingly impossible. In 51.5 months, we inaugurated 43 groups into full fledged branches of the society and we also formed 10 additional zones for the society to ease administration.

I recall with immense gratitude the support received from our members across locations during the covid pandemic. Through your support, the society was able to immediately switch to virtual asalatu sessions and we provided food and financial support of a minimum of N1.0m daily for over 2 months of the covid-19 lockdown in 2020. This unplanned and unprecedented situation which happened within the first 6 months of my tenure as President would have been insurmountable but for your collaboration. I thank you all most sincerely for your solid support and kind generosity which made this and many other initiatives possible. Indeed, *if you want to go fast, go alone, but if you want to go far, go together* (African Proverb). Together, we have gone far, and a lot has been achieved, yet so much still left to be done.

I have also greatly benefitted from the wise counsel and immeasurable support of the National Council of Elders and the Board of Trustees. You gave me wings to fly! I was able to see far because I stood on the shoulders of many giants in the Society, including all prior 6 Presidents who graciously supported in different forms and allowed the NEC to build upon the solid foundation they had laid. As said by Maya Angelou *"I come as one, but I stand as ten thousand"*.

I warmly thank the leadership of our 29 primary schools, 11 secondary schools, 8 medical centers and 10 agencies (Tafsan Investment Limited, Tafsan Tours & Travels Limited, Fountain University, Nasfat Agency for Zakat & Sadaqat – NAZAS, Havek Leadership Academy, NASFAT Relief Initiative - NRI, LASILKIIN Communications Limited – KIIN Media, NASFAT Legal Aid Council - NASLAC, NASFAT Health Initiatives – NASHIN and the NASFAT Missionary Institute – NMI) for their contributions to the mission of NASFAT and for their support and stewardship. Your collaboration with the NEC and selfless service made simple an otherwise complex affair, and enabled NASFAT to remain a pace-setting society with widespread acceptance.

Despite our multiple agencies, NASFAT at the core remains a religious society with a clear mission of developing an enlightened Muslim society nurtured by a true understanding of Islam for the spiritual upliftment and welfare of mankind. We cannot thank and appreciate our volunteers, workers, committee members, and missionaries enough for their commitment and service. I thank all our missionaries and would specifically like to thank Imam Onike, our indefatigable Chief Missioner, for his altruistic and progressive disposition. I was never in doubt of his intentions, always promoting Dawah for the benefit of NASFAT and humanity. So, it was easy to resolve our differences in style and approach in forging a united front that made our focus on Health, Education, Livelihood and Dawah (HELD) meaningful, impactful, and more than a slogan. I am very proud of the fact that, in any month, NASFAT now conducts intensive da'wah training in one of our zones.

Jazakallahu khayran to my family, relatives, friends, associates, work colleagues, mentees, my senior friends, mentors and benefactors in and outside of NASFAT, whose counsel and significant and sustained financial support every year has helped us record progress with Aseese Mosque, Fountain University and other initiatives under the HELD agenda. I thank all the members of FUPAC, FUDC and the N1.0m donor group for Aseese Mosque. *Shukran*.

To my wife, children, siblings, and in-laws, I thank you for your moral and financial support, that gave me the platform to do all I did.

I have reflected on the following statements that were part of my acceptance speech in 2019. These statements provided guardrails for our activities as a leadership team since then. I thank Allah and all our friends for their support that allowed us to deliver on most of our promises.

*"So we know we must do more to make NASFAT attractive to more Muslims and non-Muslims, NASFAT must provide a cover for all, as we are all one humanity.*

*Hence, in the coming days, I will be working with our leadership, colleagues and friends to focus our attention, programs and interventions in 4 areas of immediate focus – Health, Education, Livelihood and Da'wah (with the acronym HELD).*

*Our solemn promise as NEC: we care, we will work hard, very hard and put in our very best 24x7. We will listen to all, accept feedback, promote inclusion and embrace our diversity. We will have the courage to try new ideas, take bold initiatives, and creatively do more with less. We will act with integrity, purpose and honour, we will be transparent and accountable to earn your trust and support. We are aware of the huge expectations and in turn, we solicit your involvement, support, criticism, feedback and prayers. May God help us. Amen."* – Acceptance Speech 2019

My experience has reiterated my belief that we need more Muslims and professionals to heed the call to serve Allah with their time, talent and treasures, and assume leadership positions in our groups, branches,

zones, committees, organs, and agencies, so they can influence and contribute to the progress, growth, development and transformation of NASFAT.

All progress belongs to the “*Man in the Arena*” as said on April 23, 1910 by Theodore Roosevelt, the 26<sup>th</sup> President of the USA:

*“It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.”*

Hence, we must thank all members of the Society who stood up to make a difference and volunteered to serve in the incoming NEC (2024 – 2026). I pray Allah grants you profound successes ahead. Amen. Like climbing a big mountain, you need 8 Ps for the journey ahead: Preparation, People, Partners, Prayers, Patience, Perseverance, Prioritisation (focus scarce resources on the important things) and Perspectives (a perspective that balances the needs of critical stakeholders with both the short term and long-term goals of the Society).

**The best of NASFAT is yet to come and the possibilities are endless, bi ithnillahi tahala.** We are only limited by our vision. I encourage you not to be limited by our challenges and to think big, take bold decisions “*and do not despair of the help of Allah. Verily, only the unbelievers despair of Allah’s mercy* (Q12:87). Put your trust in Allah, “*Wa Ma Nasru Illa Min Indi Llah*” (There is no Help except from Allah). يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ ١٥٣  
“*Oh you who believe! Seek help with patient perseverance and prayer, for God is with those who patiently persevere.*” (Q2:153)

Serving in this esteemed position as President of our great society has been a privilege, and I am profoundly grateful for the trust and unwavering support you have bestowed upon me over the last 4 years, and my last request, as your President, is to ask you to extend even greater support to the new NEC led by my brother, Alhaji AbdulWaheed Ayodeji AbdulRauf, so they can continue from where we stopped and take the Society to the next level. In sha Allah.

Let us all offer our wholehearted support and unconditional cooperation as we welcome a new chapter in the history of our beloved society. The challenges we face may evolve, but I have no doubt that the spirit of unity and Islamic brotherhood that defines NASFAT will prevail and Allah will grant us success. Amen,

إِنَّا فَتَحْنَا لَكَ فَتْحًا مُّبِينًا ١  
لِيَغْفِرَ لَكَ اللَّهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِن ذَنْبِكَ وَمَا  
تَأَخَّرَ وَيُتِمَّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكَ وَيَهْدِيَكَ  
صِرَاطًا مُسْتَقِيمًا ٢  
وَيَنْصُرَكَ اللَّهُ نَصْرًا عَظِيمًا ٣  
(Q48: 1 – 3)

*Indeed, We have granted you a clear triumph O Prophet,  
so that Allah may forgive you for your past and future shortcomings, perfect His favour upon you, guide you along the Straight Path, and so that Allah will help you tremendously with powerful help (Q48:1-3).*

Ameen. I thank Allah for His Powerful Help. I ended my acceptance speech in 2019 with *Ise ya o*, it is fitting to end this valedictory speech with *Olorun, mo dupe o*. I thank you all for your attention.

Ma salam.  
Lagos.  
04/02/2024.