

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT, AHMEDABAD

SIXTEENTH CONVOCATION

MARCH 27, 1981

CHAIRMAN'S SPEECH

MR. Tata, Members of the Society, Board, Faculty and
Staff, the Graduating Class of 1981, and

Ladies and Gentlemen:

May I welcome you all to the Sixteenth Convocation
of the Indian Institute of Management.

To you, Mr. Tata, I have a special word of welcome.
This is the first time we have the privilege of having you
in our midst. We are deeply honoured by your acceptance
of our invitation to be present today as our chief guest.

Sir, your presence on this occasion is particularly
significant to the Institute and the Graduating Class of 1981.
You are the best in the society of business in which
environment most of those graduating today will make their
careers. With great subtlety and finesse you combine
business with good citizenship.

I commend to those graduating and the others to follow, the adventurous spirit that you have demonstrated in your life. You were the first pilot to qualify in India for holding a private licence followed by the famous solo flight that you undertook. This adventurous spirit you carried on to the industrial scene in founding Tata Airlines which was later nationalised to become Air India, which you again nurtured to make it a leader in commercial aviation. These and many other acts of yours replicate the phenomenal vision that your forefather, Jamsetji demonstrated. You have the unique capacity to think of the needs of the country long before society became aware of it. These are qualities unique.

Yet another aspect in your career which deserves to be emulated is what you yourself said of Tata wealth, - "The whole of that (Tata's) is held in trust for the people and used exclusively for their benefit ... What came from the people has gone back to the people many times over." It is really a matter of pride for all of us that we have in you an individual who has not only believed but practised

"Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's." You have demonstrated that business and ethics must go together. I fervently hope that our graduates will hold their managerial positions as trustees of society and sacrifice a little bit of self-interest for the interest of all.

I would also like our graduating students to take note of the expanse of your interest outside of the narrow domain of business. Be it the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, National Centre for the Performing Arts, Homi Bhabha Fellowships Council, Family Planning Foundation, Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, the Indian Institute of Science, Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, or Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust, name any important activity of this country, they have all received your enthusiastic support, managerial talent and humanistic culture.

My young graduating friends, as you move out of this blissful brick and green campus into the world of harsh realities, you may find large organizations as havens of security and glamour. you may find it difficult to keep up with the adventurous spirit of your youth. Not long before some

of you may either be frustrated and become misfits or give in by becoming a cog in the wheel. All your dreams of challenging life of the youth may vanish away. Harsh realities of life will keep dampening your enthusiasm and beating you back to your place. Some of you may fall prey to soft options of cutting corners to achieve short-term gains. That is when you may have to learn to manage yourself. In such moments of life you may think of personalities like Mr. Tata.

Today, this vast country of 670 million, is beset with economic and social problems which very few countries have faced in their history and with such intensity, multiplicity, and magnitude. These uncertain times in our country could be either seen as threats to a peaceful and placid life or opportunities for a challenging career. In such uncertain times, one may find it easy to ask for more and more benefits for oneself, or to reject one or the other pressure without comprehending the totality, or take the path of destruction in frustration. But to coalesce seemingly contradictory forces and bring about a consensus for social action will require positive attitudes towards mankind.

Both our economic and non-economic organizations require that attitude and talent. But to bring about a change from the old order to a new one, we will need change agents -- not just managers but managers who are sensitive to the social needs.

I hope you will take up the challenge of filling up this role. I hope you will be able to say, "Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive." I hope you will be able to monitor your professionalism with social awareness and enrich the society and your immediate environs with your professionalism.

I wish all of you much success and to the recipients of special awards, my congratulations.