

**SPEECH BY PRESIDENT OF MUIS  
HJ MOHD ALAMI MUSA  
AT MUIS TEA RECEPTION-CUM PRESIDENT'S CHALLENGE  
ON SAT, 9 OCT 2010  
AT SHERATON TOWERS**

Yang Amat Berhormat Presiden S R Nathan & Puan Nathan  
Yang Berhormat Menteri Sekitaran & Sumber Air merangkap  
Menteri Hal Ehwal Masyarakat Islam Dr Yaacob Ibrahim  
Dhaif-dhaif Terhormat, Duta-duta besar dan Pesuruh Jaya  
Para Anggota Parlimen  
Sobihus Samaha Mufti  
Tuan – Tuan & Puan – Puan yang saya hormati  
Assalamualaikum wr wb & Salam Sejahtera

Ini adalah kali ke 33, Muis menganjurkan jamuan teh seperti hari ini. Ia diadakan buat kali pertama pada tahun 1978. Pada masa itu ia dianjurkan untuk menyambut Maulidur Rasul dan untuk menyampaikan anugerah Jasa Cemerlang dan Jasa Bakti Muis.

Pada hari kita meneruskan tradisi menganjurkan Jamuan Teh Muis ini buat kali ke 33. Tetapi dengan dua perbezaan. Sambutan Maulidur Rasul diadakan secara besar-besaran dan berasingan oleh masjid-masjid kita. Dan kedua, majlis penyampaian cek sebagai sumbangan masyarakat Islam untuk Dana Cabaran Presiden diadakan bersama dengan Jamuan Teh Muis.

Matlamat Jamuan Teh Muis yang dikekalkan selama 33 tahun ini adalah untuk meraikan para sukarelawan kita dan juga untuk menyampaikan anugerah Jasa Cemerlang serta Jasa Bakti Muis.

Sekarang izinkan saya meneruskan ucapan saya dalam bahasa Inggeris.

His Excellency President S R Nathan & Mrs Nathan  
The Honourable Dr Yaacob Ibrahim  
Excellencies  
Ladies & Gentlemen

I like to warmly welcome you to the Muis Tea Reception. On behalf of Muis, I like to profusely thank our President, HE President SR Nathan and Mrs Nathan for gracing this occasion with their kind presence. I like to also thank Honourable Minister and all of you for your kind presence.

1 This afternoon, Muis will honour outstanding individuals who have made significant contributions to the socio-religious life of Singaporean Muslims. The recipients of this year's Muis Jasa Cemerlang and Jasa Bakti Awards represent a good spectrum of our volunteers. On behalf of Muis, I like to congratulate all our award winners.

2 Many of our guests today are volunteers from mosques, madrasah, the asatizah fraternity and voluntary welfare organizations. On behalf of Muis, I like to convey our deepest appreciation to all our volunteers, contributors and the community for the good support that they have given us. This has enabled Muis to effectively perform its role and functions.

3 As a statutory board, Muis' role is defined under AMLA as a body that administers Islamic affairs in Singapore. This is indeed a broad definition within which Muis performs a multi-faceted role, covering many aspects of our socio religious life. They include construction of mosques, appointment of mosque leaders, over-

sight of madrasah education (full-time and part-time), approval of wakaf developments, appointment of haj agents, issuance of halal certificates and collection of zakat – among many others. These functions stipulated in AMLA are critical to fulfill socio-religious needs of the public and for Muis to provide the religious leadership to the community.

4 Muis is committed to continuously improve its processes, customer service and Rules governing all these services and functions.

5 Allow me to give some examples. For better customer service, the public can conveniently pay their zakat at any time because we have introduced electronic means of payment. We have also facilitated the halal industry through pro-enterprise initiatives like the Whole Plant Halal Certification Scheme to reduce business costs. Another example is in our haj management, where we have improved the Haj Rules to make the haj system better serve the community. Muis will continue to strive for better service standards expected of it by the public.

6 Besides providing services to cater to the socio-religious needs of the community, another role of Muis is to shape the religious life of the community. This is an important role. Hence, we have spent more resources and have given a lot of attention to this role.

