

**ADDRESS TO THE DIGNITARIES PRESENT AT THE CONVOCATION FOR  
THE CONFERMENT OF AN HONORARY DOCTOR OF LAWS DEGREE BY  
THE UNIVERSITY OF KERALA  
20<sup>th</sup> JUNE, 2008**

**Justice K.G. Balakrishnan  
Chief Justice of India**

At the very outset, I would like to convey my heartfelt greetings to the Chancellor, Vice Chancellor, Honored Guests, Students and all other dignitaries present here today.

It is a great honor to have been conferred an Honorary Doctor of Laws degree by the University of Kerala. I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to this prestigious University for conferring on me this privilege. I am particularly happy, as I had received the degree of graduation from this University in a Convocation held in this very hall about 42 years back, which, I feel, laid the foundation for my further studies. Since Kerala has played a major part in my academic, personal as well as professional life, it is also very heartening to be associated in this manner with this University.

It would be relevant to recall the golden words of the Shree Chitra Thirunal Bala Rama Varma Maharaja of Travancore, the last Chera

Maharaj and the first Chancellor of this University, which he spoke on the eve of his coronation:

*“It is my hope that I shall be enabled by God’s grace to earn the affection and esteem of all communities and classes amongst my people whose advancement in every department of life will be my perpetual pre-occupation and my sole aim”.*

With this noble goal, the Maharaja established the University of Travancore in 1937, which inculcated in its students the best values from Western culture and language while, at the same time, creating a strong sense of patriotism and familial spirit. Through this novel teaching methodology, the University’s students always maintained a respect for traditional values. This ensured that their feet were strongly rooted on the ground from which they rose to become great luminaries in every walk of life.

The Maharaja deeply desired to give the best education to the children of our State and so he invited Dr. Albert Einstein to be the Vice Chancellor of Travancore University. It was only due to certain

personal reasons that he could not accept that gesture. I am told that the letter written by Dr. Einstein is still available in the archives of this University.

The University of Travancore became the University of Kerala, and in seventy-one years of fruitful existence, this University has become intellectually dynamic, physically breathtaking and spiritually enriching. It has maintained the highest standards of scholastic excellence, by offering a wide range of academic and extracurricular activities. These have been enriched by the University's use of a wide range of refreshingly creative teaching methodologies, which ensure that all students share in the intellectual richness of the institution, and thus attain skills that will form the foundations of their careers.

To me, this degree represents a monumental milestone of encouragement, rather than a figurative representation of what I may have achieved in my life. I cannot accept this honour by myself, for it goes beyond me, and encompasses all those people who have encouraged me, supported me and provided me with the intellectual and emotional support at every walk of life, especially during those

times when I needed it the most. It is these people who are the actual spirit behind this award, and they deserve it as much as I do. They ensured that I never waver from my goals, and always place the voice of my conscience and inner self before all others. After all, it is the foundation of a building that keeps the building standing, just as the roots of a tree keep it towering and strong.

Often, in life, we find that we are tempted by incentives that attempt to sway our efforts and aspirations away from what we truly desire to do, to what we *should* do. In this process, we forget what we love, and our work is not motivated by our heart, but by our mind alone. So it is important that we focus all our energy on that which we would do with all our heart, such that each day of hard work brings a sense of fulfillment and joy of going beyond our capabilities and doing things we never thought we could do. This is nothing less than a marathon, and with experience, I can say with a fair degree of certainty that any work that is driven by passion and dedication can never be tiring or exhausting, rather, it is refreshing and reinvigorating. It is such commitment that ensures excellence and success in life.

This institution, driven by the dream of the noblest of rulers, has kept its flag flying high through the decades. Its excellent pedagogy and dedicated students pursue activities encompassing all walks of education and scholarship. They are able to choose what they want to do with an extraordinary sense of freedom, and in this they are supported by a wonderfully collegial and intellectually vibrant environment. This stands as a testament to this institution's commitment to create path-breaking scholarship and striving to make each day extraordinary educational experience in erudition and the pursuit of knowledge.

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