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CONVOCATION ADDRESS

MR. CHANCELLOR, · MR. VICE-CHANCELLOR, FELLOWS AND GRADUATES OF THE UNIVERSITY, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I USE no language of convention when I express my deep sense of gratitude for the honour you have done me in asking me to deliver the Convocation Address this year. Conscious as I am of my own limitations and of my incompetence to make any authoritative pronouncement on education or the inner working of an organisation like that of a University, I feel that I do not come in your midst as a total stranger. I can, therefore, count upon your generosity in hearing this address.

In another capacity I have been privileged to acquire some knowledge of the working of your legal system, but there is another tie of a spiritual and nobler character, which binds me to your University. It was only last year that you were pleased to confer on me a signal honour, which was the more welcome to me because it was quite unexpected. I read in it not a compliment to myself but a proof of your adherence to those ideals of a University which refuse to allow distinctions of caste or creed to interfere with the unifying and cohesive influences of culture. Perhaps you overestimated my services to that culture of which you are professedly the custodians and promo-

ters. In my case, therefore, there is a double reason for expressing my gratitude to you.

Nearly fifteen years ago when I was called upon to deliver a similar address at Lucknow, I paid a tribute to your University, much younger as it was in those days, for the boldness of the experiment to which you had set your hands and for the courage you had shown in adopting an Indian language as the medium of instruction. Since then I have had further opportunities of giving consideration to this question and the lapse of time has only tended to strengthen my conviction that you cannot educate a whole nation in a foreign language. No doubt it enriches the life of a man and widens his horizon if he possesses a good knowledge of one or more foreign languages, but, still, I maintain that the education of our young men and young women in a foreign language on any large scale cannot produce those results which, I am sure, you have every right to expect if it is given in one or other of the languages of the country. I do not wish to tread upon the toes of some sensitive people, who interpret their nationalism in terms of a particular Indian language. For me it is enough to recognise that Urdu is essentially an Indian language—a language which had its birth in the Deccan and its rebirth in Delhi and to the growth and development of which Northern India and your part of India have made such valuable contributions. This does

not mean that I overlook or underestimate the other languages which may be spoken in your part of the country, and indeed I am happy to know that your University has not only not banned other Indian languages but makes provision for their teaching. If I attach importance to Urdu it is because I feel that in the past it has served as a powerful bond of cultural connection and association between the Hindus and the Muslims. That office it can still perform and is performing in many parts of India. Human experience shows—at any rate our own experience bears witness to it—that while religion and politics divide society into sections and accentuate the acerbities of opinion, the pursuit of a common culture tends to unite us and soften those acerbities. It is this experiment, which you are trying in your University, which has sustained my interest in it, notwithstanding the fact that it has been involved in some controversy on this question, but controversies are inescapable. So long as criticism is wholesome and genuine it can only tend to do good. It departs from its true purpose when it misleads opinion and sets up petty ideals. I shall refer to this subject again later on.

Meanwhile let me pay a respectful tribute to your august Sovereign who, realising that man lives not by bread alone, has provided out of his generosity a centre for all—young and old—where they can meet from day to day and

have a perpetual feast to feed their minds and souls on all that is best and noblest in human thought and human culture. Truly, therefore, a sovereign who does it is entitled to be called not only the " *Sultan* " of his *Mulk* but also " *Sultan-ul-Ulum.*"

May I also refer to my old and distinguished friend, the Right Honourable Nawab Sir Hydar Nawaz Jung Bahadur, known to us by his familiar name as Sir Akbar Hydari ? Sir Akbar has acquired all over India—and indeed beyond its shores—the reputation of a wise and constructive statesman. But noble as is the office of a statesman and great as his services may be to his country, no statesman can ever hope to command that measure of the gratitude of succeeding generations which a torch-bearer of culture does in his generation and afterwards. Sir Akbar has been such a torch-bearer in your State. To the practical hard-headedness of a statesman he unites the edifying idealism of a man of culture, of a friend of learning, of a benefactor of the youth of this State. The University owes much to him and it is but fair that its gratitude to him should be unstinted.

