

Convocation Address 2015

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Head of the Sanskrit Dept., Guest of Honour –(Mrs) Kiran Bajaj ,
Invitees, Teaching Faculty of the Dept., and my young Student-Friends –

To-day's function is a unique one. This seems to be the first time in the entire history of the Mumbai University that such a bold and welcome decision is taken by it to ask the Colleges and the Departments to distribute the respective Degree Certificates to their students. In my opinion, in fact, this is a boon to the University Department (to speak about the Department of Sanskrit) , for the Department can come closer to the students passing out from here, prior to sending them in the open world. And it is a happy occasion, especially for me because I was in the Department as R. G. Bhandarkar Professor and Head for more than twelve years. I am thankful to the Head of the Department for inviting me here to-day. I will certainly cherish the memory of this as a permanent insignia of honour.

And to young Student-Friends of mine-What words of advice can I give? The ancient texts on Dharma (Code of Conduct) – the Grhyasutras and the Dharmasutras—look at the Snatakas i. e. who have completed their studies, with great respect. The well-studied student ,carrying further the banner of progress in the society and country is really a Great Being(

Asvalayana Grhyasutra III.9.8). A student is a sacred centre of potential value. Hence at every step in his further life he has to take care , protecting his own self without indulging in unnecessary quibbles, arguments and fights and avoiding works of bravado. The Asvalayana Grhyasutra gives a long list of rules for him , reminding him that he has not to put his life in danger (III. 9. 5-7). This is because his household, society and country have spent a lot of energy and wealth to make him reach this stage. It is the duty of the student now to pay back this debt. To become dear to the persons of all the four classes in the society is the wish expressed by the student, while leaving the hermitage of the preceptor (Hiranyakesi Grhyasutra I .10. 6). To the preceptor he says, “ Like an eyeball, may I be dear to you. “ (Gobhila Grhyasutra III.4. 29).

My friends-- The modern world is a world of fast growth, with science and technology taking wide strides. It is a world of competition , giving rise to dislike, rivalry and hatred. Man has become profoundly dissatisfied with himself. Though plunged in plenty of pleasures ,he is confused. He has lost the touch with his own ‘soul ‘ , as he is running after so many ‘ have nots’ , which have no end.

Now my advice—Have a competition with your own self . Give the account of your progress to your mind—What you were not knowing yesterday and what you have known to-day , to make your tomorrow more knowledgeable. One often comes across a statement that human life is a great opportunity in the course of successive lives. So why not make the ‘ best ‘ and ‘ perfect ‘ of the life bestowed upon us by the Almighty ? The God will surely ask us as to what we have done with the ‘ TIME ‘ and ‘ TALENTS ‘ ,which he gave us. This was the advice given to Hillary

Rodham Clinton, the First Lady of the U.S.A., by the Principal of her school, when she was in two minds while contesting for the election of the American Senate. As we know she contested and won.

Edmund Hillary the first mountaineer to climb the Mt. Everest with sherpa Tenzing Norgay, was once greeted by an Indian journalist, saying, "Sir, you have conquered the mountain." Hillary was quick to reply. "No. Don't say that. I have not conquered the mountain ; I have conquered myself." This is the real spirit, when the man knows his own points of strength to enhance them and also his own weaknesses to overcome them.

Such an attitude need not lean towards negativity. The Rgveda says , "An active person alone becomes victorious ,is established and achieves prosperity ; gods do not help an idle person . "(VII. 32. 9). The sacred text says , "Stand upright ; be awakened and getting the boons , be the knowers. "

This is all in search of the Ultimate Truth in man's life. When the student is leaving the hermitage, after completing his studies, even the preceptor, who is open-minded tells the student , " Whatever are our(i.e. Preceptors') good deeds, they only are to be followed, and not others. " This is because the preceptor is conscious of the human follies and errors and has the Ultimate Truth of man's life in his view and has the urge for Perfection.

My student-friends ! We are all travellers like Naciketas of the Kathopanisad with the earnest desire to reach nearest to the Truth. I feel that Naciketas is a symbol of the human mind striving hard to go nearest to the Ultimate Truth of human life.

And in this journey of ours towards Truth, our guide could be the prayer , which is displayed on the portal of an American College and which Dr. R. N. Dandekar , the great stalwart in the field of Indology often used to quote.

It runs thus-

“ From the cowardice which shrinks from new truths,
From the laxness which is content with half-truths,
From the arrogance which claims to know all truths,
O God of Truth, deliver us. “

THANK YOU