



27th Convocation April 20, 2019

Chief Guest

Hon'ble Shri Justice Dipak Misra

Former Chief Justice of India

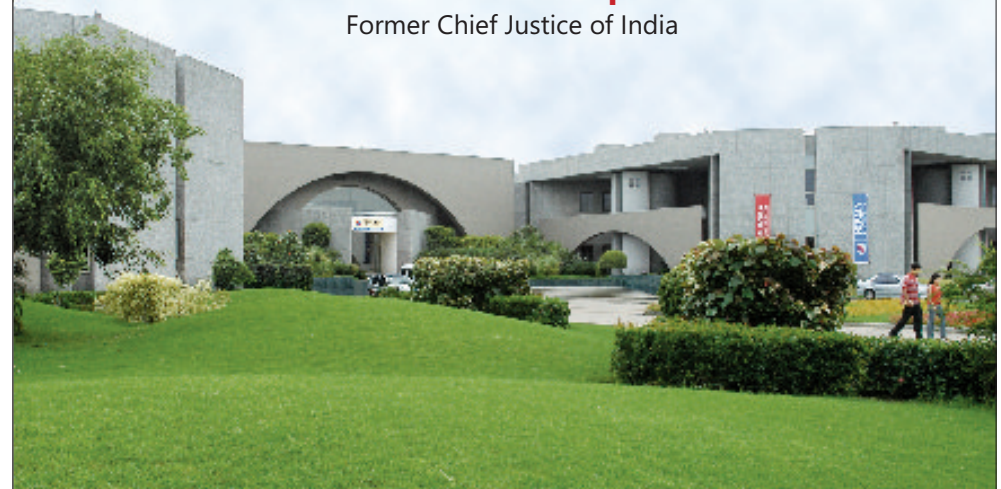


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27th **CONVOCATION**

April 20, 2019

**Convocation Address by
Hon'ble Shri Justice Dipak Misra**

Former Chief Justice of India

Dr. Karsanbhai Patel, President, Nirma University, Dr. Anup Singh, Director General of the University, Shri K.K. Patel, Vice-President of the University, Members of the Board of Governors, Members of the Academic Council, Deans of various faculties, enthusiastic graduating students and their parents, friends from the electronic and print media, ladies and gentlemen :

I have the great honour and privilege to participate in the 27th Convocation of Nirma University, Ahmedabad. At the very outset, I congratulate the graduating students and others who have been conferred the decoration today. Their hard labour has resulted in obtaining the honour from this prestigious University. It is by itself an accomplishment. I may clearly say that your achievement can never be singularly yours since the immense hard work of the teachers of the institution has also gone into it. That apart, the affection without any affectation, the nourishing and perseverance of your parents have shaped you to become what you are today. Your parents and the teachers are the cause of your inspiration. Additionally, the institutional environment that has contributed to your growth can never be underestimated.

It is sometimes expected that a person delivering the Convocation address is to give a certain motivational advice to the students. I do not intend to give you any kind of advice in that sense but share my

ideas with you. To put it in another way, I would tell you what I would have liked to be told.

The first thing I would like to share with you is that education does not stop after one graduates or acquires a Ph.D. It may take a pause when you feel content. I can say this with some certitude that if you really read, the more you know, it makes you realise how less you know. That is the beauty of knowledge. Therefore, it is difficult to feel content in this sphere. This feeling is an affirmative one in life and I would suggest, all of you should have this intellectual hunger. It is an attitude where one feels more hungry where she/he satiates most.

The second aspect, I want to highlight relates to the spirit of constructive engagement. Michelle Obama in 2013, while addressing the students of Eastern Kentucky University, had urged students to spend some time engaging with others, especially those holding a different stand from you. She said that if you are a Democrat, spend some time talking to a Republican ; and if you are a Republican, have a discussion with a Democrat. May be, you will find some common ground ; may be, you would not. But if you honestly engage with an open mind and an open heart, you will definitely learn something. Therefore, dear students, even while you stand before me having secured a much deserved academic degree, I urge you to engage and to continue the intention to learn, for we need peace, positivity and humility in the world today than ever before. A discordant view of another does not make someone an alien. Fair amount of discussion leads you to the establishment of a society of flexibility that proceeds on the path of progression where each one is part of the cohesive whole in spite of the differences. That is the sign of maturity.