The documents relating to your University, which your Registrar was good enough to send me at Allahabad have given me an insight into the character and the activities of your University. I note with satisfaction that you provide

for instruction in Theology, Arts, Science, Law, Engineering, Medicine and Education; that your degrees are recognised by the Government of India for the Indian Civil Service and other competitive examinations and that recently you have had recognition extended to you by the great Universities of Oxford, Cambridge and London. At the present moment you possess a staff of 36 Professors, 45 Readers and 69 Lecturers and that the total number of your students at the beginning of the current academic year was 1965. These figures may well compare with any of the much older Universities in other parts of India. You are still at the commencement of your work and I have no doubt that as your work develops and the number of your students multiplies, the number of your teachers will also correspondingly increase. I saw a few months ago something of the buildings which were ready then and the buildings which were in the course of construction and I was also privileged to see the plans which were ready. When all the buildings are ready over this wide area, I venture to think that there will be nothing like them anywhere in India. I am not going to enter into the controversy, which often obtrudes itself on our attention, as to whether it is a wise policy to spend so much money on brick and mortar. I content myself with saying that though the avoidance of extravagance and luxury is a virtue, yet there should be

nothing mean or bizarre about the surroundings and environments of culture and learning. The home of culture should be worthy of it. If you can provide such a home and such a sanctuary there is no reason why you should not, but howsoever magnificent or imposing your buildings may be, your contemporaries and your posterity will judge you not so much by the grandeur of your buildings as by the loftiness of the ideals you cherish in those buildings, by the breadth of vision of your teachers and your pupils, by the freedom from anything petty or mean in thought and action, which you will not permit to grow within your precincts, by the development of that sense of larger humanity, which can only thrive in an atmosphere of tolerance and by the inculcation of that burning desire to serve the larger interests of the country courageously—but wisely—without which an Indian University must lose much of the justification for its existence, particularly at this time.

Another feature of your University, which has particularly appealed to me, is the establishment of a Bureau of Translation and Compilation as an integral part of your University. The list of books in History, ancient and modern, Political Science, English Constitution, Economics, Philosophy, Metaphysics, Ethics and scientific subjects, which you have already translated and published, is by no means negligible and I note with pleasure that

you have before you a programme of work in that direction which, when completed, should make a substantial contribution to our intellectual and cultural wealth. It is perhaps inevitable that in the circumstances in which we find ourselves, we should devote not a little of our attention to the enrichment of our culture and literature by the translation of foreign books. If the education of the youth of this country is to be given in Indian languages, Universities cannot afford to ignore their responsibility in the matter of providing in our own languages a sufficient, adequate and ever-growing body of literature. " In the process of transmitting the treasures of Arabic erudition into the West," says Professor Hitti, " Toledo, which maintained its position after the Christian conquest in 1085 as an important centre of Islamic learning, acted as the main channel. Here through the initiative of Archbishop Raymond I (1126-51) arose a regular school for translation. In it a series of translators flourished from about 1135-1284. Scholars were attracted from various parts of Europe, including the British Isles, whence hailed Michael Scot and Robert of Chester. In 1145 Robert made the first translation of al-Khwarizmi's algebra ; in 1143 he had completed with Hermann the Dalmatian, for Peter the Venerable, the first Latin translation of the Koran." Instances of this character could be multiplied from our own history. I need hardly recall to

your mind the names of the great writers of Persian in Moghal times who translated books from Sanskrit or other Indian languages into Persian. Indeed in the early part of British rule in India there was a good deal of translation done from our languages into English, but times have changed and it is now necessary for us to translate foreign books into our own languages. I, therefore, attach considerable value to this part of the activities of your University. I am free to confess that I have read a number of books translated into Urdu under your auspices and, subject only to one criticism which I shall frankly make, I have not only been much interested in those books, but have considerably benefitted by your translations. The criticism that I have to make is that at times it has occurred to me that there is a distinct tendency among the books issued from your Bureau to borrow difficult words from Arabic and Persian. Do not misunderstand me because I recognise that you cannot avoid drawing upon the reserves of Arabic and Persian when you are translating technical words and phrases or writing in the language not of the market-place but in that of culture. Still I would urge that if you desire to render true service to Urdu and to invest it with a larger appeal, it is necessary that simplicity of diction should always be kept in view and words which are easily understandable, whatever their origin, Persian, Arabic,

Sanskrit or English, should not be replaced by unfamiliar or difficult words. If I may venture to draw your attention to the tendency observable among contemporary writers of Persian in Iran, I shall say that they do not hesitate to absorb freely words from some of the Western languages. I shall say nothing more on this subject.