7 However, shaping religious life is not easy. This is because Muslims are not a monolithic faith community and there is diversity with regard to their understanding and practice of Islam. It is not our intention to homogenize the understanding and practice of Islam. As a religion, Islam celebrates diversity. This is seen when the Holy Prophet (pbuh) himself had asked his companion, Mu'adz Ibn Jabal, whom he dispatched to Yemen as the Governor, to apply the power of reasoning to make decisions. This was because the context in Yemen then was different from the one the Prophet experienced in Makkah and Madinah. Holy Prophet was extremely astute to recognize that the context of each society, even during his time, differed. What more for our society today that exists about 1400 years after our Holy Prophet. There are many changes that we need to adapt to. However, as human beings, we respond and adapt differently to a changed context. These different responses and adaptations give rise to the diversity that exists within the Muslim community.

8 In shaping religious life of the Singapore Muslim community, Muis recognizes the need to adapt to changing context of society and to embrace diversity. This is in the spirit of the Prophet's Tradition (Sunnah) as explained earlier. The Prophet (pbuh) has also taught us that there are many fundamentals in our Islamic life that are unchangeable that we must strictly adhere to. Muis is guided by this approach of adaptability and ensuring strict adherence to the unchanging fundamentals as we shape religious life.

9 Through Islamic education for the young and adults, our mosques and asatizah imbibe in our community the fundamental Islamic teachings that make them faithful, moral and practicing Muslims. It is faith, morality, practice of rituals that strengthen religious resilience and provides the anchor in our religious life. I am happy to say that our young are responding well to efforts in building their religious resilience. Mosques have reported higher youth participation in youth Islamic programs – an increase of 25% over the last 3 years.

10 Beyond the unchanging fundamentals that make us resilient, we are encouraged by the progressive and adaptive spirit of our community. The acceptance of recent fatwa on joint tenancy as well as CPF nomination manifest the progressive thinking of our asataizah and the community. As a community, we have been adaptive in our religious life. For example, mosque leaders are today more accepting of the need to be more innovative in reaching out to the young. Moreover, many asatizah have also used creative ways in teaching Islam to the young. For example, Ustaz Sofyan Yadi (from Mydin Mosque) uses drama and music to convey religious messages; Ustaz Muhamad Nuzhan b Abdul Halim (from Masjid Jamiyah Rabitah) uses the lingo of the young to connect with them while Ustaz Zahid Md Zain (from Muhajirin Mosque) uses IT to “power-point” the content of Friday sermons in “youthy” ways.

11 These three asatizah are among an emerging group of young asatizah who are making their mark and are well accepted by our community of elders. We are happy to say that this is one example of the inclusive attitude of our community. This inclusivity in our religious life is also seen from the greater acceptance of our ladies in leadership positions. Two of them are at the apex – being members of the Muis Council; three of them are in the Appeal Board and a good 111 ladies are in our mosque management boards with several holding key appointments. Not only are we generational and gender inclusive in our religious life, our community is also inclusive in more basic religious matters. Let me explain. Malays who are the majority within the Singapore Muslim community and who are dominantly Sunni as well as of the Shafiee school of jurisprudence, are embracing of other Muslims who are not Sunni and Shafiee. It is indeed a blessing that the Singapore Muslim community's spirit of inclusivity has seen it enjoy unity and harmony, amidst its growing diversity.

12 With a positive religious life enjoyed by Muslims here, we can see an emerging level of confidence to contribute beyond the community. The ethos of giving to those in need of help regardless of race or religion is now becoming apparent. The community, through mosques have contributed a total of \$1.9 million so far as humanitarian aid for overseas communities hit by natural calamities.

13 Our mosques are also contributing to the larger society at the local level. In fact, nearly all our mosques today are involved in at least one community project that benefits non-Muslims within their neighbourhoods. This is indeed a new development that has not existed before. Finally, we can also be pleased to note that more mosque leaders are now contributing beyond the minaret. One in five mosque leaders are actively participating in grassroots organisations.

14 I like to end my speech by saying that all of us can take pride that Singaporean Muslims are responding well to calls for them to lead a religious life that is Religiously resilient, inclusive, Contributive, Adaptive and Progressive (RiCAP). We can certainly build on this achievement to further strengthen our Singaporean Muslim Identity or SMI.

15 Thank You.