I may further reflect on the said aspect. Keeping oneself engaged in discussion and manifold learning processes removes one away from the sphere of complacency. Complacency can never be regarded as a virtue. It can be put in the compartment of defeatistic acceptance, a philosophical escape and a fatalistic resignation. As all of you are

intellectuals of the 21st century, you should cultivate universal rationalism, competitive optimism and learn the art of sublimation of emotions. You can achieve this with individual efforts and dedicated endeavour by immersing in 'Swadhyaya'. You will become what you intend to be, but behind the said intention, there has to be unflinching commitment.

Be guided by your ambition but never be totally governed by it. I must explain this concept. It is a normal phenomena to have ambition but if one is wholly entrenched in it without realising the conception of limitation, it ushers in desperation and discontentment. You are required to strike a balance ; and that striking of balance is contentment. I wish all of you to be content personalities so that you be achievers in the universe. That should be your strength which shall enable to fight the battle of life. To quote a few lines of the poem 'Thinking', also known as 'The Man Who Thinks He Can' by Walter D. Wintle :

*"Life's battles don't always go
To the stronger, or faster man ;
But soon or late the man who wins
Is the man who thinks he can !"*

You will need the courage to stand up and the courage to seek help. Do not hesitate to do so. Always remember courage is the mother of all virtues ; and courage, to be a virtue, should be taken recourse to on the right occasion. Not to fight against 'Adharma' at the relevant time shows lack of courage. Similarly, where it is not required to show bravery but one reflects so, it exhibits lack of intellect. Therefore, you should always maintain the stance of intellectual courage never conceiving of any deviation.

The aforesaid courage strengthens faith. Having intellect as your tool, you should cultivate the attitude to have faith in your dreams. APJ Abdul Kalam, the former President of India, while addressing the

students at the Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati, in 2012, advised :

"Write your dreams down on a piece of paper. That page may be a very important page in the book of human history."

You should appreciate what has_ been stated hereinabove. It is clear as noon day that you have the potentiality to create history and not get lost in history. I sincerely congratulate you for your potentiality.

To have faith in oneself is perhaps the most difficult thing, because you will come across a lot of people who will discourage you and ask you to conform to the preset norms. However, have the courage to disagree and proceed to realise the dreams that you have today. That will define the future of tomorrow's nation. I may recall what Steve Jobs in one of his addresses had said :

"Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life. Don't be trapped by dogma - which is living with the results of other people's thinking. Don't let the noise of other's opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want. Everything else is secondary."

If you are prepared to think big and act in time with conviction, you will be rewarded. You should hold on to your goals even if you stumble here and there, and learn your lessons. Dr. A.P.J. Kalam has said, and I quote :

"All the technological advancement we have today are the outcome of scientific exploration of scientists of earlier centuries. At no time, man was beaten by problems. He strives continuously to subjugate impossibility and then succeeds."

Therefore, I urge you dream about a better world than you received and work hard to make that a reality. Do not get disappointed by

failures ; learn your lessons and try again. Human beings are resilient by nature. Constantly remind yourself that man can be destroyed but not defeated. You should inculcate Martin Seligman, the American Psychologist's view on how to bounce back from setbacks and hardships. Firstly, you may believe that you are at fault but it is important to remember "don't take failures personally". Secondly, you must have the belief that an event will affect all areas of your life ; and there should be the belief that sorrow will not last forever. If you can overcome the aforesaid propensities, then your entire paradigm will shift and you will be well on your way to healing. Your "psychological immune system" and the vehicle of life would be in real gear.