Our Universities have in the past fulfilled a distinct purpose in our national life. It would be a narrow view to take that they have only produced a race of clerks or professional men, who have done no good to the country, and that, therefore, they have no further claim upon the support of the State. While there is no one who feels more keenly than myself the pressing need of wide-spread education among the masses, or the need of instruction and training in crafts, arts, and industries so as to add to the material wealth of the country or at least to provide means of livelihood to the growing number of our unemployed young men, I should very strongly deprecate any movement which had for its object the starvation of our Universities or the refusal on the part of the State to freely and frankly recognise its obligation to maintain them in a state of efficiency. It is true that it is not always easy to adjudicate between the claims of University education and mass education and it may be that for sometime to come we may, at any rate in certain parts of India, have to pay greater

attention to mass education than has been the case so far, but I think it would be a great mistake to hold that the State is under no obligation to maintain and support the existing Universities. If there is so much craving for freedom and progress in every department of life in the country, that, I maintain, is mainly due to the work of our Universities. It is they and they alone which are responsible for the great awakening which has taken place in this country during the last fifty years. They have undoubtedly helped to create and foster a national consciousness and a sense of self-respect, and have raised the level of our thought. They have brought within our reach the best fruits of learning and culture of the world. They have brought us into direct contact with the achievements of the modern mind, they have revived our pride in our past and they have filled our hearts with hope for the future. I am not claiming for them perfection ; there can be no such thing as a perfect University. A University is a living organism, it grows from decade to decade and it must change and readjust itself to the changing needs of the times. Personally I feel that while on the one hand they have done much good on the moral side and in the cultural field, our Universities have yet to bring themselves into line with the changing needs of the times. I realise that a University cannot be converted into a factory for the production of material

goods for human consumption, but I also feel that on their scientific side they can impart an education to our young men, which can enable them to turn their knowledge to good account or to place their knowledge at the disposal of our industries and the general organisation of the economic life of the country. In short, I maintain that there ought to be a greater correlation between our Universities and the acute and growing economic needs of the country. If this point of veiw is accepted, it can only strengthen my contention that the State should own its obligation not merely to maintain our Universities but to contribute freely to their improvement. Luckily, there is no fear of your University being starved or otherwise impaired in its beneficent activities by the adoption by your State of some new theories about the obligation of the State to maintain seats of learning and to promote the highest interests of culture and science of which one hears so much at present in British India in varying language from time to time.

There are two problems which are facing most of the Universities at present and I believe your University also cannot afford to ignore them. The first problem to which I propose to refer briefly is the problem of unemployment among the educated middle classes and the second problem to which I shall refer presently is the problem of discipline among the students.

Four years ago I had to examine as Chairman of a Committee in my Province the nature and extent and effect of unemployment among the products of our Universities. Naturally most of my report concerned itself with unemployment in the United Provinces, but in the course of my work I had to take into consideration the condition of things not only in other parts of India but also in some foreign countries. I do not know how acute, if at all, the problem is in your State, but I should not feel at all surprised if with the growth in the numbers of your graduates the problem is beginning to grow. Wisdom and far-sightedness require that the authorities of your University should, in close co-operation with your government, begin to take steps from now so as to provide against those dangers which are bound to arise when your educated young men will feel the bitterness of disappointment. In many countries of the West their governments have been steadily reorganising their systems of education so as to bring them into relation with the question of unemployment. If I may quote from my report, no country has approached the question of unemployment —and it seems to us none can approach it—as an isolated problem having no relation whatever to (*a*) education, (*b*) professions, (*c*) productive occupations, (*d*) agriculture, (*e*) trade, (*f*) business, and (*g*) industries. It is difficult to suggest a remedy of universal

