

FAREWELL SPEECH

Hon'ble Justice G. Rohini, the Chief Justice
my esteemed brother and sister Judges,
Mr.Sanjay Jain, Additional Solicitor General of India,
Mr. Rajiv Khosla, President, Delhi High Court Bar Association,
Mr.Jatan Singh, Vice President, Delhi High Court Bar Association,
Mr. Abhijat, Honorary Secretary, Delhi High Court Bar
Association,
Mr. Raman Duggal, Delhi Government Standing Counsel (Civil)
and all Standing Counsels of the Central Government and all Law
Officers of the State Government,
Senior Advocates and Members of the Bar,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

I was born in a beautiful Village which was electrified in the year 1975 when I was in 7th Standard. I belong to a humble family my father was an Agricultural Labourer. Despite, he made his best efforts to give education to my all siblings. Therefore, with all his dedication, devotion and hard work, he made us, all four brothers, to comfortable positions. The eldest brother was selected in the Indian Revenue Service of 1973 Batch, who had reached at the rank of Commissioner and finally retired as Member CESTAT. My second brother was selected as a Probationary Officer of 1975 Batch in Bank of Baroda, who retired as Chief Manager, I am third one and my fourth brother after doing M. Phil. and Ph.D. from JNU is serving as an Assistant Professor. My eldest brother has been our mentor and fatherly figure who sacrificed lot in bringing our family to this height.

I want to share with you some of my childhood experiences. At the age of 10-11, I remained in news in my Village as I alone used to take Bullock Cart from the field to my house. Thus, since my childhood, I am in a habit of doing difficult tasks. During the emergency period, the family planning was forcibly imposed, therefore, all the adult male members used to avoid going to cities. At that time, in our family, apart from my father, two male members were there. My age was 13-14 years, my younger brother was 7-8 years. Kaithal, a small city, which is now a District, was about 14 kilometres from my Village. Therefore, I had to go to the said City alone for purchasing household items. Though I knew cycling but because of young age, I could not manage from the main seat, therefore, I could only ride bicycle by cross-legged. Therefore, I learnt the sense of responsibility from my childhood.

I always remember one incident of my school days. When I was in 8th Standard, wheat-harvesting season was going on, which was the most labour-intensive process which used to be performed under the direct heat of Sun and in the temperature of 45 to 50 degree. This exercise needs to be performed in a sitting posture only. While reaping, lot of dust emerged, since I was allergic to dust, therefore, reaping was very tough job for me. Hence, I decided to go for labour work, though my father was reluctant. For said purpose, I went to City, namely, Pundri (now Tehsil of District Kaithal), which was 9 to 10 kilometres

away from my village, where FCI Godowns were under construction. The Contractor over there asked me to pick up the cement bag and took the same to the site. I did not know the weight of cement bag, however, my capacity was to lift maximum 20 Kgs. and the weight of cement bag was 40 Kgs. I could not lift the same; consequently, the Contractor rejected me for taking as Labourer. Thus, I have seen the hard time of my life and simultaneously learnt lot and decided what may come I would study and do something in my life.

I passed Matriculation from Govt. High School at my Village where due to shortage of classrooms my class used to be under trees only and in my whole school life I never had the feel of a classroom.

After passing Matriculation in the year 1979, I got admitted in Pre-University in the University College Kurukshetra, from where I graduated in Humanity. For my higher studies, I applied in two Courses, i.e., L.L.B. and Master in Political Science. Though I got admission in both the Courses but I was not willing to take Law as my profession, hence, I opted Post-Graduation in Political Science. The reason for not opting Legal Profession was that during interregnum of applying for admission, I visited the office of an Advocate, where I saw that his office was full of books. I thought if I would become Advocate, I would have to study the same pile of books. So, I preferred Master in Political Science.

When I was in the final year of Post-Graduation, I was elected as Joint Secretary in Students' Union of Kurukshetra University. During that period, I was in hostel and came in contact of a student, namely, Pardesi who was pursuing his Law and was serving as waiter in a Hostel of Law Students. Being Executive Member of the Students' Union, I pursued his case and got sanctioned Scholarship for him from the Film Society Fund, which was generated by selling tickets for showing movies in the University Auditorium to the general public. I am informed Mr. Pardesi is now Addl. District and Sessions Judge in Haryana.

