

Hon'ble the Chief Justice, my colleagues on the Bench, learned ASG, Mr Sanjay Jain, Mr Rajiv Khosla, President of the DHBA, Mr. Raman Duggal, Sr. Standing Counsel for NCT, Mr. Jatan Singh, Vice President, Delhi High Court Bar Association, Mr. Abhijat, Secretary, Delhi High Court Bar Association, Mr. Puneet Mittal, Executive Member, Mr. Soli Sorabjee, Sr. Advocate, friends, Ladies and Gentlemen

1. This is an event I was not prepared for. But then life holds many surprises, this is, one of them. Surprises are interesting; at times they can hurt, this one does not. The reason is, the august gathering I sit in and the scores of well wishers, family friends (some of whom though not present today) have extended their support in larger measure and in boundless ways. I thank them, and you all, from the core of my heart.

2. I believe each one of us is a product of destiny and I am no exception. I joined this court on 11.04.2008 and I hope to join the Madras High Court on 11.04.2016. That would be 8 years to the tee. My time here, for the moment, evidently, had come to an end and nothing, therefore, nothing could have come between me and my destiny, which includes all other plans and options which I had conjured up in my mind. Destiny threw them by the way side and here I am

on the anvil of my journey from one great court to another great court.

3. This court has been my nursery. I learnt the subtle skills of my profession in this court. As a lawyer it trained me to articulate and present a point of view; to leave the result of my actions to a neutral third party i.e. the Judge. In that sense each one of you is a “Karma Yogi”.

3.1 As a Judge, I was taught to take calls, to decide. It taught me to face the inconvenient and the unpalatable. It taught me, self belief. It ingrained, in me, humility. It encouraged me to look at issues from different perspective, and that, life does not have binary options; it has shades of gray, in fact many shades. Judging for me and I am sure for each one of my colleagues is an act of devotion. Devotion to work and cause of justice. In that sense, it trains one for a life after judgeship; the only difference being that your devotion gets transfixed wholly on your creator. This for me is a lesson in Bhakti Yoga.

4. In my 27 years in the profession, which includes 8 years on the bench, I have worked and interacted with some of the finest minds in the legal fraternity, both on and off the bench.

4.1 All of them have shaped my world-view. Interaction with them often showed up my inadequacies. It made me, silently admire, the depth and the vastness of their knowledge, on myriad subjects. The eloquence of the bar

often left me speechless. But each day was a learning curve.

5. It is said that a rolling stone gathers no moss, this “stone” hopes to gather a lot of moss. As I proceed to Chennai I am reminded of the great history of the Madras High Court, a court which has seen a century and a half pass by and is still going strong. A Premier Presidency court, established as far back as on 26th June 1862. A court where doyens like Sir. T. Muthuswamy Iyer, the 1st Indian Judge to be appointed to the Madras High Court, Sir Subramania Iyer and V. Bhashyam Ayyanar have walked its hallways.

6. Great courts are an amalgam of vigilant lawyers and robust judges. Courts are literally the last recourse of the poor and the deprived. It is indeed the last bastion between the might of the State and its citizenry.

7. It is, therefore, incumbent upon you to stand guard and protect its essence and core. Judges take oath to uphold the constitution, to decide without fear or favour, ill will or affection - these words are our loadstar. They can have meaning only if the institution is ring-fenced from pernicious influences. This can be ensured only if the bar stands tall and acts as its sentinel.

8. Freedom to write and express a view, on matters which are placed before a Judge are a core part of his or her function. A wrong view is subject to institutional oversight and correction. A dissent of yesteryears often inspires a

generation of future Judges. The wisdom of the court is never static. It is this that the bar needs to encourage and guard. Judges are fallible. They make mistakes. Their follies, if bonafide and unmotivated, are to be ignored and got corrected by known and usual institutional methods. This is so as they are no different from an ordinary common man. It is when they cross the rubicon that they are required to be dealt with firmly and without remorse. The propensity to believe the worst about a judge brings about a trust deficit and breeds institutional decay.

9. In this context, the reaction of one of the Law Lords to the criticism in the media about the untenability of the view taken in the famous *spycatcher* case is telling. When asked what he had to say with regard to their picture being published in the National daily, in an inverted position, with the caption "Old Fools"; the Law Lord replied: That I am old is a matter of fact. That I am called a fool, is a matter of opinion. If they had questioned my integrity, I would have a problem.

10. The Collegium, which appointed me and some of my colleagues in April, 2008 spoke in similar vein. The wise counsel given has remained with me to date.

11. Ladies and gentleman what is right and what is wrong often gets lost in

the din and noise of a non-believer. As Shakespeare said “good often gets interred with bones” it is the bad which lives on. We suffer from, what I call, “Gandhari Curse”. After the great war when Krishna visited Gandhari, she cursed him, despite his response, that what he did was in consonance with *Dharma*. The curse led to the destruction of the entire Yadav clan, including *Krishna*. Each time we decide, we suffer, perhaps, Gandhari’s curse. The western thought is no different. In life, like in courts, it is difficult to sift the wheat from the chaff.

12. About truth it is said: it is a conundrum surrounded by lies, wrapped in mystery. We all attempt to find truth each day of our lives. Our life’s work is neither possible nor complete without the support of our loved ones, which includes the judicial family, our families by blood and our staff. I am no different. I could not have carried through my even and uneven days without their unstinted support and unalloyed loyalty.

13. I, therefore, bow down, unhesitatingly, my head with humility to this great bar for having faith in me. I thank my mother, my wife who has gone through the most turbulent time of her life, I continue to remain proud of her. I thank my sister and brother-in-law and my three children for standing like a rock besides me. I thank my staff and each one of my law researchers, both

past and present for facilitating the execution of the work assigned to me. I would have liked to have called out the name of each one of them but the list is long. They are here and they know the feelings that I have for them.

14. Last but not the least, I thank my brethren, both past and present, as without their support this journey would not have been possible.

15. Before I conclude, I go away with thought "*KABHI KISI KO MUKAMMAL JAHAN NAHIN MILTA... KISI KO ZAMEEN/ KISI KO AASMAAN NAHI MILTA.....*

GOD BLESS YOU ALL.