

ADDRESS ON THE OCCASION OF “GOLDEN JUBILEE CELEBRATION OF THE BAR COUNCIL OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA”, ON MAY 5, 2012, AT BHARGAVA AUDITORIUM, PGI, CHANDIGARH.

**By: Hon’ble Mr. Justice M.M. Kumar,
Acting Chief Justice**

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Your Excellency Shri M. Hamid Ansari, the Vice President of India; Your Excellency Shri Shivraj V. Patil, Governor of Punjab and Administrator Union Territory, Chandigarh; Shri Pawan Kumar Bansal, Hon’ble Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Water Resources; Shri Salman Khurshid, Hon’ble Minister of Law and Justice and Minister of Minority Affairs; Mr. A. Rehman Malik, Hon’ble Minister for Interior Government of Pakistan; Hon’ble Mr. Justice Swatantar Kumar, Judge, Supreme Court of India; Hon’ble Mr. Justice Parmod Kohli, Chief Justice of Sikkim High Court; my esteem colleagues – Hon’ble Judges of Punjab and Haryana High Court; Former Judges; Shri Hawa Singh Hooda, Advocate General, Haryana; Shri Ashok Aggarwal, Advocate General, Punjab; Dr. Anmol Rattan Sidhu, Assistant Solicitor General of India; Shri Sanjay Kaushal, Senior Standing Counsel Union Territory of Chandigarh; Hon’ble Mr. Justice Kuldip Singh; Shri Hira Lal Sibal, Senior Advocate; various delegates of Bar Council who have come from different parts of the country; learned Senior Counsel; Members of the Bar; faculty of Panjab University; ladies and gentlemen

It is indeed my unique privilege to participate in the Golden Jubilee Celebration of the Bar Council of Punjab and Haryana. The very fact that eminent personalities of this country have graced this occasion would itself show the significance of this event. I express my warm felicitations and greetings to all the lawyers in the States of Punjab, Haryana and Union Territory of Chandigarh. My special greetings to Shri Lakh Raj Sharma, Chairman, Bar Council of Punjab and Haryana.

The celebration of Golden Jubilee is a highly significant event in the history of an institution. It is of extreme public importance. It brings happiness and joy. At the same time, the Bar Council being a public body provides an opportunity for self introspection.

My association with this Bar Council goes back to the year 1977 when I was enrolled as an Advocate. The then Chairman of the Bar Council, Shri A.S. Sarhadi, decorated me and made me eligible to practise law. I have perfected my lien in the Bar for having practised law for 24 years before I could take seat on the Bench.

The legal profession has produced national heroes who led the freedom movement. The Father of the Nation Shri Mahatma Gandhi Ji, Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru and Sardar Patel, belong to the legal profession. The list is endless. I feel extremely proud to be part of this profession,

which has produced people like Sarvshri N.A. Palkiwala, H.M. Seervai, Jagannath Kaushal, Justice Kuldip Singh, Hira Lal Sibal, Pawan Kumar Bansal, Salman Khurshid, Bhupinder Singh Hooda, Hon'ble Chief Minister, Haryana, Kapil Sibal, A.K. Sen, Soli Sorabjee, K.K. Venugopal, Justice Ashok Bhan, Justice J.L. Gupta, Justice S.S. Nijjar, Justice J.S. Khehar, Justice A.S. Anand, Justice M.M. Punchhi, Justice A.D. Kaushal, Justice H.S. Bedi, Justice R.S. Sachhar, Justice D.V. Sehgal and many others. The theory of 'Basic Structure of the Constitution' could not have been propounded by Hon'ble the Supreme Court without the valuable assistance of eminent counsel like N.A. Palkiwala and H.M. Seervai. This Bar Council has produced a large number of eminent counsel, bureaucrats, administrators and persons from public life.

There are more than 70,000 Advocates on the rolls of this Bar Council. It is very rare that a member of the Bar is elevated directly to a coveted seat in the Hon'ble Supreme Court and out of total four direct elevations to Hon'ble the Supreme Court, two belong to this Bar Council. Hon'ble Mr. Justice S.M. Sikri, who served as an Advocate General till 1964, was picked up for elevation to Hon'ble the Supreme Court direct from the Bar. Likewise, Hon'ble Mr. Justice Kuldip Singh, who is with us today, was the second such elevation. The contribution made by both these personalities is well known, particularly in the area of development of

Constitutional Law. Justice Kuldip Singh acquired the title of “GREEN JUDGE” by virtue of his single handed contribution to the Environmental Laws. This is the hoary tradition this Bar Council has. The Bar Council has made a significant endeavour by deciding to honour three leading lights of the profession, namely, Shri Hira Lal Sibal, Hon’ble Mr. Justice Kuldip Singh and Shri Hawa Singh Hooda. These personalities, who have from this Bar Council have brought laurels to the institution. Shri Hira Lal Sibal completed more than 67 years of practice before he discontinued his appearance in the Courts. The International Bar Association honoured him in the year 1994 as a ‘*Living Legend of Law*’ along with great luminaries Mr. N.A. Palkiwala, Mr. H.M. Seervai and Mr. Govind Swaminathan. Likewise, Hon’ble Mr. Justice Kuldip Singh has served at the Bench of Hon’ble the Supreme Court after having practised for more than 28 years. All of them made tremendous contribution to the legal literature.

I must also place on record many other endeavours made by the Bar Council. A new chapter was written when the Bar Council decided to administer oath to the newly enrolled young advocates at the time of their enrolment. A large number of young advocates are attracted to the profession and to impart professional education to them, the Bar Council have also made efforts. A number of seminars have been conducted in

the presence of Hon'ble Judges of the Supreme Court and Punjab and Haryana High Court so as to hammer home the basic tolls of the profession so that they do not fail in any respect while arguing before the Courts. The Bar Council has done well by starting many benevolent schemes including Benevolent Fund Scheme, BCA Welfare Scheme, Medical Claim Scheme and Death Claim Scheme.

I think some self-introspection would also be necessary. The standard of profession has to be kept at the highest pedestal. We must ask ourselves and find the right answer as we are celebrating the Golden Jubilee, as to whether the mechanism of disciplinary committees has been effective; whether we have done enough to check the erosion of standards in the profession; whether effective steps are required to be taken ensuring that the clients are served by their advocates sincerely and faithfully; whether the standard of fees in the profession is within the reach of common man. I feel that the time has come that some mechanism should have been evolved so as to make the services of a lawyer available at a reasonable fee and to ensure sincere and faithful preparation of cases. All this may require resolute determination, commitment to the profession and some sacrifice. It can be easily done by those who joy working hard for a purpose.

I end by quoting the famous words of G.B. Shaw –

“This is the true joy in life, being used for a purpose recognised by yourself as a mighty one, being a true force of Nature instead of a feverish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy....I want to be thoroughly used up when I die. For the harder I work, the more I live. I rejoice in the life for its own sake. Life is no brief candle to me. It’s a sort of splendid torch which I have got to hold up for the moment and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generation.”