application. Much will depend upon the actual conditions prevailing in your State. It may be necessary for you to reform your system of primary education and to correlate it to the actual conditions of village life so as to make young people more efficient units of village economy and save them from the temptation of concentrating in urban areas in search of employment. Similarly, it may be necessary for you to reorganise your secondary education, to make it more varied in its content, to make it self-sufficient so that it should mark a distinct stage in the equipment of your young men for the struggle of their lives. Again in the field of University education you may consider it necessary to lay greater stress on practical research, the fruits of which may be reaped by those among you who are anxious to start industries on a large scale. You may also feel yourself called upon to reorganise your professional education, insisting upon a higher standard of efficiency so as to prevent their being overcrowded. Above everything else, your resourcefulness will be put to the test in creating new careers and avenues of employment for your young men. I do not think one single remedy can suffice for the purpose, but I think there is great force in the observation of the United States National Planning Board to the effect that " the choice is not between anarchy on the one hand and complete control over all aspects of private behaviour on the

other. A totally unplanned nation is as impossible and undesirable as a totally planned economy." For obvious reasons I cannot make any specific recommendations in this behalf. I am contenting myself with drawing your attention to the inevitability of this problem so that you may be ready to cope with it before it assumes threatening proportions. It must be definitely recognised that an unemployed educated young man, who feels that life has nothing to offer him and that the society of which he is a member and the State of which he is a subject, takes no interest in his moral and material well-being, is a source of positive danger to the State. It seems to me that if this problem of unemployment among the educated youths of British India had been seriously tackled ten or fifteen years ago, we should have been, at least to some extent, immune from some of those disruptive and subversive tendencies which are today threatening the very existence of our social order.

I shall now briefly refer to the question of discipline—a question which has been forcing itself upon our attention in recent months nearly everywhere in India and to which reference has been made on more than one occasion by eminent educationists and even by many advanced political leaders, who cannot certainly be accused of harbouring in their minds any anti-national sentiments. I am not one of those who would like to put any artificial res-

trictions upon the freedom of thought or the freedom of expression of young men at the University, so long as it is recognised that this freedom is to be used within the precincts of the University for the development of those intellectual and moral qualities, which must be a powerful asset to a young man before he is actually called upon to face the real struggles of life. The greater the measure of freedom of thought they enjoy, while their cultural life is in the process of formation, the better it would be for them, but young men have got to recognise—and must be made to recognise —that there is no affinity between a University and an industrial concern and a strike against the University or against the teachers is, in my humble judgment, a strike against knowledge, culture, and good manners. But even worse than the ordinary strikes are the hunger strikes resorted to by some young men to enforce their will or their judgment against the will and judgment of those who are in authority over them. Perhaps this much may be said in their favour that men, who ought to know better, have placed before them in the past false ideals of independence, self-respect and self-sacrifice and when these young men work under the influence of those ideals, howsoever much you may condemn them, you cannot excuse those who are in the main responsible for encouraging such false notions. Well may, therefore, a young man, who has succumbed to

such influences, exclaim with the Persian poet,

درمیان قعر دریا تخته بندم کرده
باز میگوئی که دامن تر مکن هشیار باش *

In the words of Professor Barker "There are still reformers and even revolutionaries in the land; and no man yet knows what our new and comparatively untried system of national education may do to lift up our hearts and rekindle our spirits—to chasten our febrility, to sublimate our gregariousness, to ennoble our leisure, to elevate our characters and to 'give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.'" It is true we are passing through difficult times. A new spirit and a new outlook are pervading our whole mental and moral being. We hear from day to day so many different slogans and cries—not always reconcilable. At times we are told that the doom of the existing order is at hand; at others our orators point towards the promised land as if it was within a stone's throw. Do you, therefore, wonder that in the midst of this intellectual and moral ferment, our young men should at times lose the balance of their mind and take that to be true freedom which, in truth, is false freedom and which upon reflection they will find makes true freedom more and more distant. If the responsibility of the teachers to their pupils is great, if also the responsibility of the pupils to

*You have bound me to a plank in the midst of the deep sea,
Still you ask me to be careful and not to get wet.

themselves, to their University, and to their country is great, greater still is the responsibility of those who in moments of public excitement exploit the passionate ardour and the generous impulses of our young men to achieve political or communal ends. We cannot, I admit, afford to ignore the signs of the times or to take note of the new spirit which is asserting itself in different forms in the different spheres of our national life. It is impossible that the Universities can altogether remain unaffected by that spirit and yet the question, as to what part the Universities can play in the moulding of events, is one which, it seems to me, should seriously engage the attention of all those who are interested in the future of our youth and the future of the country as a whole.

