JUSTICE (RTD.) JAVID IQBAL'S ADDRESS
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Professor Khalid Aftab, Vice Chancellor, Distinguished Professors, Deans, Faculty Members, Your Excellencies, dear graduates, ladies and gentlemen! It gives me great pleasure to be in my Alma Mater after more than half a century and to address the young graduates at the Convocation of what now has developed into Government College University.

I am profoundly impressed to learn that the new University provides facilities to students to specialize in almost all the modes of traditional knowledge as well as new Sciences and Technology. Furthermore, it has expanded the horizon of its educational system by affiliating with internationally reputed universities and thus has established contacts with foreign centers of excellence. Perhaps one day it will further expand its system to provide education not only on its campus but also cater for distance instruction. Owing to the advancement in technology, it is now possible to make use of web-based modules, CD, and e-mail besides face to face tuition.

We all are aware that this emerging University has a long and magnificent history and Prof. Khalid Aftab! You have rightly observed that it is one such institution in Pakistan which has produced great men in the past and is producing people of great ideas at present. The Torch as the crest of University Emblem obviously symbolizes the Light of Knowledge. But the motto Courage to Know represents the principle that to realize your potential for exploring new fields of learning, you have to have the Courage to start with Doubt or Denial before arriving at the stage of Affirmation of the Ultimate Truth.

On an occasion like the present one, one is expected to give some advice to young men and women who are about to cross the threshold from a protected life to a world full of
numerous challenges. But I do realize that the technique of giving advice, like all the things of the past, has become obsolete because in this highly individualistic and competitive modern world, the problems are also new and therefore everyone is inclined to learn through his or her own mistakes. However, there is a consensus on the point that owing to globalization no nation-state in the third world can survive without acquisition of the knowledge of Sciences, Technology and Economics. The study of Sciences and Technology reveals that through creativity the working of things and the quality of life can be improved. What is creativity? And what is authentic living which can improve the quality of our lives?

It is difficult to define creativity, but any attempt to do so must include innovative and inventive bent of mind along with the psychological elements of curiosity, wonder and novelty. God creates everything out of nothing. But human mind, with its numerous potentialities, can manipulate the already existing objects or turn over the already existing ideas like a pack of cards and as a consequence something unusual is produced or a new idea is formulated. Creativity therefore breaks the conventional mode and expands the limits of reason and perception. In other words, it is the outcome of assessment and rearrangement of the existing things and ideas within the confines of our environments. But it is annoying that the reward of originality is usually received in the form of resentment of our conformist friends, probably because the conventionalists prefer the maintenance of status quo and are inclined to disapprove anyone who has something new to offer.

Sometime a challenge in the collective life of a community demands the performance of a creative act for its resolution. Therefore, such a creative act is not only novel but it provides an appropriate solution to a given problem. However, the creative idea, in its nature, remains not only innovative but it is also exploratory and an adventure into the realm of the unknown. On the other hand, the conformist idea, as it avoids disturbing the status quo, is cautious and methodical. Thus, to quote my revered philosopher friend Professor Khawaja Masud, creativity is
iconoclastic whereas conformity is dogmatic. The dictum of the conformist is “why change?” But the principle on which the creative mind operates is “why not?” This is how Pakistan came into being and this is how its establishment was opposed.

Creativity involves the ability to change one’s attitude, approach or prospect in regard to a specific given problem. We must not forget that every human being is endowed with numerous mental potentialities and happens to be creative in different fields and to different degrees. Consequently, the difference between a genius and a common man is not of quality but is essentially of quantity i.e. the imagination, energy or persistence of the genius may be a little more developed than that of the ordinary man. There is however, another difference, pointed out by Prof. Khawaja Masud, that the innovative man starts from doubting the value of the generally accepted paradigm, and his skepticism liberates him from the shackles of conventional belief, while his urge for the new, prepares him for courageously undertaking the responsibility of his creative discovery. Therefore, creativity implies non-conformity. A conformist is less intelligent as compared to a liberated mind. He is less confident of himself and therefore more dependant on others, more rigid and certainly more self-righteous and authoritarian.

I note that Government College University also offers Islamic Studies as one of its courses and Dean of the Faculty of Languages, Islamic and Oriental Learning, is our eminent Professor Suhail Ahmed Khan. I trust this subject includes the causes of the collapse of Islamic polity and culture in modern times. According to Allama Iqbal, a product of this very illustrious University, there are three causes of this decline: arbitrary Sultanate, sterile Mullaism and decadent Sufism. For the renaissance of Islamic polity and culture, he proposes that autocracy of all forms must be replaced by democracy, equality for all, respect for Human Rights and Rule of Law, as these values are consistent with the injunctions of Islam; Mullaism to be replaced by the election of qualified lawyers to the national assembly of his proposed Muslim state, to reinterpret Islamic laws in order to bring them into conformity with the modern needs and requirements of the community through the process of Ijtihad;
and lastly the spirit of true Sufism to be revived through defining *Toheed* as a principle of human unity, human equality and human freedom, as well as through the dissemination of liberal-modern education among the illiterate masses of Islam.

It is necessary for the progress of the new educational system to bid farewell to the medieval mode of learning. The times have passed when prescribed text books were expected to be committed to memory and poured out during the test. Now only that education system can succeed which draws out the creative potential of a student, irrespective of the fact whether he belongs to an English medium school or an Urdu medium school or a *Madrassa*, for creativity comes as naturally to the average student as it comes to the clever and brilliant one. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the teacher to encourage the development of original and innovative ideas among his pupils.

