

CONVOCATION ADDRESS

at the First Convocation of Jagran Lakecity University, Bhopal

delivered by

Justice R. C. Lahoti (Former CJI)

on September 20, 2015

Hon. the Chancellor Sh. Hari Mohan Gupta

The Vice-Chancellor Prof. Dr. Anoop Swarup

(Other dignitaries on dias)

Successful Students Conferred with Degrees,

Other Students, waiting in wings for success,

Parents, Guests, Ladies & Gentlemen.

I am very pleased and feel privileged, having been invited to deliver First Convocation Address of this institution of learning.

I congratulate all those who have been conferred with Honours and awarded Degrees. It is your devotion and hard work that have earned the laurels for you. I greet you all. May God shower many more successes on you in the times to come!

The first requirement of learning is to be inquisitive. Do raise questions; seek and search for answers. Every participant of this Convocation needs to ask – What is a Convocation? The dictionary meaning of ‘Convocation’ is, ‘a large formal meeting or gathering of persons belonging to a particular order’. In the context of a college or a university, ‘Convocation’ means ‘the students community who are assembled for a ceremony’. Over a period of time, Convocation has acquired a special meaning. It is also called ‘graduation’. It is an occasion for the successful students to celebrate their accomplishments and, at the same time, to plan for the future; whether you are entering into the next course of learning the lessons or embarking upon a career, in either case, it is a time to reflect and plan for the future. At this moment, while celebrating your success, the most powerful message which was given by Albert Einstein is

relevant. He had emphasized – ‘while being a man of success, it is of paramount significance to become a man of values’.

You all know Swami Dayanand Saraswati, the great scholar and teacher who founded Arya Samaj. He was a poor but a brilliant student as a young boy and hence loved by his teacher. He studied and learnt by heart the lessons in *Vedas* and other ancient holy scriptures from his master. Then came the day of departing from the *Gurukul*. His master asked all the disciples including Dayanand to give *guru dakshina*. *Guru dakshina* is the fee to be paid by a student by way of acknowledgement of gratitude for the mercy showered by the master on the disciple by awakening and enlightening the student through the process of imparting instructions. Poor Dayanand had just two lavang (cloves) to offer by way of *guru dakshina*. The master smiled and told Dayanand that he wanted not an ordinary but an invaluable gift to be given by Dayanand to him by way of *dakshina*. Dayanand got worried as he had no valuable with him to present to his master. The master said – you have with you something which is invaluable. You are possessed of learning and ability, competence and capability, wisdom and characteristic qualities. I want them all. Dayanand stood with folded hands and the head bowed down – a posture of surrender. The master said- “Dayanand having taken my *dakshina* (fee) now I return all this to you by way of my loan in trust to you. Promise me that you will utilize your education, learning and ability in creating a new awakening in the country and dedicate yourself to abolishing all the evils prevalent in the society.” History bears testimony to the fact that Dayanand stood by his words given to his master and came to be known as ‘Swami Dayanand Saraswati’.

‘Lives of all great men remind us that we can make our lives sublime and parting leave behind footprints on the sand of time.’ To make

your lives sublime and to enable you in leaving your indelible footprints on the sand of time, as on the day I have a few tips to give to you.

Be Excellent in what you think, say or do (*mansa, wacha, karmana*):

Never compromise on anything less than excellence. Excellence is achieved by persistent efforts supported by talent so as to surpass ordinary standards. To be excellent in any walk of life which you may tread in, you will have to be firm and work hard but the price is worth paying, as, excellence is something which is admired by everyone.

The year 2004-05, during which I was the Chief Justice, I had declared my year to be ‘the year of excellence in judiciary.’ I had said that excellence consists of five I’s.

- (i) **Initiative** – We shall not be satisfied with doing just what is our duty. Each one of us shall exert to do better than his contemporaries or predecessors going beyond the goal of duty and to be better than himself every next day;
- (ii) **Intelligence** – None of us shall feel satisfied by mediocrity, i.e., by just being average;
- (iii) **Industry** – Each one of us shall exert to put his competence and capability to its maximum utilization;
- (iv) **Integrity** – Integrity is steadfast adherence to principles of ethics and morality, which are allowed to emerge from within.
- (v) **Inobtrusion (i.e., an inobtrusive personality)** – Be modest, be humble. Being imbued with initiative, intelligence, industry and integrity, what has been

achieved is just what is the basic requirement of the personality of any good human being. Such achievements should not be a reason for developing any egoistic attitude.

Rejuvenate our own culture, our own values:

Preserve and strengthen, if necessary re-invent, our own culture, the culture of India, our own basic values.

Nani A. Palakhivala has been a great lawyer and a known intellectual wizard of the 20th century. Shri C. Rajgopalachari hailed Palakhivala as a 'Gift of God to Modern India'. Speaking on 'India's Priceless Heritage' ¹, he had said that India's culture is ageless and is as relevant to this century as it was to the 20th century before Christ. In his opinion, ancient Indians had not only explored but also laid the foundations of the most modern mathematical and scientific knowledge. They had conceived and developed the sciences of logic and grammar and made great advances in fields so divergent as anatomy and astronomy, philosophy and physics, medicine and mathematics. Our ancestors had not only the knowledge but they were also blessed with intuition, a most powerful faculty than anything else. He quoted Dr. Arnold Toynbee, who had, after surveying the story of the entire human race, observed – *'At this supremely dangerous moment in human history, the only way of salvation for mankind is the Indian way – Emperor Asoka's and Mahatma Gandhi's principle of non-violence and Sri Ramakrishna's testimony to the harmony of religions. Here we have an attitude and spirit that can make it possible for the human race to grow together into a single family – and, in the*

Atomic Age, this is the only alternative to destroying ourselves’.

