

- (i) Hon'ble the Acting Chief Justice Shri Sanjeev Prakash Sharma,
- (ii) My esteemed brothers and sisters on the Bench,
- (iii) Mr. Rajendra Prasad, learned Advocate General,
- (iv) Mr. Rajesh Panwar, Representative, Bar Council of Rajasthan,
- (v) Mr. Ratna Ram Tholia, President, Rajasthan High Court Advocates' Association,
- (vi) Mr. Anand Purohit, President, Rajasthan High Court Lawyers Association,
- (vii) Mr. Mahendra Shandilya, President, Rajasthan High Court Bar Association, Jaipur
- (viii) Mr. Sandeep Luhadiya, President, the Bar Association, Jaipur,
- (ix) Learned Senior Advocates and learned members of the Bar,
- (x) Members of the Registry and staff of the High Court
- (xi) my respected Bhabhijis and above all my revered mother.

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1. Today is a moment, full of reminiscence and emotions, when I bow for the last time, while alighting from a journey which I commenced with my first bow in September 1992. Before beginning my ensuing journey on a rather unfamiliar terrain, I am driven by the feeling of anxiety and fear of unknown, and not by excitement.

2. Upon treading through the memory-lane spanning over a period of 33 years, I feel that the long period has passed in a flash. When I first wore the robes, after obtaining my degrees in Chartered Accountancy and Law, and entered the Majestic Jubilee Building, I was having a

mixed feeling of enthusiasm and nervousness. Enthusiasm, because I was going to be a part of a profession known for its nobleness; and nervousness because of the fear of not being able to make a mark in the ocean of eminent lawyers so also the very thought that I had large shoes to fill, given my pedigree of three generations at the Bar.

3. My grand-father late Shri Sayar Chand Mehta had earned great repute not only as a professional but also as a philanthropist. When I was about to join the Bar, he said - "Don't lose your heritage for moments of footage".

4. Entering the annals of this Court, I was on the horns of dilemma, regarding the chambers to join. And in this process, I followed the advice given by one Senior Advocate, who said that your father Shri B.C. Mehta Sahab is a counsel for Commercial Taxes Department and various other government organizations and if you join his Chambers, you will have an opportunity to deal with and argue variety of cases.

5. Thus, I began my career under the tutelage of my father, who always encouraged me to draft and argue the matters. He never believed in offering a ready-made solution; instead he would always prod me to ponder and find answers and relevant law myself. Though he was very hard working in Chambers but had the unique ability of carrying a relaxed demeanour in Court and corridors. He

would greet and meet everyone. From him, I learnt the values of hard-work, humality and humor.

6. I vividly recall my First Case, which I argued before Hon'ble Mr. Justice A.K. Mathur. Opposing me was doyen of the Bar, Senior Advocate late Shri D.S. Sisodiya. Though, I lost that case, but was delighted to know that the judgment was a reportable one. My first case gave me the most important lesson, that for a lawyer losing or winning a case hardly matters. What matters the most is, the pouring of diligent efforts in rendering quality assistance to the Court and the audience, which the Court has provided.

7. I had an opportunity to observe Late Shri Marudhar Mridual sahib, Late Shri L.R. Mehta sahib, Late Shri Makhtoor Mal Singhvi Sahib, Late Shri Murlidhar Purohit sahib, Late Shri J.P. Joshi sahib and many other lawyers of eminence in action.

8. Out of the stalwarts of my time, I have a different place for revered Shri Rajendra Mehta. He was a legend unto himself, not just for his immaculate legal acumen, but also for the disposition that he carried in professional as well as personal life. I was immensely benefited from the interactions I had with him, in vacant Court Halls, where he used to sit with his bags full of books or drafts of writ petitions and replies, which he would be settling.

9. I once asked him, "you are so thorough in your drafting, does any of the Hon'ble Judges read the memo of petitions as carefully as you meticulously draft?" With his trade mark smile, he responded that "I draft my petitions not for others but for myself."

10. My earnest request to the young members of the Bar would be to focus on the drafting. Because, if you draft well, then only you will be able to argue and articulate well. The time you spend on formulating the grounds and pondering over the issues of law involved, would definitely benefit you, while preparing the matter for arguments. And more importantly, the language which is used while drafting, would automatically flow while you address the Court.

11. My interactions in the Bar with the fellow members and the seniors was both educating and inspiring. Every appearance was a lesson: not just in advocacy but also in the art of perseverance.