Creativity, in fact, is self-direction; it is to learn at one's own initiative. One cannot deny that this is an era of explosion of knowledge. In the modern world, knowledge is developing at such high speed that by the time you leave this grand University, what you have learnt so far, will become obsolete. Therefore, after leaving your *alma mater*, it is only through self-education that you can keep pace with the latest developments in your field of studies. I am certain that the creative teachers of this University have launched you on a new voyage of discovery by giving you an understanding of the basic structure of your subjects. This is not an advice but remember, to be creative is to fulfill yourself as a person and to fulfill yourself is your destiny.

What is authentic living? It is essentially a question of philosophy, although it concerns itself with certain moral values which may be permanent in nature or may not be permanent, but subject to the law of change in accordance with the changing needs and requirements of an individual. The conformist's view is that authentic living is not achievable in this world and that by observing religious obligations one should prepare himself for realizing authentic living in the hereafter. The generally accepted
view is that education only informs and this is not sufficient; because a student has to be “formed” besides being “informed”. It has also been held that what you have gained through your studies so far is not genuinely relevant. Your life at the university has merely been an exercise of a fighter equipped with certain tools. The real battle shall now commence when your skill to handle the tools shall be put to a test and you would be judged also on the grounds whether as a person you are good or bad.

Once upon a time, it was believed that authentic living is realized when one acquires material comforts, amasses wealth, and becomes cultured in the real sense through developing a good understanding of literature, fine arts, philosophy, history etc. Then came a stage when some moralists formulated the view that it was irrelevant to involve oneself in the futile discussion as to how authentic or unauthentic living can be associated with culture or wealth. The argument proceeded: why should one bother to establish a connection between the Greek versions of the tragedy called “Electra” (written by Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides) with that of Eugene O’Neill’s “Mourning Becomes Electra”? No one is interested to find out who among Marlowe, Kyd and Shakespeare originally conceived or actually wrote “Hamlet”; or which out of the three proofs i.e. teleological, ontological or cosmological establishes the existence of God. Who cares whether or not you approve the cosmology of Ptolemy, Copernicus, Galileo, Newton or Einstein. The study of literature, philosophy, history etc. or mastering of the classical languages may make one knowledgeable or may even make one cultured, but what has such specialization to do with authentic living? On the other hand, even an idiot or a moron can acquire wealth and become wealthy but material comforts have nothing to do with authentic living.

There is also a view that “Peace” leads to the realization of authentic living. “Peace” is a laudable ideal for which one should aspire although it appears very difficult to achieve. One of my learned colleagues in the Supreme Court once informed me that the Chinese word for “Peace” is pictorially depicted by a roof with one woman under it. On the other hand,
“War” is depicted by a roof with two women under it. The wisdom of the Chinese in these picturesque linguistic expressions is obviously indisputable so far as domestic peace and harmony is concerned.

There is another way of evaluating “Peace” as a concept. According to one of Iqbal’s poems a young student from Merv once came to Ali Hajveri, better known as Data Ganj Bakhsh, the patron saint of Lahore, and pleaded that he desired “Peace” for authentic living, but since he was surrounded by enemies who wanted to exterminate him, the saint should pray for their destruction. The saint replied: “You should be grateful to your enemy for he is your best friend in the sense that he always keeps you awake and in a state of preparedness. Authentic living means awareness and alertness, and if conflict or competition is eliminated from your life, the result will be apathy and death”.

Iqbal’s contribution to the cultural renaissance of Islam is his philosophy of the “Self”, which is reflected in his works. He believes that man is potentially a creative activity and has a capability to become co-worker with God in the process of progressive change if he takes the initiative. Iqbal desires the rebirth of the spirit of inquisitiveness and defiance among the modern Muslim youth so that their lost stature in the field of Science could be recovered. He demonstrates through an analysis of history that in the sphere of human knowledge the Western civilization is a further extension of Islamic civilization. Everything in the Western thought that led to human progress is an elaboration of those very ideas, theories and debates which were initiated by Muslim thinkers and scientists. Briffaut admits in his “Making of Humanity” that there is not a single aspect of European growth in which the decisive influence of Islamic Culture is not traceable and nowhere it is so clear and momentous as in the genesis of Natural Sciences and the Scientific Method. Therefore, if we learn those sciences and equip ourselves with that technology in a more developed form today, we will not be receiving something from an alien culture, but taking back what we originally gave to the West. In this way, he attempts to create a bridge between Islam and the West.
The values on the basis of which Iqbal elaborates his concept of authentic living, are the adoption of such moral attributes as love, freedom, courage, high ambition, and indifference towards the acquisition of material comforts. The cultivation of these attributes in one's character, according to him, is likely to result in the fortification of one's "Self" and the acts of such a person may become creative and innovative. He is of the view that the factors which destroy man's "self" arise out of stagnation. Stagnation disseminates passive virtues like humility, submission, obedience or Taqleed (blind following of the past authorities) as well as fear, cowardice, corruption, begging or asking not only for the means of livelihood but also for ideas from others, imitating and finally servitude.

Iqbal also highlights the symbol of "Eagle" to illustrate his concept of authentic living and advises the young Muslim men and women to adopt the five qualities which he notes in this regal bird:

i) it soars high in the sky;
ii) has sharp vision;
iii) prefers loneliness;
iv) does not make a nest; and lastly
v) only eats the "shikar" killed by itself.

In this modern age, since everyone is expected to learn at one's own initiative, my young friends! Remember to fulfill yourselves by always being creative and you are undoubtedly free to choose your own pattern of moral values for determining what is going to be your personal ideal of authentic living. I conclude by most sincerely wishing all of you the best of luck as you leave the portals of this illustrious institution and give you this parting message through the verses of Iqbal.
“The passive meandering of the stream,
Creeping slowly within its muddy banks,
Is a sight unpleasant to my eye!
Do not look at it my dear youth!
Turn yourself to the other side and behold-----
The fountain surging magnificently upwards
By its own inner force.”