

**Anwar tells hometown crowd to value education**  
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**Terence Netto**

Opposition Leader Anwar Ibrahim treated some 300 witnesses of the Penang government's official grant of RM1.7 million in aid to 19 religious schools to a little homily on faith and reason, manners and morals, in Permatang Pauh today.

NONESpeaking at Madrasa A-Aminiah, reputedly the first such school in the state to be equipped with a science laboratory and library costing RM400,000, Anwar (right) told his semi-rural audience that true education was not possible without a firm foundation in morality.

"The quest for knowledge can take humans into realms like nuclear physics for example, but if the nurture of his or her sensibility does not keep pace with the extension in learning, education will have little impact for the progress of humankind," he said.

Surveying his audience of teachers, farmers, petty traders and government servants, Anwar recalled how his first religious teacher in his village of Cherok Tok 'Kun, not far from where he was speaking, emphasised on him the ethic of responsibility.

"When I told an international seminar on accountability recently that the word is an extrapolation of the ethic of responsibility that my first religious teacher had taught me, I was besieged by several members of the audience after my speech," he revealed.

NONE" They wanted to know what connection, if any, was there between accountability in the secular context to which they are acclimatized and the ethic of responsibility that my first religious teacher had inculcated in me," said Anwar.

"I said that the term 'accountability' was only the latest coinage of something that Islam had taught its adherents with respect to being responsible for our actions and being worthy of the trust placed in us when given positions in society," said Anwar, by now warming to his role of transmitter of the lofty into accents easily understood by lay people.

Practice what you preach

He could not resist a partisan dig at the powers that be.

"There's no point talking about religion on the one hand and then issuing licenses for sports betting on the other," he said.

NONEAnwar said politicians gave secularism a bad name when they commit to actions that they justify in political language as if morality and politics were strangers.

With his well known penchant for the thought of Reinhold Niebuhr, a 20th century Christian theologian famous for his attempt to make the devices of politics compatible with morality, Anwar said before a society could produce the educated person it had to have a firm idea of the moral person.

"The one cannot be nurtured without the other," he said.

He said that education was as much about the nurture of sensibility as it was about the

search for knowledge.

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