

THE BEGINNING OF THE BEGINNING

**Text of the Address delivered by the Vice-Chancellor, University of Ilorin, Ilorin,
Professor Is-haq O. Oloyede, on the occasion of the 24th Convocation Ceremonies of the
2006/2007 and 2007/2008 graduands of the University on Wednesday, October 22, 2008
at the Auditorium, University of Ilorin, Ilorin.**

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We convoke here today in honour of the young men and women who had laboured over the last three, four or five years, depending on their programmes, to pluck the fruits of success. We assemble here now as a mark of acknowledging the dedication and tenacity of these young leaders of today and tomorrow, who had worked hard to achieve different degrees of success in their lives. To these graduands, I say: hearty congratulations. To you all, distinguished Nigerians, I say: you are genially welcome.

I, on behalf of the University, congratulate you graduands on your success because achieving success is not an easy task. Only you can quantify, if at all you can, the sacrifices you had made, the stress you had undergone, the sleepless nights you had had and the several hurdles you had crossed to reach this important stage of your lives. It is said that every successful person has a painful story and every painful story has a successful ending. Having accepted the pains, you can now get ready for success.

However, the successful ending of your undergraduate programme is just the beginning of a new phase of your lives. As a matter of fact, your graduation is just *the beginning of the beginning* – a new beginning in the world of possibilities before you. I want to congratulate you once again and felicitate with your parents/guardians, who had been the pillars of support behind you while you were being baked in the oven of your basic university education. Surely, one of the high points of life for a parent is to witness such occasion as this in the life of his/her child and this is an occasion that makes every parent proud. Congratulations once again!

Mr. Chairman sir, permit me to say that ordinarily, a convocation address should be a catalogue of the activities of the University from the previous convocation to the present one. However, this address will be brief, decidedly, because a comprehensive Annual Report will be presented tomorrow, which is our Founder's Day. It is consequent upon this that I would like to address our graduands who are beginning to face fresh challenges of life.

You graduates of the disciplines of Arts, Business and Social Sciences, Education and Science are united by one goal: **the betterment of humanity**. It was Christopher Morley who in memorable words aptly captured the essence of the four faculties, to my mind: “There are three ingredients of life: learning, earning and yearning.” Whether you are skilled in language and culture or you socialize and interact appropriately to advance polity and commerce, or you dispel darkness through the illumination of teaching or you bring about change through the study and adaptation of natural phenomena, the object of these disciplines is to make life easier, living better and human beings happier as you learn and you earn and you yearn.

But an open sore that assails the global conscience is that our world of today is becoming increasingly Hobbesian for the vast majority: solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short. In my address at the inauguration of the Transitional and Electoral Commission on January 4 this year, as part of the resuscitation of Student Unionism at our University, I called your (colleagues’) attention to the Ghandian seven blunders of the modern world. For emphasis, I will repeat the points.

Mahatma Ghandi, the father of modern India, referred to as “the master mind”, regretted that as modern and civilized our contemporary world claims to be, it commits seven egregious blunders. These are: wealth without work, pleasure without conscience, knowledge without character, commerce without morality, science without humanity, worship without sacrifice and politics without principle. I added on that occasion that Ghandi’s grandson, Harun Ghandi, added the eight, which he called ‘rights without responsibilities’.

It appears to me that the graduates and specialists in the four faculties of Arts, Business and Social Sciences, Education and Science especially would have food for thought from the highly respected “master mind”. I am sure that if you graduands of the four faculties can boldly avoid the blunders that

continue to bump and bomb our world, it will surely mark *the beginning of the beginning* of the urgent need to actually make life better, and make us, the fortunate or unfortunate human beings alive, happier.

The Chairman, eminent ladies and gentlemen, it is my utmost pleasure and unfathomable joy to announce that our graduate output of the four faculties was 3,509 for the 2006/2007 session (Arts: 405; BSS: 1,159; Education: 710; Science: 995; and Sub-degrees/Diplomas: 240) while our output for these faculties at the end of the 2007/2008 session was 2,734 (Arts: 288; BSS: 636; Education: 655; Science 973; and Sub-degrees/Diplomas: 182). These are the graduands who are considered worthy enough in learning and character to deserve the certificate of the University of Ilorin during the period.

Lastly, for all of us, graduands and guests, there must definitely have been wasted opportunities and misused chances in our lives. For any missed opportunity, the appropriate attitude to it is not to fill eyes with tears and thereby blur our vision of a better opportunity ahead. After all, we all know that no one can go back and change a bad beginning but anyone can still start now and create a successful ending. I pray that this blessed day shall be the beginning of a pleasant new beginning in our lives. *Let somebody say amen!*

Thank you very much for your attention.