

15-1/82/12/11

SPEECH BY DR AHMAD MATTAR, ACTING MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS, AT A GATHERING FOR ORPHANS FROM SINGAPORE AND MALAYSIA ORGANISED BY THE DARUL ORPHANAGE AT DARUL IHSAN, 5 MATTAR ROAD ON 11 DEC 82 AT 2.30 PM

It gives me much pleasure to be here at this get-together with so many Muslim children from different backgrounds and from two neighbouring countries.

I would like to commend the Management Committee of the Darul Ihsan Orphanage in organising a gathering for this group of less fortunate children to enable them to meet and get to know one another. The Committee has been very active in its efforts to obtain monetary and material contributions from the public, associations and business organisations to finance the activities of the Home. It has striven hard to upgrade the living conditions in the Home. However, there is always more to be done for the welfare of the children and I would urge volunteers to come forward to offer their services.

We all recognise that the family is the most effective agent of social control. Parents play a vital role in educating their children and influencing their personality and attitude towards life and society. They set the example for their children to follow. They instill in them the proper values and attitudes towards life. It is most unfortunate that orphans cannot enjoy parental love and guidance. But this loss can be compensated for somewhat if the staff running orphanages realise this and strive to develop a healthy relationship with the children. The staff should make conscious effort to get close to their charges, recognise their strengths and weaknesses and, where possible, be available to comfort them when they meet with disappointments along the way.

Similarly, teachers in schools can also play an important role in instilling the correct attitudes and proper values in these young orphans.

They should/2.

They should try to spend more time with, and pay more attention to them to make up for the absence of parental love. They should be aware of the special psychological problems that these parentless children face and help them to find the correct solutions.

Religious organisations too can help the orphanages by organising activities and programmes that would enrich the experience of the children. Religion has always exerted a strong influence over the conduct and behaviour of individuals and our children should be constantly reminded of the need to follow their faith and lead a useful life as taught to us in the Koran.

I can quote many instances of orphans who have been able to rise above their misfortune and have gone on to make a name for themselves. To the orphans gathered here and elsewhere, I have this to say: You should not adopt the defeatist attitude that life has nothing in store for you. You should strive to rise above your station and resolve that you want to make a good life for yourselves in the future. The key to this good life is a sound education. So always try very hard to succeed in your studies and the future will be that much rosier for you.

I wish you all here an enjoyable afternoon and for our little friends from Malaysia, a very pleasant stay in Singapore.

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