There can be no greater tragedy in the life of a nation than when people profess noble ideals and yet act as if those ideals had lost all their potency and could only be appealed to on the platform and in the press as a sort of cover for conduct wholly inconsistent with them. Thus is insincerity bred among us; thus are those noble ideals degraded from their high place; thus is our whole moral being contaminated and thus are we diverted from the highway of true service to the country into the by-lanes and tortuous paths of class interests, religious bigotry, party factions, social hatred, and all other evils which precede or accompany a period of social disintegration or

dissolution. I am not speaking as a pessimist, or as an alarmist, I still hope good sense will prevail in the end, but I would be untrue to my convictions and untrue to you if I did not enter a caveat. Instead of our concentrating our energies upon the building up of our future on solid foundations, we are dissipating them in activities which are dividing man from man, brother from brother, and are creating a sense of insecurity as to the future. I frankly tell you that I doubt very much whether we could have more abused any other word in English language than we have abused this word 'nationalism.'

Of course I realise—and I have no doubt you all realise—that it is impossible for India to lead a life of isolation. Modern conditions will not permit any country in the world to lead a life of isolation. At the same time I feel that if certain competing theories of life in Europe adumbrated by certain thinkers and philosophers, economists and politicians or dictators—whether their abodes be in London, or Moscow, or Berlin, or Rome—have led to such unsettled conditions in Europe, it is all the more necessary that we should take a warning from the chaos and conflict in ideas and conduct which they have produced in Europe. Why should we reproduce that chaos and conflict in our country ?

I put it to you whether during the last 40 or 50 years you have known a time when India

was more divided than it is at present, or whether there has been a greater chaos in our ideas, a greater conflict between our professions and our conduct, greater manifestations of party prejudices, and, what is worse than everything else, a greater distrust and a greater suspicion between the different sections of the community as a whole, and yet I recognise that the craving for freedom has become deeper and more widespread than ever before. The question to my mind is, are the conditions which we have produced in the country favourable to the realisation of our political or social ambitions? Speaking generally about nationalism a learned writer—Mr. Carlton Hayes, who has made a special study of nationalism—says that "Nationalism is now obviously a world-wide phenomenon, vitally affecting both the material and the intellectual development of modern civilisation. It tends more and more to influence the economic and spiritual as well as the political relationships of mankind. It is so closely related to the whole complex of contemporary culture that any change in its direction or intensity would seem to wait upon an alteration of other factors in the complex." As a general proposition perhaps it is true—and certainly more true of the West than it is of the East—but when we begin to apply those general considerations to the existing conditions in our country we at once come up against certain hard realities of the situation. It is not enough, in my humble

judgment, that there must be a general craving for freedom or a democratic state of society. What is more necessary and urgent is that we must bring into existence that temperament and those conditions which may make the advent of the new order easy and practicable. It is all very well for some people to say that a class struggle is inevitable before they can remould society according to their cherished pattern, but I ask you, what is the price we shall have to pay for this class struggle in the country, the beginnings of which are already there. Whatever be the other items of cost in the process of this struggle, the heaviest item is going to be freedom—political, economic and religious. You will not get the freedom you want, the freedom to say and do what you like consistently with the freedom of others. You will probably get such freedom as may be doled out to you by the will of the powerful few and all this will be the very negation of true democracy. It will be a form of slavery the more galling because it will assume the garb of freedom. If I am told that these are the views of a reformer and not those of a revolutionary who feels sure that he is ready to give us a new heaven and a new earth, I shall not resent that charge. It is in these conditions that our Universities have got to discharge their responsibilities to our young men, who after all will be the legatees of our ideas, and I certainly do not wish that they

should be saddled—if I may use a legal expression—with onerous gifts.