12. I can't forget my days, when we used to sit with the fellow colleagues on the chairs kept outside Court No.1. Though, some senior used to nudge us and ask us to sit in the Court rooms and it had been my endeavour to follow such advice but at times I ended up defying such instructions to enjoy the company of contemporary members of the Bar, including Shri Vijay Bishnoi Sahib, who has been known for his charisma and unparalleled wit.

13. I would make a special mention of Shri Arun Bhansali Sahib, who would guide all the members of the Bar. He has been my friend, philosopher and guide in all walks of life. We alongwith Mr. Manoj Bhandari, Mr. Manish Shishodia and Mr. Vikas Balia all of whom are designated senior advocates, used to look for the breaks to enjoy cold drinks, even in chilly winters.

14. So far as guidance and basic understanding of law is concerned, I learnt it from my father but when it comes to exposition of law and arguments, I was truly lucky to have assistance of my colleagues - Mr. Sharad Kothari, Mr. Lalit Pareek, Mr. Varun Singhvi, Mr. Kunal, Kritika, Mahak and Gaurav. They helped me a lot in drafting so also in research.

15. I was privileged to enjoy love and affection of all the members of the Bar, out of whom some are adorning the Bench and some are sitting in front of us, leading the Bar from the front.

16. For last couple of days, I could not sleep properly and even when I slept, my mind was wandering in the old building – 'the Chay Ki Thadi' – the shop at which we used to have 'mogar ki kachori' and 'lahsun ka kofta', the common water hut, where we used to drink water and what not. I must confess that during those days I never had any

stomach problem or cold & cough, which I often have these days.

17. But, the aroma of the judges' kitchen, which used to spread in the corridor leading to library around lunch hours, was both fascinating and tempting. We used to think "ये जजेज आखिर खाते क्या हैं"

18. Then came the fateful day, when I was entrusted with the responsibility of sitting on the Bench, where I once fumbled to stand and argue as a young lawyer. I am grateful to Hon'ble Mr. Justice Sunil Ambwani sahib, Mr. Justice Ajay Rastogi sahib and Mr. Justice Govind Mathur sahib, who considered me worthy of being given this divine duty.

19. I must confess that I remember and cherish the memories as a member of the Bar more fondly than the days I spent on the Bench. Because as a member of the Bar, I observed the incidents during Court proceedings, so also what had happened outside the Court room, but after being elevated, I spent most of the time in the Court room, which more often than not was monotonous.

20. Though on 7th December 2019, we have moved to this magnificent and monumental building, but the days, I spent in the heritage building of the High Court are unforgettable. Its Corridor was unique – we used to come across all the seniors and juniors and if a lawyer brother was not seen for

a couple of days, his absence was automatically felt. Maybe congested, but that building was cosy; maybe small, but that building could accommodate all; maybe, we got hit by others in rush hours, but that touch was never taken as an offence. In short, that building was nostalgic.

21. Over these years, my relationship with the members of the Bar has been increasingly enriching. As a member of the Bar, most of my interactions were with the members, who used to practice in commercial side and civil side but after being elevated, it was extended to all sides. On being given roster to deal with the criminal matters, I realized that the criminal jurisprudence is very intriguing and interesting. I would accept that before getting the criminal roster, I had hardly dealt with any criminal matter. Initially, I was a bit hesitant, but the cooperation and assistance provided by the members of the Bar practising on criminal side not only made me absorb nuances of the criminal jurisprudence, but also made me aware and sensitive to the society.

22. Over these years, my relationship with members of the Bar has been one of mutual respect. The arguments advanced before me were sometime spirited, sometime passionate, but always rooted with the finest tradition, for which this Bar is known. Those arguments made my task simple, meaningful and intellectually fulfilling. The courtesy

and assistance extended by the Bar is something that I will cherish forever.

23. This Bar of rich tradition and legends has guided me in almost all branches of law, with which, I hope I will be able to discharge my duties and tread on the remaining journey, however, unfamiliar or unexplored would that be. It is often said that Bar is the Judge of Judges, but according to me, the Bar is 'Guru' of the Judges. Though I have learnt from each member of the Bar, but if I failed, it was my shortcoming and poor understanding.

24. As a Judge, I cherish the memories during my time spent in the common room. Yes, I would admit that the food and the snacks, which are served in the common room are delectable. The joyous moments in the common room sitting with the senior colleagues, other two brothers of the triplet and my younger brothers and sisters are etched in my heart. We discussed everything, except law and the Court. I would especially mention the name of brother Justice Kuldeep Mathur, whose inclusion has enhanced the laughter and cheerfulness in the common room.

