

**SPEECH AT 7TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
OF PERKIM GOON LAW ASSOCIATES
ON 21ST APRIL 1999**

I thank you for inviting me again to officiate your Annual General Meeting. I understand that this is your 7th AGM. The fact that there has been no cases coming to Court to injunct the meeting or to have it declared unlawful shows that the Association, has no problems. That is what it should be. Congratulations and keep it up.

The economic crisis in Malaysia is, in a way, a blessing in disguise, especially to private colleges like Institute Perkim Goon. As more parents cannot afford to send their children abroad for studies, more students enrol in local colleges. Of course, it is good for local colleges – businesswise. But I hope that the standard will not be compromised. In fact with better business, I am sure that they can afford to provide better facilities.

I am happy to see that law students of this college have done well in their examinations. The results of the June Examination of the University of London External Programs shows that:

- For Intermediate level - 70% pass rate
- For Finals Part I - 80% pass rate
- For Finals Part II - 100% pass and 80% out of 15 students
obtained 2nd. Class Honours.

Congratulations and keep it up.

Whilst you study hard to obtain good grade in your examinations, you should also remember that it is not just the certificate and the amount of money you make that are important in a man's life. A human being is a complete person – a physical and a spiritual being. Men are created by God in the best of moulds and they may also be abased to be the lowest of the low. That is what the Koran says in Chapter 95 Verse 4 and 5. I don't only believe but I also think that there is a lot of truth in it.

If a person only spends his whole life in pursuit of material things, he is neglecting the other half of his life – the spiritual and moral aspect. The reverse is also true. So, you must strike a balance between the two – physical and spiritual needs.

Regrettably (and may be because I work in Court and more often I see the wrong type of people) I observe a very disturbing trend in the behavior, conduct and attitude of people, in Penang.

The good human values seem to be dissipating. It is only the material values that seem to be of importance. (Or, has it always been like that?).

For example, do you know that a majority of civil claims in Penang High Court are cases involving members of the family or close relatives, fighting over inheritance?

Next, comes disputes between business partners, partners, mind you, not competitors.

Next comes disputes of over commercial or contractual transactions.

In all these cases there is one common factor present: greed and dishonesty.

In one case a son sued his mother. He alleged that his mother was not entitled to a share of the property left by his father. His reason was that his mother was not legally married to his father. So I asked him: what are you?

It is unimaginable that a son is prepared to go to such an extent to deny his mother of a share in her husband's estate. After all, when she dies to whom does the property go, if not to him?

I can give you many other examples and due to lack of time I will not.

We see people who appear to be very proud to label themselves "KIASU", when they should be ashamed of it.

It is this kind of attitude that produces professionals who prey on their clients, patients etc. and who charge exorbitant and unjustifiable fees; businessmen who think that the do business they must cheat; developers who only think of making as much money as they can, never mind the effects on environment and the public; contractors who dump their waste materials on road-sides and into the streams; factory owners and/or their agents who dump their chemical wastes on land and in the sea; farmers who pollute streams, rivers and air, but when there is an outbreak of virus as a result of their activities, abandon their farms and animals and in the same breadth ask for compensation; citizens who having lived, worked and prospered in the country, transfer their Ringgits to a neighbouring country that offers exorbitant interest knowing full well that the Ringgit is going to be lent to foreign speculators to speculate on the Ringgit and ruin the country's economy. Indeed examples are endless.

In the light of the current JE problem consider this passage from the Koran –Chapter 30 verse 41:

“Mischief has appeared on land and sea because of (the meed or reward) that the hands of men have earned, that (God) may give them a taste of some of their deeds; in order that they may turn back (from Evil).”

I hope we have learnt a lesson or two from the incident.

I hope that you will grow up to be a different kind citizens, professionals, whatever and, above all, persons. There is in life such thing as good manners, good behavior, honesty, civic-mindedness and so on. It is these qualities, amongst others, that make men the best of God's creations. It is the absence of these qualities in men that abase men to the lowest of the low.

Having a degree is one thing. Being educated is another. Being educated is one thing. Being cultured is another. Having a good job is one thing. Being a respectable person is another.

I have lived long enough to observe again and again, that, at the end of the day, truth always prevails over falsehood, good over evil and honesty over dishonesty. The only question is sooner or later.

I wish you all success in your studies, your career and your life.

I now declare your 7th AGM open

Thank you.