Another instance was that a blind student, namely, Suchet was pursuing Post Graduation in Music and despite staying in the Hostel he was not taking lunch and dinner from the Hostel Mess because that was expensive for him. Thus, he used to take food made for Waiters from a Canteen at cheaper rates.

One day, after the dinner, I alongwith one of my classmate was having Milk outside that Canteen, said Suchet came and asked the Canteen Manager to serve food immediately as he was very hungry. Upon which, Manager replied, "Sorry, Food is finished." He said, "Oh, no problem, I had snacks at around 5 O' Clock in the evening." On hearing this, I immediately got up, went to the Hostel Mess and requested the Manager to send one Thali in Suchet's Room. After that, I instructed the Manager that Suchet

will take food from the Mess and the same will be added as 'Guest Diet' in my account. This process continued for about 5-6 months till that fact came to the knowledge of my Hostel mates. Thereafter, all of us unanimously decided to bear the same. I did not stop there. I took up his case in the Film Society Meeting and got the monthly stipend sanctioned for him for his other needs. Thereafter, he worked as a music teacher in Himachal Pradesh, who recently expired.

On completion of my Post Graduation in Political Science in the year 1985, I got admission in LL.B. in Campus Law Centre, University of Delhi. After completion of Law, once, me and my eldest brother were at my Village and were discussing to start practice at places like Kaithal, Karnal, Kurukshetra, Chandigarh or Delhi. Suddenly, my father intervened and said, "You will decide the Best, but my only suggestion to you is that you should not start practice at Kaithal, Karnal or Kurukshetra. Better start either at Chandigarh or Delhi". We both brothers put a specific question to our father Why? He replied that in small cities, growth will be small and in big cities Sky is the limit.

Then, another onerous task came before me, since I was first from the family in legal profession. I had no contact with any Advocate, therefore, it was very difficult for me to find out with whom to start practice as a Junior. With lot of difficulties and

through some indirect references, I succeeded in approaching one of the lawyer, namely, Late Sh. Watan Singh, who was mainly practicing in criminal side at Patiala House Courts. I practised with him for 4 years. Thereafter, I started independent practice. In the year 1996, I came on the Panel of Railways and Union of India for defending their cases before this Court.

Being a Panel Lawyer, it was difficult for me to manage the cases at High Court and District Courts, therefore, in the month of November, 2003, I discussed with my wife to leave the work of District Courts completely and concentrate only at the High Court level. Though she was initially reluctant thinking that I could be unsettled, however, she supported my decision. The **God** helped me and on 3rd of June, 2004, I was appointed as a Standing Counsel for the Central Government and received 1500 pending cases from Mr. Sanjay Jain, who is now Additional Solicitor General. Since being the Standing Counsel, I had to work very hard, therefore, my wife said, "Leave the household responsibility on me and I will manage my service as well as the home affairs but you should concentrate upon the cases and besides this whatever help you need, I am ready to support."

As I told that initially I was not willing to become even an Advocate then how the idea of becoming a Judge travelled in my mind, there is an interesting story behind it.

After having married in the year 1993, I stayed in Gulabi Bagh area, where some judicial officers were also staying. There I thought that I would prepare for Delhi Judiciary but in the very same year about 20 to 25 judicial officers were compulsorily retired or removed from the service. I asked various persons that what was the reason; they said that High Court is not obliged to give any reason. Then I decided not to go for Subordinate Judiciary. After passing of more than two years as Standing Counsel for the Central Government, I started thinking that I may be elevated as a Judge of this Court. **God** helped me and on 05.09.2008 I was elevated as a Judge of this Court. I pay my gratitude to Hon'ble Dr. Justice M.K. Sharma, the then Chief Justice of this Court and the Collegium Members Hon'ble Justice T.S. Thakur (presently, the Chief Justice of India) and Justice Manmohan Sareen, who recommended my name. I have been very fortunate to have Division Benches with very senior and outstanding Judges like Justice Madan B. Lokur, Justice A.K. Sikri, now the Supreme Court Judges and Justice Pradeep Nandrajog, Judge of this Court.

I have been lucky to have able guidance of our former Chief Justices like Justice A.P. Shah, Justice Dipak Misra, Justice D. Murugesan, Justice N.V. Ramana and the present Chief Justice G.