Swami Vivekananda envisioned education as the training by which the current and expression of will are brought under control and become fruitful. Education cannot be measured in terms of the amount of information that you put into your brain, which runs riot and remains undigested throughout your lifespan. The purpose of education must be to engage in life building, character building and assimilation of ideas. According to Swamiji, if one has assimilated five ideas and made them part of their lives and character, that person has more education as compared to someone who has memorized the whole library. The digestion of ideas has the stimuli to make you an original thinker. That is how perceptions change and wise people come into being to convert the society from being to becoming.

Educational institutions have an important role in igniting the minds of our future generations and grooming them for a more proactive role in public participation. The maturity of a society has to be judged in terms of the consciousness of the young generation towards their obligations and duties towards the society. Each and every citizen must carry forward the idea of national integration and the idea of fraternity which formed one of the principal ideals of Ambedkarian philosophy.

It can be said without any fear of contradiction that education trains you to become a student for life. It shall enable you to understand the Newtonian thinking process of "humility". When you are intellectually humble, you will understand that the role of education would remain incomplete without contributing towards an inclusive society which may create acceptable and conducive environment for various deprived and under privileged classes of people who are often left behind in the developing phase of a society, most commonly due to economic disparity, traditional oppression and many other social evils. I want to assure you all that you would attain the true joy of serving society only when you transcend beyond your traditional role of an engineer/ lawyer/manager/scientist/doctor, etc. by providing hand- holding to the people in distress, exploited by both the state and non-state institutions, regardless of their economic and social status.

This further requires adherence to the principles of human rights, equal access to fundamental rights and upholding the rule of law. And this can be achieved only through legal instruments that would ensure that every person in the society is treated fairly and equally notwithstanding his or her economic capacity, political views and social standing.

You have an extraordinary capacity to help people, but this capacity mandates a moral responsibility to help people. And in order to discharge this responsibility successfully, it is necessary that you connect with the little Indians. Therefore, I request all the present and future professionals to maintain respect for our ancient culture and social traditions and to help in the social and economic progress of the country.

You have been taught and trained to remain a student in continuity by the University. I would suggest that in life, you must learn to romance with education. You must also develop a sense of gratitude. Be grateful for where you are today and the people who helped you to

reach here. The recent World Economic Forum has identified three top skills required in future - Creativity, Problem Solving and Critical Thinking. All of you must imbibe and cultivate these skills. As dynamic scholars, aim high, develop strong convictions, keep learning, believe in your potential and strengths and soar like the eagles in the skies of the universe of knowledge and scholarship. You should constantly ask the question as T.S. Eliot, the Nobel Laureate, tells :

"Where is the Life we have lost in living?

Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?

Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?"

In this regard, you must always recall what Mahatma Gandhi has said :

"Live as if you were to die tomorrow.

Learn as if you were to live forever."

Talking about education is incomplete unless one appreciates a line from W.B. Yeats :

"Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire."

I may humbly add here that this fire of intellect does not destroy anything but builds the future of human race because the progress of future depends upon the learning of the present generation.

You should always remind yourselves that there are three Mothers whom you should never let down in your lives. The first one is the Mother who has given birth to you. It has been rightly said :

"God created Mother may be because He cannot be present everywhere."

Adi Shankaracharya observed :

"Kuputro jaayeta kwachidapi kumata na bhavati"

To transcreate :

"There may be a wicked son, but there will never be a wicked Mother".

You must all be grateful to your Mothers. If your Mother has given biological birth to you, your Alma mater as the foster Mother has enabled you to stand on your feet and get recognition. The third Mother is Mother India, that is, your "Janmabhumi". Take a pledge today that you would never let down these three Mothers — the biological Mother, the Alma mater and the country where you are born.

You are the most powerful life changers of today. As the embodiment of future, you must show concern for environmental purity and develop physical morality and environmental ethicality as a consequence of which you respect everything from the microcosm to the macrocosm. You should perceive unity in diversity and realise that every human being is at the pyramidion of the progressive pyramid.

In conclusion, I once again congratulate you and extend my best wishes to all of you for achieving the mission.

Thank you all and I am sure, the Almighty shall bless you all.