

**SPEECH TEXT BY YAB PRIME MINISTER: OCEANS THAT SPEAK,
ISLAM AND THE EMERGENCE OF THE MALAY WORLD**

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SPEECH BY

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PERDANA MENTERI

FOR

**“OCEANS THAT SPEAK, ISLAM AND THE EMERGENCE
OF THE MALAY WORLD”**

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ISLAMIC ARTS MUSEUM

KUALA LUMPUR

Assalamualaikum warrahmatullahi wabarakatuh dan salam sejahtera.

YBhg. Tan Sri Syed Mokhtar Albukhary,

Pengerusi Yayasan Albukhary dan Puan Sri Sharifah Zarah Albukhary;

Tuan Syed Mohamad Albukhary,

Pengarah Muzium Kesenian Islam dan keluarga yang membantu;

Sahabat-sahabat yang begitu komited dan rakan-rakan yang saya muliakan.

1. Kita tentunya biasa dengan pameran. Tetapi seringkali ada juga pameran yang dianggap terkecuali, istimewa dan unik. Dan saya kira 'Samudara Berbicara' ini sesuatu yang agak lain daripada biasa yang memaparkan satu sejarah gemilang. Islam bertapak di mana-mana, Asia, Afrika dan dunia Arab. Tetapi ada kelainannya tentang kaedah penyebarannya dan kegiatan dakwahnya di Asia Tenggara, Ceraman, melibatkan Hadhrami melibatkan India, khususnya India Selatan, China, Hadhrami tentunya ulama-ulama besar dari India, termasuk dari Kalinga Selatan, termasuk Kerala, Kardataka, dan di situ juga ada Karsaragot dan Malik Dinar yang menyebabkan pengaruh yang kuat melalui ahli Sufi dan juga pedagang. Dan menampilkan tokoh-

tokoh besar seperti Nuruddin al-Raniri, yang tidak menguasai bahasa Melayu sama sekali, tetapi kalau mengikut data sejarah telah ke Pahang dan menguasai bahasa Melayu dari satu markas di Pahang. Itu kerja Dato' Dr. Mohd Anwar Ridhwan untuk cari jawapannya.

2. Kemudian dari negara China tentunya disebut oleh Syed Muhammad tadi tentang pengembaraan besar Armada China yang pada masa itu 1451 sampai 1453 dianggap armada terbesar dalam sejarah, yang menampilkan tokoh dan sosok seperti Cheng He dengan perkampungannya di Melaka, perkampungan beberapa persisiran Jawa yang menyebabkan ada komuniti Muslim, China dan campuran Melayu di Jawa.
3. Dan kalau S.Q. Fatimi bawa teori itu mengembangkannya mengatakan Islam di Kepulauan Melayu, Tanah Melayu, Jawa, Sumatera itu dari negara China, jadi S.Q. Fatimi kata Islam come from China itu agak menarik. Dan kita di Malaysia dan juga di Kepulauan Melayu berasa bertuah kerana dari awal bertapaknya Islam itu dia menunjukkan kekuatan yang cukup kosmopolitan. Ia mendakap pengaruh dari semua membawa kekuatan kepada bentuk pemikiran, bahasa dan budaya kita.
4. Syed Muhammad menyebut tentang Tome Pires. Ia menggambarkan kekuatan dan keagungan Melaka pada ketika itu. Tetapi, saya ingin menambah bukan sahaja kekuatan pelabuhannya, tapi ada hubungan dengan apa yang diungkapkan peranan Profesor DiRaja Ungku Aziz. Kalau tidak salahnya mengikut Profesor DiRaja Ungku Aziz, dia ke London dan masa itu ada beberapa manuskrip lama, diambil kerana

dia kata ini manuskrip lama Melayu Islam. Ini disebut 'Aqa'id al-Nasafi' dan dari situ pulang dan menyerahkan kepada Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas yang kemudian menyatakan tentang penulisan dan pengupasan karya agung Islam yang lama dalam Bahasa Melayu. Itu yang disebut 'Aqa'id al-Nasafi'. Ini baik juga kerana saya boleh juga ulangkaji kajian ini.

5. Jadi penampilan Syed tentang Samudera Berbicara bagi saya itu sangat penting kerana ia memberi gambaran yang kuat dari segi pelabuhan, governance dan sebagainya, tetapi ada kekuatan tambahan tentang apa yang disebut ideas and faith. Each artifact on display tells us the tales of migration, restoration and integration which count much of diplomatic, religious and social exchanges of the time.
6. Now may I elaborate, the theory espoused by Prof Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas. Look at these artifacts hopefully, I have not seen but then I believe your competence and experience and passion to display would prove major points to support the theory. Islam, in his one of his great earlier writings, first of course, Hamzah Fansuri which also engulfed this intellectual, heavy intellectual debates between 'wahdatul wujud' and 'wahdatul syuhud'.
7. I am talking about four to five hundred years ago I mean as compared to the petty debate about Islam popularised by some semi educated politicians. But Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas originally wrote the theory of Islamization in the Malaysian-Indonesian archipelago. And then he expanded the thesis into Islam dalam sejarah dan

kebudayaan Melayu. And the thrust of this argument is that Islam in Malaysia or in the Malay world treats religion as a departure from near rituals to the whole attempt to not only change the body, but the soul – rupa dan jiwa. And that's why he brought in 'Aqa'id al-Nasafi' as an example, and then the manuscript in Terengganu, and then the literature of Syeikh Syamsuddin Ibn Abdullah As-Sumatrani and Syeikh Daud bin Abdullah al-Fatani and Hamzah Fansuri in the Malay world where there was a robust intellectual debate and exchanges on the issues of spirituality, faith and to an extent also language and governance. So, I'm of course excited personally and would strongly encourage Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka to undertake a special mission to be much associated with this particular exhibition.

