

07 DEC 1998

Court-Anwar (Yasin)

AZIZAN: I READ THE YASIN TO CALM MY SOUL

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 7 (Bernama) -- Azizan Abu Bakar who had sworn that he was Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's "sex slave" told the High Court here today that he read the surah Yasin to calm his soul during the "commotion" before his arrest by police.

He said he continued to read verses from the Quran in the house of Dr Ristina Majid in Bukit Bandaraya, Bangsar, on the evening of Aug 17 last year after being given the surah Yasin by Dr Ristina.

"I asked Dr Ristina for the surah Yasin when I wanted to perform the Maghrib prayers and I brought it along with me when I was arrested because I wanted to continue reading it," he said.

Azizan, 38, the former driver of Anwar's wife, Datin Seri Wan Azizah Ismail, was testifying at the trial of the deputy prime minister charged with four counts of corrupt practice under section 2(1) of the Emergency (Essential Powers) Ordinance 1970 which carries a maximum 14 years' jail or RM20,000 fine, or both, on conviction.

Anwar, 51, is alleged to have used his position to interfere in police investigations into allegations of sexual misconduct against him.

Azizan, who now works as a marketing and administrative executive with a firm in Alor Gajah, Melaka, was testifying under cross-examination on the 21st day of the trial.

The court was earlier told that Azizan had signed a sworn statement admitting that he was Anwar's sex slave and that the homosexual acts with Anwar occurred several times in 1992.

His sworn statement was attached to a letter entitled "Perihal Salah Laku Timbalan Perdana Menteri" (The Matter of the Misconduct of the Deputy Prime Minister) written by Ummi Hafilda Ali dated Aug 5, 1997 and addressed to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Ummi Hafilda is the sister of Mohamed Azmin Ali, Anwar's former private secretary.

Cross-examined by counsel Haji Sulaiman Abdullah, Azizan said he continued to read the surah Yasin, which contained a translation and detailed explanation, before being interrogated by the Special Branch police in Bukit Aman.

He agreed with Sulaiman's suggestion that the translation and explanation were longer than the Quranic verses.

Sulaiman then asked whether he had to perform ablution before holding the surah Yasin but senior deputy public prosecutor Yusof Zainal Abiden objected on the ground that the question had no relevance to the case as it was on a religious aspect.

Sulaiman said it was relevant because the witness had told the court that he swore by the Quranic verses.

Justice Datuk S. Augustine Paul allowed the question.

Azizan said he disagreed with counsel's suggestion that a person need not perform ablution when holding something whose translation and explanation were longer than the Quranic verses.

At this juncture Anwar turned to his family and smiled.

Sulaiman then asked Azizan whether he knew that in Islam, Quranic verses, if mixed with translations and explanations, were not regarded as part of the Quran.

Asked by Paul for the relevancy, Sulaiman explained that if it was not the Quran, it was not significant, to which Yusof objected.

Sulaiman said it was related to Azizan's swearing using the surah which he had with him and to the police believing him.

Paul said counsel should pose the question to the police officer concerned.

Earlier, the court was told that Azizan swore by the surah Yasin before ACP Mazlan Mohamed Din who believed him because he had used a part of the Quran.

Paul said he would not make any findings just because a witness swore by the holy books but would base his findings on hard evidence.

Earlier, senior deputy public prosecutor Datuk Abdul Gani Patail objected to the line of questioning on the ground that this was a trial conducted in a civil court.

Sulaiman said he was trying to establish whether what was done regarding the oath was done properly.

Paul then requested Sulaiman to ask the witness whether he had brought the surah Yasin to the court to which Azizan said: "I have, my Lord. (It's) in the witness room."

When the court resumed after six minutes' recess to enable Sulaiman to discuss the matter with the other counsel, Paul said he was not bound by oaths taken by witnesses using holy books.

"It may be accepted in God's court but we are in a civil court. I will not be bound by that," he said, to which Sulaiman responded that he would not pursue the matter.

Paul: Just let God pray for us.

Sulaiman: God doesn't have to pray, we have to pray. We must pray to God for justice.

Paul: We must not disturb God too much.

Gurbachan Singh then took over the cross-examination.

-- BERNAMA

NHD JK