

**UCAPAN PERDANA MENTERI DI MAJLIS MAKAN
MALAM BAR COUNCIL, DI REGENT HOTEL, KUALA
LUMPUR PADA 20 DISEMBER, 1979.**

Kami berdua, iaitu saya dan isteri saya memanglah jarang menolak jemputan makan — memanglah adat resam kita iaitu rezeki jangan sekali-kali ditolak. Bertambah pula jemputan ini datangnya dari Bar Council di mana pada suatu masa dahulu saya telah menjadi seorang loyar buruk.

Saya dan isteri saya mengucapkan berbanyak terima kasih kepada Presiden dan ahli-ahli Bar Council kerana sudi menjemput kami berdua ke majlis makan malam ini. Saya sungguh terharu dengan ingatan Bar Council sudi menjemput saya supaya bersama-sama meraikan makan malam ini. Sungguhpun saya pada masa ini telah bertukar corak, namun demikian, undang-undang masih ada dalam darah dan daging saya. Sungguhpun pada masa ini saya asyik dengan cinta baru, iaitu politik, cinta saya yang lama, iaitu undang-undang, tidak sekali-kali jauh dari hati saya.

Thank you very much for inviting my wife and I to this dinner tonight. It has been many years since I last attended the Bar Council Dinner. When your President, Encik Abdullah, came to see me some months ago and extended the invitation, I was very happy to accept it. Encik Abdullah and I are very old friends. We were in the same school in Johor Bahru and we read for the Bar together in London.

Since I changed my profession, I have almost lost touch with my many friends at the Bar. I value the opportunity that you have given me tonight to meet my old friends again. Most of them look very prosperous and I wonder whether I have made the right decision in changing my profession.

Looking back over my various careers, I cannot help feeling how fortunate I have been in having friends who have encouraged and assisted me. Tun Suffian¹ assisted me in getting a place in a legal firm in Kuala Lumpur where I started my legal practice. I was very happy in that firm; my colleagues were very kind, considerate, helpful and patient; we worked as a team; we took pride in our work, and above all, we maintained the highest standard of professional integrity.

¹ Ketua Hakim Negara.

Another person I would like to mention in this brief reminiscences of my life at the Bar was the former Lord President, Tun Azmi. I once appeared before him in a criminal appeal case. That was my first criminal appeal case. To impress him, I brought three basketful of law reports and text books. He listened to me patiently; creased his forehead from time to time; dolefully peered at me through his spectacles. When I sat down completely exhausted and expecting a favourable decision for all my efforts, he looked kindly at me and said softly, "Encik Hussein, I congratulate you on your arguments. You have done well. However, I am not with you. Appeal dismissed". Even though I was naturally disappointed, I was quite satisfied because he appreciated my efforts and he said it so sincerely.

I pray that I will be as fortunate in my present job. I have always appealed for unity, understanding and tolerance in facing our country's problems. My responsibility now is of course heavier – heavier than I have ever borne before. But I have always and great faith in the good and practical sense of the people, whatever may be their racial origins, economic or social status. Our country has not only been endowed with rich natural resources but with people who are hard-working, law-abiding and moderate in their views and actions. It is because of these characteristics that our country has been able to develop and progress as it is today. It will be a great tragedy to us all if through shortsightedness, uncontrolled emotion, religious fanaticism, racial intolerance and greed, we plunge our country into racial and religious upheavels, anarchy and chaos.

We are striving to restructure our society and to eradicate poverty. We are fighting to bring about social justice. We are building a better life for all our people. In these tasks, every one of us, every group, every institution and every profession has and must play an active role. The legal profession and the Bar Council are included. While we may have differences on some issues, let them not deflect us from our overall responsibility to our country.

Thank you once again for inviting my wife and I to this dinner and giving us the honour to meet you all.