

Speech by Inche Buang bin Omar Junid, Parliamentary
Secretary, Ministry of Social Affairs at the Official
Opening of a Special Religious Course for Muslim
Converts at the Misagoff Islamic School,
Jalan Sultan on 15.2.70 at 10.00 a.m.

ASSALAMU 'ALAIKUM WARAHMATULLAHI WABARAKATUH.

I am pleased to have been invited this morning to
declare open the special Religious Course for Muslim Converts
scheduled to begin next week.

With the introduction of this course, the Majlis
Ugama Islam Singapura has ~~yet~~ ^{yet} taken ^{yet} another step forward.
Since its inception 1½ years ago, it has engaged itself in
several important welfare activities designed to benefit our
Muslim community. It is, therefore, befitting of the Majlis ^{if} it
continues from time to time to win the support and confidence
of overseas Muslims just as our local Muslims have equally
manifested their appreciation and goodwill. The big success
in the recent campaign to collect fitrah is a matter which we
ourselves cannot easily pass off without complimenting the
Majlis. By its action, scholarships are being awarded to Muslim
students both at Pre-University and University level. It has
produced sermons for delivery at the weekly Friday as well as
the annual Hari Raya congregations. Our mosques, suraus and
religious institutions can now turn to the Majlis for financial
assistance. Religious talks and broadcasts are among other
aspects of its functions. The Majlis took firm action to check
against the preaching of false doctrines in Kg. Paya. The time
is not far ahead when a special course of Koran Reading and
Translation will be organised. The activities of the Majlis
have been so diverse that I am unable to name them all.

This course is being introduced at the right moment
because no Muslim organisation has yet volunteered to run such
classes. We cannot say just how many of these converts have
been properly assisted in their quest for information on Islam.
I feel concerned if people should embrace Islam merely to be
able to marry. Once marriage had taken place they were ignored,
left to fend for themselves and drifted away not knowing what
Islam really was. It was due to this unsatisfactory state of
affairs that the Majlis was compelled to enforce new rules for
the registration and supervision of converts as were publicised
recently.

In future, any Muslims converting non-Muslims to Islam must report such conversion at the Registry of Muslim Marriages not later than a week from the date of such conversion. Expenses incidental to his circumcision by a doctor following his conversion will be borne by the Majlis. In addition, he will be given financial assistance of 130/- per month for three months and free religious tuition at this school. Conversion certificates will be issued only when these converts have satisfied the Majlis that they have truly acquired the basic knowledge of Islam. These are the glaring changes which have been implemented ever since the Majlis has taken over the powers for the registration of converts.

Perhaps when the Majlis has attained improved financial standing, consideration can be given to assist the less fortunate converts to a better way of life. To achieve this, careful and detailed planning would have to be given by members of the Majlis at their future meetings so that every convert could benefit from the wisdom of their action.

Friends:

It is my prayer that you will undertake this course seriously and practise the knowledge you have gained as long as you live.

You are fortunate because there is now a special body to guide you and provide facilities to you and those of your friends who may be interested in our religion.

Finally, may I take this opportunity to congratulate the Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura for their dedication of service to the extent that success has come to be seen and appreciated.

I feel certain that because of its dedication the Muslims of Singapore will henceforth give their full and spontaneous support to the Majlis.

I pray to Allah that He will shower His blessings for the success of this course and constantly give His guidance to our new converts.

In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful,
I declare open the special religious course for converts.
Amen.