25. I was fortunate to get guidance from all senior Hon'ble Judges and was very lucky to get company and advantage of my bonding with ever energetic Hon'ble Mr. Justice P.S. Bhati, who is always concerned about the Institution and Hon'ble Mr. Justice Vinit Mathur, who though has been reluctant to eat in the common room, but has always been

willing to lend his support in other matters with his administrative acumen. We are lucky that our elder brother Justice S.P. Sharma has also come back. Our brothers and sisters at Jaipur are also very affectionate and helpful; I never felt any divide between Jaipur and Jodhpur.

26. I am thankful to all the Chief Justices who reposed faith in me. I pay my gratitude to Hon'ble the Acting Chief Justice, who is more farsighted than any other Chief Justice, I have so far come across.

27. Being born in a joint family comprising of my grandfather, his brother, my grandfather's three sons and 8 grandchildren, exposed me to values of sharing and caring. The emphasis in our middle-class household was on self-reliance, sacrifice and solidarity. Indeed, the resources were not enough for a household of 18 human beings, but it hardly made any one of us uncomfortable or dissatisfied.

28. As they say 'never let a good crisis go waste'; resource constraints imbibed within me, the urge to optimise the resources for the benefit of all. It was also my first lesson in realising the importance of inclusivity. The credit for instilling all these virtues goes to none other than my mother Smt Vimla Mehta. Despite remaining on toes the whole day, catering to the needs of the large family, she held a non-negotiable stand, when it required her to take out time for inculcating discipline and responsibility.

29. So far as other necessary trait for a professional, namely punctuality is concerned, I learnt it from my maternal grand-father, late Shri RRC Bhandari, who again was a practicing lawyer at Jodhpur. Even at the cost of sounding pompous, I would like to share it for the benefit of the young members of the bar how punctuality stood ingrained in me. As a lawyer, I had made it a point to enter the court premises latest by 10.20 am. This became a part of my personality so much so that in my 9 years' tenure, I hardly remember even a single day, when I did not commence the court proceedings exactly at 8 or 10:30 am, as the case be.

30. Out of other members of the family, I was immensely influenced by my uncle Shri RRC Mehta, who pumped in courage and fearlessness in me. Fearlessness has perhaps not made me reckless; instead it has made me forthright - a trait that sometimes comes at a cost.

31. My life lessons would have been incomplete, had I not studied in Balniketan school- a Gandhian Hindi medium school, where we used to sit on floor, work on desks and write with holders. We used to clean the classroom, school premises and even toilets. Whatever little writing and oratory skills I possess, the same is a result of my upbringing in that school, where extracurricular activities and general reading was compulsory. My school taught me that

one should stand for what he feels is correct, even if he is the sole dissenter.

32. Being the High Court of largest State, we have legacy of immutable accomplishments. We are not only well endowed in terms of infrastructure but we also take pride in being the front-runners, when it comes to embracing technology.

33. Our keenness to adopt new technological tools came to fore during the COVID times, when not only many High Courts even Hospitals chose to remain closed, but the Rajasthan High Court remained accessible to all through VC hearings. I am proud to have been a part of this Institution, which showed its commitment to the cause of justice by deciding highest number of cases during those testing times.

34. Before I part ways, I must make an honest confession: it was the only time when, as a Court, I readily issued mandamus for deciding representations—something I have otherwise been reluctant to do. The same was done only to ensure that the younger members of my mother Bar were able to meet their financial needs.

35. This High Court is second in terms of pendency, but people forget that it is a Court with highest rate of disposal per judge. This goes on to show the scale of herculean efforts made by my brother and sister judges. According to me, large pendency is a testimony of immense faith, which the people of this state reposes in this Institution.

36. A High Court with nearly 10,000 regularly practicing lawyers once unfairly accused of casteism and favouritism, is today, acknowledged for its cultural vibrancy and demographic inclusivity. Perhaps belatedly, two daughters of the Bar have been elevated, not on the ground of inclusivity, but because of their worth, hard work, and merit.

37. This Court, once known primarily for trivial civil disputes or labour matters, is today, recognized for the rich variety of cases it handles — ranging from mining, taxation, electricity, arbitration, commercial, and complex contractual disputes.

38. Whenever I went to NLUs or Judicial Academy, I realized that not only a lot remains to be learnt, but a lot needs to be shared with others as well. Therefore, if anyone believes that I am stepping away from my 'maati' in pursuit of better prospects or greater exposure, I must respectfully disagree. I am leaving this pious temple of justice, this sacred place of worship to share the colours of my 'maati' with others, so as to bring glory and respect to Rajasthan High Court, even if it requires me to go out of my comfort zone.

39. Fortunately, the Rajasthan High Court has got new young faces – full of energy and enthusiasm. While I leave this Institution, I am sure that afflux of new energy in the Bench would take this august Institution to new heights.