8. And I believe universities not only University Malaya, but universities should undertake additional efforts because this exhibition would mark as I have alluded too earlier the whole attempt to understand Islam in this region because the problem in this sort of exchanges is the discourse often times dictated by the capitals in the West.
9. Islam always seen from the prism of their understanding particularly what is happening in the Middle East. Islam in Malaysia and Indonesia, of course, Islam is Islam, that is associated universal pattern but it is also special aspect and dimension which is different, which expresses more tolerance and understanding just by nature how Islam was plot in, the Arabs, from the Indian, from the Chinese, and that gave strong impact to our understanding in tolerance of what things may have changed, but that I think is the essence of this exhibition because it would create that sort of understanding by

understanding I mean intolerance and acceptance of a multiracial, multicultural world.

10. Even the Malacca, when we refer to Malacca for example, there has been revised who are pure Indians or strong Arab origin but that is a sort of racism which we hear now it is quite absent in the right things in those days, Nurudin al-Raniri is a pure Indian Muslim. The consciousness about race began somewhat in the 1930s or 1940s with the DKA and DKI. DKA is people like Mokhtar Bukhari, Darah Keturunan Arab and DKI is Darah Keturunan India, when this just in 1913 to 1930 the time when there was a very strong urge for identity and a place in this society.
11. That's why I think going back to history, going back to the arts and culture and such an exhibition would help us to read over understanding and see this more positive contribution of Islam in this region.
12. And so in that note again, I thanks to Mokhtar Bukhari's Family and Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia for the opportunity to launch and give a short lecture on the subject. I think it is a good you encouraging me to attend and probably I had to revise some of my old texts, which is new to Dato' Seri Dr. Wan Azizah. No chance to discuss all these issues.
13. So, thank you again Syed Muhammad and I would other just formal launching this exhibition, would strongly urge universities, education

institutions, Dewan Bahasa Dan Pustaka, Jabatan Arkib Negara and National Library and it takes special effort, because this is unique and commendable. It's not always you have exhibition of this standard in the region. I follow very closely developments in the region and between the Islamic exhibition and this exhibition, thank you, jazakallah khair is exceptional in terms of the substance, content and message.

14. Jadi, saya sekali lagi akhiri dengan mengucapkan terima kasih dan minta maaf kerana saya memilih untuk menyampaikan pandangan dari apa yang saya kenal, kebetulan saya belajar dari Almarhum Profesor Diraja Dr. Haji Ungku Abdul Aziz, Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas dan Syed Hussein Al-Attas. Kalau di izinkan, if I'm permitted just to extend a bit of this argument, you see people like Hussin Al-Attas and Naqib takes a different dimension about the whole process of Islamization.
15. In the 1940s, Mohammad Natsir, an Indonesian wrote for one of the in Indonesian journals and later published as kapita selekta and that was the first time in the english speaking world, at that time, of course, he wrote in Indonesian, introduce the great Belgian history, which was quite unknown among the english speaking world or academia.
16. Henri Pirenne wrote two important works, 'Mohammed and Charlemagn' and a History of Europe, where he maintained that the so-called modernization in Europe happened after the initial conflict between the follows of 'Mohammed and Charlemagn' and of course

the grandfather Charles Martel and that transformed Europe in terms of ideas, intellectual tradition that was absent in the past.

17. Now Syed Hussein Al-Attas in 1960's wrote a paper for the conference of historians of Asia entitled 'The reconstruction of Malaysian History'. We are use Henri Pirenne central argument that the point of departure in understanding what modernity is all about is not just faith and rituals but the intellectual tradition.
18. So modernity is not because of the printing press, modernity because the understanding the intellectual tradition, the tradition of knowledge and culture, and that was the paper entitled 'The reconstruction of Malaysian History'. I great difficulty in getting that, finally, the University of Malaya librarian searched and found it, but it's just left and ignore which it's unfortunate because I think it's one of the major pieces in trying to encapsulate the whole understanding of what history is all about, that was 1960.
19. In 1971, we have Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas's book on Islam in culture and history – Islam dan sejarah kebudayaan Melayu where he expanded the Henri Pirenne thesis and we got the Pirenne thesis about how you'd see the rule of Islam in terms of changing not only the physical appearance and culture, as you know like now people highlight the dress code to the Mrs Wine edition, but more so the intellectual tradition and the love for scholarship.
20. So this unfortunately, I missed that earlier point with Henri Pirenne. So I think your next assignment, Tan Sri Datuk Syed Mokhtar

Albukhary is to find out the writing of Henri Pirenne, how his influence the thinking, understanding culture of Islam in this region.

Terima Kasih,

Wassalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.

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