Rohini. Apart from that I have received great love and affection from the Bar and from my colleagues as well.

During this period, I learnt a lot from the Bar as well as from my colleagues. I never ever hesitated in asking on any of the issue from my colleagues, therefore, with my dedication and devotion, I tried to do my work sincerely and to the best of my capacity, competency and knowledge.

Whatever, I could perform that was because of support of my wife, my children, who never sought time from the judicial work for their pleasure. They always supported me in doing work even on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays either in Court or at my residence. My whole home affairs have been taken care of by my wife in addition to her work as a practising lawyer.

It is true, whatever I could perform, that would not have been possible without the assistance of my staff, who worked with me in early morning hours at 9.15 onwards or late hours upto 9 O'clock in the evening. Thus, I appreciate the work and conduct of my PS Mr.Rohtash Singh, Court Master Ms. Uma Sharma, Sr. P.As. Ms. Saphalta Bhati and Mr. Manoj Kumar, P.A. Mr. Jyotirmoy Ghosh, Asst. Court Master Mr. Surender Singh, Restorer Mr. Rakesh Kumar, Usher Mr. Mohan Singh and attendants Mr. Dharmender Singh, Mr. B. Naresh, Mr.Surender

Kumar, Mr. Ravinder Singh, Mr. Ajay Kumar and Mr. Gulam Nabi Lon and previous Chauffeur Mr. Guljar Singh and Mr. Baljeet Singh, present one, for their dedicated services.

I also thank Mr. Jasbir Singh and Mr. Prashant, for their outstanding services as Personal Security Officers attached with me.

I will be failing in my duty if I do not appreciate the assistance rendered by Ms. Rekha Angara and Ms. Nidhi Gupta as Law Researchers.

Simultaneously, I cannot forget the services rendered by Protocol officers including the Medical Protocol of this Court. I especially appreciate the services of Mr. S.P. Singh Premi, who most of the time wholeheartedly had taken care of medical needs of my family.

I am very thankful to all the Officers and the staff of the Registry for their services in the Judicial Dispensing System without whose sincere work justice cannot be imparted so smoothly.

This High Court has given me everything, love, affection, cooperation, assimilation and distinction. I served this Court for about 7 ½ years very smoothly and without any problem.

Friends, no person is perfect. I am not an exception. I might have hurt the feelings of some of you unintentionally. If that be so, I can only say that the same might have happened while dispensing the justice. My sincere apology if I have hurt anybody even remotely.

Now, I am going to the High Court of Judicature at Hyderabad, which is the Common High Court for the States of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. No doubt when someone is transferred from one place to another, at that particular moment, one may feel uneasy, but thereafter everyone realises that changes are always for betterment.

I firmly believe in the principle - **"Be optimistic and think positive"**.

As rightly said by **John F. Kennedy**

"Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future."

I have seen that part of the Country. I hope, I will get same love and affection there also which I got in this Court. But one fact remains that whatever the best of Career I would have, I will certainly miss the memories, love and affection received from this Court. I am not feeling that I am leaving Delhi, but I am

taking it with positive spirit that my circle of friends and well wishers is going to be expanded.

Perhaps, these lines from Jagjit Singh's Gazal are relevant:-

ना मुहब्बत ना दोस्ती के लिए,
वक्त रुकता नहीं किसी के लिए,
वक्त के साथ साथ चलता रहे,
यही बेहतर है आदमी के लिए.

At this milestone of my Life, I wish to say that "No Journey is long, when dreams are Big and Sky is the limit. We should aim high in life. But remain contented with what we have and what we are.

Here these lines are relevant to quote:-

“वक्त से लड़कर जो अपना नसीब बदल दे,
इन्सान वही है जो अपनी तकदीर बदल दे,
कल क्या होगा कभी ना सोचो यारों,
क्या पता कल वक्त खुद अपनी तस्वीर बदल दे..”

Those who spoke about me and I came to know from various sources, I have great satisfaction that I tried to make people happy. This work spirit I will try to continue there also as I believe in the Words of Charlie Chaplin that:-

Life laughs at you when you are unhappy

Life smiles at you when you are happy

*But, Life salutes you when you make
others happy ...*

Finally, I thank the Almighty for giving me this call in my life and helping me to deliver justice in whatever little measure that I could.

I thank you all for your support and the privilege of serving with you.

JAI HIND.