Friedrich Max Mueller² has paid growing tribute to India in these words:

“If I were to look over the whole world to find out the country most richly endowed with all the wealth, power and beauty that nature can bestow – in some parts a very prardise on earth – I should point to India. If I were asked under what sky the human mind has most fully developed some of its choicest gifts, has most deeply pondered on solutions of some of them which well deserve the attention even of those who have studied Plato and Kant – I should point to India. And if I were to ask myself from what literature we, here in Europe, we who have been nurtured almost exclusively on the thoughts of Greeks and Romans, and of the Semitic race, the Jewish, may draw that corrective which is most wanted in order to make our inner life more perfect, more comprehensive, more universal, in fact more truly transfigured and eternal life – again I should point to India.”

If all scholars, thinkers and great men are looking at India, should we not look at and rivet our hopes on what is our own, our own Motherland?

Develop zero tolerance to corruption:

Rampant corruption is eating into the roots of our polity. Transparency International has, in its Report for the year 2015, placed India at number 85 in its Corruption Perception Index (CPI); that is to say, to be a corruption free or honest nation, we shall have to rise 84 steps above – a feat which seems to be close to impossibility, unless the things change drastically. Indian citizens, you and I, are facing corruption in every sphere of our lives – including health care, education, safety and security of person and property, which are all bare essential, natural and fundamental rights of any human being. It does no good to us - as a nation - to confess that there was a time when bribes had to be paid only for getting the wrong things done; now bribes need to be paid for getting right things done at right time. While dishonest enjoy the prosperity and live life of luxury, the honest are isolated and stand alone. The consequences are : (i) There is frustration and negativity prevailing in the society; (ii) People are inclined to take the law in their own hands by developing lack of confidence in the governance; (iii) Law-abiding citizens, weak and poverty stricken sections of the society are being subjected to tortuous exploitation.

For fighting against corruption, a mere law and looking up to Governmental authorities would not do. Our experience shows that they are little effective and those who can be expected to eradicate corruption have themselves developed vested interest in nurturing it. The youth, especially the talented youth, which is being produced by the institutions like Jagaran University are our hope. We need volunteers and

role-models. The need of the day is to generate a healthy campaign against corruption by awakening and enlightening the masses and exhorting the saner elements in society by campaigns, debates and educating the people. Youth is a spark which can either burn and hurt or can light a lamp. The talent and energy of the youth if only channelized, impossible can be made possible. Just as the rays of sun passing through a magnifying glass can burn or crack anything on its focus; similarly the power of youth–energy focusing on corruption can succeed in its eradication. The least one can do is to swear and declare to oneself: (i) that I shall not take any bribe nor shall indulge in any corruption, (ii) that I shall not give any bribe and shall not be a party to corruption though I may suffer, (iii) that I shall do my best in creating awakening against corruption so as to ensure, as far as possible, justice, equality and sharing in prosperity to every human being.

I, at this pious moment, exhort you to be a wave of transformation by yourself. Let me warn you, if you do not fight against corruption, you will be denied and deprived of many a good thing in life which you deserve and which is your right and entitlement to have.

My young friends! Be a torch-bearer. Choose a role model and follow his footsteps. For the youth, I have not been able to identify a better model to emulate than Swami Vivekanand. He lived a life of 39 years only (1863-1902). Within this much time what he achieved and accomplished, was simply superb and matchless. He is regarded as ‘patriotic saint’ and his birthday (Jan. 12, 1863) is celebrated as National Youth Day.

Read his life. Read his works. While graduating and passing out from the University, do not forget that the motto of Shri Hari Mohan Gupta, the Founder and Promoter of Jagaran Social Welfare Society (JSWS) set up in 1997, was to lay the carpet for a 'Social Change'; a change for better, to modulate a society which would make the world a better place to live in. You have to give shape to his ideology. Throughout in your life, wherever you may be, remember the motto of Founder of this University, take pride in having been a student of this University and be a source of social change.

Epilogue:

What is the secret of changing the society?

I am reminded of a young man bubbling with energy. He had a healthy body and a healthy mind and an earnest desire to do something good for the good of everyone. He took an oath that he would set right the whole world! Time went by. Nothing happened. In his late youth he decided that though he could not change the world, he would set right his own country and, if not, at least his own city. Nothing happened. Then came the day when the old age set in. He decided that he would correct at least every member of his family. Yet, he felt not so fulfilled in his wish. At the end, he told to himself – if only I would have made a determination that I would correct only myself then possibly I would have succeeded in changing everyone!

My message to you in this Convocation is – Adorn your personality with qualities and values. Be a savior of India. Extend your helping hand to the poor, the down-trodden, the deprived

and the exploited. And, in the words of Swami Vivekanand –
'Awake, Arise and Stop Not till the goal is achieved.'

My good wishes are with you.

1. Nani A. Palakhivala, *India's Priceless Heritage*, Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan
2. Friedrich Max Mueller, *India: What Can It Teach Us*.