40. I am leaving this Institution with a heavy heart. I never expected that so many members of the Bar would come to bid adieu to me. This Court-hall must be thinking :-

ये अधिवक्ताओं का समूह जिसे छोड़ने आया है,
वो जज कितना अकेला सफर पे निकलेगा ?

41. I would also like to place on record words of appreciation for the Registrar General and the Members of the Registry, who play a pivotal role in running the Institution. I cannot forget to thank staff members of the High Court, who are 'नींव के पत्थर' of this Institution, and who silently work tirelessly to ensure that the Court functions seamlessly. My special thanks are due to the Protocol Cell of Jodhpur & Jaipur, led by Mr. Aditya Joshi, Mr. Anand Soni & Mr. Narendra Singh at Jaipur. They left no stone unturned to ensure that my travel and other related aspects are well taken care of.

42. The personal and medical staff of Protocol namely Mr. Ravi Gaur, Mr. Shubham and Mr. Sunil have also been a great help to me and my family members for our medical needs.

43. I must acknowledge the invaluable role of my staff members, to whom I always used to say that I am 'karta' of Hindu Undivided Family, without you I can't perform my duties. They quietly and efficiently worked till late in the evening. Even female members of my staff and legal

researchers never complained for the extended working hours. I thank all my staff members - my Private Secretary Shri Arun Vishwakarma, Court Master Shri Lalit Thanvi, Sr. PAs' and PAs' Anil Makwana, Arvind ji, Aakansha ji, Raksha ji, Anshul ji, my Legal Researchers Nikhil, Anamica, Shubham, Samiksha, Amulya, Ayushi, Parul, Bhumija, Usher late Hazari Singh Ji and Jethu Singh Ji, Chauffeur – Bhanwar Lal Ji and Madan Singh Ji, Court Clerks Bhagwan Singh ji, Laxman Singh ji, Jaidev ji and my PSOs - Jitendra Singh ji and Ganga Singh ji.

44. While my official duties were taken care of by them, my house and domestic affairs were taken care of by My Wife – Richa, who with all my shortcomings has always supported me and taken care of social obligation and our family, including father and mother. My daughter and son – Pratyushi and Pranjul have also supported me and have never demanded anything, including Time. May they, together with my son-in-law Vedant, as the fourth generation continue the legacy with the same spirit and passion.

45. Mr. dependable Mahendra; who is with us since his childhood as an integral part of our family, and other members of the staff at my residence namely Nathu Singh Ji, Rameshwar Ji, Pankaj Ji, Devaram Ji and Mahesh Ji and Cook – Nakhta Ram Ji would take care of smallest needs of

the family and have made my home so comfortable that I feel too cocooned to leave it.

46. Well, when I move to Delhi, I am moving physically, my soul and heart will always remain here. Because Rajasthan High Court has not just been a workplace for me, it has been a place of worship – it is my Alma-mater and my family. Camaraderie and the traditions of this Bar will always remain in my heart.

47. Thanks will not be enough for Hon'ble the Acting Chief Justice and all learned speakers who have spoken words of praise, for which I know, I am not worthy of, but I take these words as their blessings and expectations. I would try to live up to these expectations in my future responsibilities. Alas ! my father Shri B.C. Mehta were alive and could see my little steps towards what he had asked me to do.

48. According to me "Judges are the face of a High Court, while the Registry forms its skeleton. The staff of the High Court is flesh and blood, but the Bar, apart from being soul, is the Heart of the High Court. It is only the healthy heart, which keeps the entire body alive and brings glow and shine on its face.

49. Though I have judged without being judgmental, but as everyone, I am also not free from faults and shortcomings. At times, I have lost temper in the Court but

the same was momentary. While I cannot justify such unpleasant moments at my behest but all I can do at this juncture is, to seek apology and forgiveness from all who might have felt hurt, because of my behaviour, act and actions. I am sure members of the Bar will show magnanimity and excuse me - at least while I am leaving this Court.

50. I have been a bit reluctant in inviting members of the Bar to my residence here in Jodhpur, but now I invite each one of you with folded hands to visit me in Delhi, whenever you come to Delhi. I would be welcoming you with my arms stretched to the fullest extent.

51. On a concluding note, I would like to recite a few lines :-

आप का साथ, धूप में था छांव
आप का साथ, समंदर में था नाव

आप से ही अंधकार में था प्रकाश
आप से ही था मेरे जिस्म में सांस

आप से मिला है ज्ञान,
और आप ही से मिली पहचान

ले रहा हूँ आज विदा पर
साथ में है, इस बार ही का नाम
