



**SPEECH BY
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AT ABDUL GAFOOR MOSQUE
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All of us love Rasulullah (saw) so much. We wish that we live at a time when Rasulullah is alive. But this is wishful thinking. Beloved Prophet left us about 1400 years ago.

2 We yearn for his presence because we want him to guide us, especially as we live today in a very different and fast changing world that gives rise to many complex challenges. For example, life-styles are changing, sometimes radically, and many of them challenge our religious values. Furthermore, the society that we live in has become very diverse and we need to manage this diversity. In addition, science and technology have produced numerous inventions and innovations that have ethical implications. And society is stratified between the haves and the have-nots and the situation is made worse because the have-nots are also saddled with a multiplicity of family and social problems.

3 Beloved Prophet is not physically present to guide and to give us solutions to these new challenges that I have mentioned earlier. But he has left us the teachings of Islam embodied in the Holy Koran and his Sunnah (the Prophet's Traditions) to guide us. We can therefore feel that Rasulullah is here to guide us, even if he is not physically present, if we steadfastly hold on to the teachings of Holy Quran and his Sunnah, and we understand these sources in a comprehensive and holistic manner.

4 I like to highlight 5 key elements of the central message of the Holy Koran and the Prophet's Sunnah that can be applied to confront our challenges today.





5 First, Holy Prophet taught us to be **R**eligiously resilient and rooted to Islam, however challenging our life may be, or however changing the world may be.

6 Second, Holy Prophet has taught us to embrace diversity and be **i**nclusive by providing us with examples. For example, when he migrated to Madinah, one of the early things that Rasulullah did was to draw up the Madinah Convention, which is a document to unify the diverse community found in Madinah consisting of Muslims, Jews, Christians, atheists and pagans. This document was very inclusive in spirit, as Holy Prophet did not neglect or ignore the presence of non-Muslims, but he assured them of their rights, even though the Muslims were then already a strong community.

7 Third, Holy Prophet taught us to help the poor, needy, orphans and widows by being **C**ontributive – not only materially but also in non-material ways. Furthermore, Holy Prophet also showed us that our contributive spirit should go beyond just helping Muslims. For example, it was reported that one of the people helped by Holy Prophet was a poor, blind Jew. Everyday, Rasulullah would feed this poor Jew, without fail.

8 Fourth, Holy Prophet taught us not to be rigid in our religious life but rather take cognizance of our social context and **A**dapt Islamic teachings appropriately. This was the advice he gave to Mu'adz Ibn Jabal whom he dispatched to be the Governor of Yemen. He encouraged Mu'adz to apply his power of reasoning using the principles laid down in the scriptural sources, if the Koran or Sunnah did not provide him with explicit guidance needed for his role as the Governor.

9 Finally, Holy Prophet was **P**rogressive in his thinking by applying new ways of doing things. For example, he adopted Khalid ibn Walid's idea of using the





defensive strategy of the Persians by digging a ditch around Madinah to protect the city from the invading Makkan army.

10 These are some of the teachings that Holy Prophet has left us with which are useful to guide us in managing our complex life today.

11 I like to summarise what I have said about Holy Prophet's teachings to just one term – RiCAP – to be **R**eligiously resilient, **i**nclusive, **C**ontributive, **A**daptive and **P**rogressive in our religious life. These attributes of RiCAP which our Holy Prophet has asked us to live with, are needed by us, as we confront the challenges, changes and diversity in our society. Let us all make the attributes of RiCAP a significant part of our social ethos and identity as Muslims in Singapore.

12 As the social ethos and identity of Singaporean Muslims, the RiCAP value of inclusivity also requires us to respect people of other faiths. Rasulullah (saw) is the best example of how respectful is he of people of other faiths. There are many examples, but suffice for me to quote two examples of the high respect that Holy Prophet had for people of other religions.

13 In the first example, Holy Prophet, allowed a delegation of Christian priests who visited him, to pray in the Prophet's Mosque as they could not find any other place to worship. The other example is his respect for a Jewish boy who attached himself to the Holy Prophet throughout his life. Never once, had the Holy Prophet asked the young Jew to convert to Islam. Nevertheless, the young Jew decided on his own volition to become a Muslim just before he died.

14 The religious harmony prevailing in our country is due, in no small part, to the good work of religious leaders including those from our community. Our mosques





and organizational leaders have also shown great enthusiasm in maintaining harmonious relationships with other faith communities. Let us continue to remind ourselves of the excellent example of our Holy Prophet in showing deep respect of people of other faiths and avoid offending those who have beliefs different from ours. The religious talks that we organize and the speakers we engage must continue to maintain and strengthen the respect we have of our diverse society. With this in mind, Muis screens all foreign Muslim speakers to ensure that only those who appreciate our delicate socio-religious environment are allowed to speak in Singapore. Similarly, I hope that Muslim organizations and mosques will continue to strengthen the respect we have of our fellow Singaporeans from other faiths.

14 In conclusion, I like to invite all of you to commemorate the birth of our Holy Prophet in the best possible way, that is by living the spirit of his Sunnah that has provided humanity with goodwill, harmony, peace and happiness.

Thank You.

