

Hon'ble the Chief Justice, my esteemed brother and sister judges,
Ms. Maninder Acharya, Addl. Solicitor General,
Mr. Kirti Uppal, president,
Mr. J P Sengh, Vice President,
Mr. Amit Sharma, Honorary secretary, Delhi High Court Bar
Association,
Mr. Rahul Mehra, Standing Counsel (Criminal), Govt. of NCT of Delhi

other standing counsel of the Central and State Governments
Senior advocates and other members of the Bar
District and Sessions Judges
Registrar General and Registrar Vigilance,

Ladies and Gentlemen

At the outset, I express my deep sense of gratitude for the kind words spoken about me. It is indeed a great honour for me.

On 17th October, 2011, in this temple of justice, in the name of God and in the presence of God on Earth, my revered mother, present today, I had taken oath to discharge my duties without fear or favour, affection or ill-will, and to uphold the law, to the best of my ability, administered by Hon'ble Mr. Justice A.K. Sikri, Judge, Supreme Court, the then Acting Chief Justice.

Today, after serving this institution for close seven years, with the blessings of Almighty, my parents and other well-wishers, and with co-operation of all of you, I am humble to say that I have lived up to the oath. I have tried to perform my duties with devotion and dedication, to the best of my ability and knowledge, fearlessly, honestly, and without discrimination.

I strongly believe in destiny and have utmost faith in God. My family circumstances did not permit me to pursue higher studies and I was in search of some job which did not happen. I took admission in Rajindra Govt. College, Bhatinda in Commerce. I was topper in the college; it prompted me to pursue LLB at Chandigarh. I got National Scholarship; it helped me to complete my law with gold medal. I never intended to join Delhi Judiciary. I took DJS exam only for experience. I wanted to join Punjab Judiciary, as selection there was fully on the

basis of marks obtained in the written exam; there was no interview. I somehow was mistaken that to qualify the interview, one required links and contacts. I qualified DJS exam and appeared for interview before the Committee headed by Hon'ble Mr. Justice V. S. Deshpande, the then Chief Justice of this Court. My performance in the interview was so perfect that the Committee had decided that this boy should stand first. I became the topper of the batch. This is how my unexpected and unchartered journey started. I firmly believe that some invisible hand, i.e. hand of God, held my hand; made way for me, removed all obstacles and assisted me to reach this destination... "Raasta banta gaya aur main chalta gaya."

Today, my thoughts go back to 22nd September 1980, when I took oath of Office in the district court. I have served district judiciary for around 31 years, in almost all the jurisdictions, in various court complexes, at all levels. I am proud to say that I received all love, affection and respect from my colleagues and each member of the Bar there. I never faced any difficulty in the discharge of my duties; it was always smooth-sailing. In 2010-11, I was Principal Secretary (Law) in Delhi Govt., before elevation. There, I learnt as to how the Govt. functions; it was a wonderful and informative experience.

I am extremely thankful to Hon'ble Mr. Justice Dipak Misra, Chief Justice, Supreme Court and his colleagues who reposed trust in me and recommended my name for elevation to this Court in 2011. It was with the blessings of Almighty, my parents and good wishes of all the well-wishers that I became a Judge of this court.

I have been very fortunate to have shared benches soon after my elevation with very senior judges - Justice Nandrajog, Justice Bhat and Justice Khanna. It was a wonderful experience to share criminal roster with them for sufficient long duration. I learnt a lot from them, not only 'law' but also how to manage the court. They also reposed trust in me and enabled me to author several judgments. My special division bench on Saturdays with brother Justice Hari is worth mentioning. During 9 days of our working together, we disposed of 37 appeals. Justice Hari authored several excellent judgments.

I was also lucky to have shared Full Benches, one with Justice A. K. Sikri and Justice Nandrajog, and the other with Justice Khanna and Justice Valmiki Mehta. It was a great learning experience for me.

I am grateful to our Chief Justice for conferring honour upon me to share bench with her today in this Court no. 1.

I believe that the office of a judge is a responsibility to be discharged with great care and compassion. It was my utmost desire to impart justice to the needy, downtrodden and the senior citizens. Keeping that in mind, I disposed off hundreds of cases pertaining to individuals in 'custody'. I am firmly of the opinion that 'persons in custody' are primarily concerned with disposal of their appeals promptly; they are least concerned with the law laid down by us.

Job of the judges, though seemingly appears to be comfortable, it is stressful too. Many a times, the files appear in our dreams. I remember that in a bomb blast case in which 10 accused persons were in custody for more than 10 years, I had held some of them guilty. I had sleepless nights on award of capital punishment to three of them. The convicts, however, without any reaction, accepted the verdict, I was expecting strong reaction and unpleasant scene that time.

Despite all the stress, judges of this institution are working day and night, to fulfill every genuine prayer. When all doors are closed, this is the only temple that remains open.

I am very happy and grateful to the Ld. members of the Bar, as well as the Prosecution Branch for being very kind and affectionate towards me and for having extended the fullest cooperation. I feel proud to say that whatever decision I gave, favoring or against them, it was accepted without any complaint.

My piece of advice to young lawyers is, that they must muster courage to argue cases after seeking guidance from their seniors; should not always appear to ask for pass-overs or adjournments, they must work hard.

On personal front, ours is a very closely knitted family. We all live together. When in the evening I see my mother aged around 85 years, playing happily with my grand children aged around 3 and 5 years, I consider our home nothing less than a paradise. I shall forever be indebted to my parents for their true sacrifices and blessings. Had my late father been here today, he would have been proud of me. My wife Anita is very religious and God-fearing lady. She has always

supported me in all my endeavors and I acknowledge her sacrifices. My two sons, Judicial Officers in District Courts in Delhi, are very obedient and respectful. So are my two daughters-in-law.

The contribution of my uncle Late Sh. P. C. Aggarwal, Advocate, who supported and encouraged me to join the profession, deserves due acknowledgment.

It is a matter of great happiness for me to have the company of my friend from school days, Mr. R. K. Goyal, who is also present today.

I am thankful to all the officers and staff of the Registry, particularly Protocol, Medical and P & P, who were always eager to provide all possible assistance. I acknowledge their valuable contribution. I take this opportunity to thank my entire staff, former Private Secretary Deepti, present Private Secretary Ashu, Court Master Surender Sharma, Sangeeta, recently promoted as PS, Tarun, Ajeet, Pardeep, Dhyanchand, Narender, Dinesh, Chandan, and Rajaram who all have been very supportive.

I also thank my present and former law researchers and acknowledge their valuable contribution. Thanks are also due to my Personal Security Officers Narender and Rajbir for the good services rendered by them in discharge of their duties.

Today I leave this house with great satisfaction and contentment. When I came to Delhi in 1980, I was alone. Today, I am fortunate to have this extended family. I have got more than I could ask for. For me, less is more. Mine has been a long and eventful journey, with all ups and no downs.

I express my heartiest gratitude for your kindness, support and good wishes. Thank you once again for your benign presence here to bid me affectionate farewell.

Before parting, I must share with you that I am a profound lover of my mother-tongue Punjabi. I conclude my address with Punjabi saying:

"Yogi Chalde Bhaley... Nagri Basdi Bhali", meaning roughly, "The individuals must move on, Long live the institution".

Thank you.