The first and foremost function of our Universities at a critical juncture like this in dealing with our young men is to clarify their ideas, to remove those clouds of doubt and suspicion from their minds which prevent them from realising that life does not consist of a series of theories but of the capacity to reform, to reconstruct and to readjust. Above all it should be the function of the Universities in the existing conditions to instil into young minds the absolute necessity of a spirit of toleration—a spirit which should enable them to realise that it is just possible that there may be some element of truth in what others, than those whom they imagine to have the monopoly of the whole truth, say or maintain. If Universities have in the past moulded the minds of our young men so as to create in them a craving for freedom ; if they have directly or indirectly been responsible for rescuing them from the degrading influences of sectionalism or communalism, which places the interests of a section of the community above those of the community as a whole, then they should still be able to create that atmosphere and promote those ideas without which neither true freedom nor genuine nationalism can thrive.

The scene that we are witnessing in India at present recalls to mind the vivid picture of the Athenian democracy which Plato draws in

his "Republic". In a famous passage he compares the ship of the State to an actual ship on the sea and says : " The sailors are quarrelling about the navigation. Each man thinks that he ought to navigate, though up to that time he has never studied the art, and cannot name his instructor or the time of his apprenticeship. They go further and say that navigation cannot be taught, and are ready to cut in pieces him who says that it can. They crowd round the solitary master, entreating him and offering him every inducement to entrust them with the helm..... They have no notion that the true navigator must attend to the year and to the seasons, to the sky and the stars and the winds, and all that concerns his craft, if he is really going to be fit to rule a ship. They do not believe that it is possible for any one to acquire by skill or practice the art of getting control of the helm, whether there is opposition or not, and at the same time to master the art of steering. If ships were managed in that way, do you not think that the true navigator would certainly be called a star-gazer and a useless babbler by the crews of ships of that description." If this be the case are we not entitled to turn from the star-gazers and useless babblers to the professors in our Universities, free from the din and noise of the market-place and accustomed to think and work in an atmosphere of serenity ? Presumably they are above party passions and their judg-

ments are not affected by party considerations. Presumably also they can draw upon their accumulated knowledge of human history and of true philosophy, which treats life as a single harmonious whole and not as consisting of jarring units. Will they deprive us of the benefit of their knowledge, their wisdom and their cool judgment ?

May I before I sit down venture to address a few words to the young men on whom you are going to place today your hall-mark of approval of their scholastic work within your portals ? With the wide expanse of life before you the journey through life will put the heaviest strain on your physical, intellectual and moral reserves, but during all the trials that you may have to face you must on no account be untrue to the education which you have received and to the ideals of conduct which have been placed before you here. It is quite natural that you should be actuated by personal ambitions. I do not believe in a young man who has no ambitions of his own. While trying to realise your personal ambitions, do not forget that you owe a duty to your society, your State and your country. In the midst of these conflicting claims it will not be your intellectual gifts alone which will enable you to master difficulties and achieve success. More necessary than your intellectual gifts will be the moral stamina that you possess, which will enable you to tread your path with firm

steps. Truly and literally you are the trustees of the future of this country. On your outlook and on your word and deed will depend as to whether this country is going to achieve that unity which is its first and last need, and without which all talk of freedom and self-government is mere sham and hypocrisy. In a few famous lines the late Sir Mohammad Iqbal—whose loss I deeply mourn with you all—has placed before you an ideal, which you may well adopt in your interest and the interest of the country. They are as follows :—

این کہن اقوام را شیرازہ بند رایت صدق وصفا را کن بلند

اہل حق را زندگی از قوت است قوت ہر ملت از جمعیت است

رائے بے قوت ہمہ مکر و فسون

قوت بے رائے جہل است و جنون *

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*Unite all these ancient nations.

Raise the banner of truth and sincerity.

The men of truth live by strength.

The strength of every community is by unity.

Opinion without strength is hypocrisy and fraud.

Strength without opinion is ignorance and madness.