



KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY

**YAB DATO' SERI ANWAR IBRAHIM
PRIME MINISTER OF MALAYSIA**

**IN HONOUR OF ROYAL LAUREATE PROFESSOR NAQUIB
AL-ATTAS'S EXTEMPORE SPEECH
ON HIS BOOK, *ISLAM: THE COVENANTS FULFILLED***

**26 JANUARY 2025 | 8:45 P.M.
WORLD TRADE CENTRE, KUALA LUMPUR**

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh dan salam sejahtera

Alhamdulillah, alladzi arsala rosulahu bil huda wa dinil haq.

Liyuzhhirohu 'alad dini kullihi.

Wa kafa billahi syahida.

Wa usolli wassallim 'ala rasulil kareem.

Wa 'ala alihi wasahbihi ajma'in.

**Yang Kami Muliakan, Royal Laureate Profesor Tan Sri Dr. Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas;
Guru Kami dan Guru Bangsa;**

**Yang Berhormat Senator Dato' Seri Diraja Dr. Zambry bin Abd Kadir,
Menteri Pengajian Tinggi;**

**Yang Berhormat Puan Fadhlina Sidek,
Menteri Pendidikan;**

**Menteri-Menteri;
Tetamu Kehormat; dan
Saudara Saudari.**

1. Satu penghormatan besar untuk meraikan Royal Laureate Profesor Tan Sri Dr. Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, di mana pada tahun lalu beliau telah menggambarkan Zaaba sebagai pemukul rebana, saya mengambil kesempatan merenung sumbangan guru bangsa Profesor Tan Sri Dr. Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, peniup seruling nyaring nyanyi menusuk kalbu.

2. In the classic Persian work of Sufi poet Farid ud-Din Attar, *The Conference of the Birds (Manṭiq-aṭ-Ṭayr)*, we come across these esoteric couplet:

It was in China, late one moonless night,
The Simorgh first appeared to mortal sight

3. And we are told that the hoopoe tells the birds that they will have to cross seven valleys – facing the hazards of even death – in order to reach the abode of this legendary Simorgh.

4. This evening, we gather to listen to the bezels of wisdom from a towering intellect, an internationally renowned scholar of the highest calibre, our beloved *sheikh*, Royal

Laureate Professor Tan Sri Dr Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas.

5. Indeed, while we are grateful for his enlightening forays into history, semantics, literature, civilizational studies, philosophy, metaphysics and, Islam, we cannot yet begin to fathom the depth of Professor Naquib's legacy.
6. But make no mistake, it is a legacy that has been forged on a lifetime of dedication to the passionate pursuit of knowledge and learning, a religious calling for the quest of the truth and understanding, a mystical odyssey into the mysteries of the unknown.
7. As the main purpose is to listen to Professor Naquib himself extemporise on his latest book *Islam: The Covenants Fulfilled*, it would be quite unnecessary for me, even audacious, to attempt to review it. Suffice it to say that when Professor Naquib dwells into the world of Islam and the fulfilment of the primordial covenant between God and man, it is best that we stay in our lane – as students.
8. Nevertheless, speaking of students, I am proud to declare that I have been one of the most fortunate of Professor Naquib's circle of devoted pupils to have benefitted from

his wisdom and foresight. His magnum opus – *Islam and Secularism* – published more than four decades ago, has had a lasting impression on me and I believe still remains compellingly relevant today.

9. Professor Naquib expounds and advocates with passionate zeal the concepts of *dīn*, *‘adl*, *ḥikmah*, *adab*, and *ta’dīb* – which I made an effort to inculcate, among his many other weighty ideas and values, in our system during my time as Education Minister, back in the 80’s.
10. Now, going back even further when I was an undergraduate, Professor Naquib inspired us to go the extra mile, to get out of our comfort zone of books and studies, crucial as they are, to do and make things happen.
11. Bolstered and fired by the zeal of Islamic revivalism that became a phenomenon in my youth, ABIM was born from the awareness that Islam is the perfection of beliefs and the ways of living and that a Muslim should live by the principles of tawhid.

12. However, the plethora of provocations could not restrain us from promoting Professor Naquib's thoughts as contained in such books as *Islam Dalam Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Melayu (1972)*, which coincidentally was also a text for all teachers when I then became Minister of Education and *Risalah Untuk Kaum Muslimin (1973)* apart from the many others.
13. I do want to underscore one fundamental point in all these works – and that is the primacy of Malay dignity and the inherent strength of Malay society built on the foundations of Islamic values. This is an aspect which needs reiteration particularly in this day and age rather than partake of the self-induced delusion of “Malays losing power” and the consequential chest thumping hysteria in asserting “ketuanan Melayu.”
14. In short, Professor Naquib's great works remind us of the Islamic outlook on life based on the overarching dominion of the core civilizational values of justice, culture, freedom, morality, and societal progress. Above all, the call to overcome ignorance with knowledge, to go into the light from darkness – all these being the absolutely essential building blocks of a noble and great civilization.

15. Insya-Allah, the government will take the initiative to enhance the Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas Library at ISTAC with its current collection estimated at more than 150,000 titles.

16. Let us pray that future generations will draw inspiration and benefit from our quintessential Islamic scholar, our teacher par excellence, our beloved Royal Laureate Professor Naquib al-Attas.

Wa billahi taufik walhidayah wassalamualaikum
warahmatullahi wa barakatuh.