

Bismillah-ir-rahman-ir-rahim.

The learned keynote speaker Ms. Saleema Hashmi

The Honorable members of the Board of Governors,

The Executive Director,

Distinguished Guests, Members of the faculty and staff, Graduates, their parents and friends,

Assalam-wa-alikum.

Let me first of all offer my heartfelt felicitations to the graduating class of 2018 and their parents for their dedicated efforts that culminated in today's proud achievements. You have joined a very distinguished and elite group of professionals who have acquired the capabilities to forge ahead in your professional life. I also wish to thank our chief guest, an accomplished artist, educator and an icon for younger generation for gracing this auspicious occasion by her presence this morning.

For IVS today is a momentous day, a historic day, as it celebrates its 25<sup>th</sup> graduating batch and you are all very closely connected to this milestone. What is so unique about this celebration is the spirit of the community which believes that a strong grounding in art and design education is essential for the social, economic, and intellectual wellbeing of our world.

An education that prepares you to become a life-long learner, think contextually, or as popularly referred to "think critically" — Your critical thinking: lies in your ability to take an idea of complex proportions, break it down into its component parts; analyze those parts in detail; negotiate positions with which you disagree; and then assemble all of that in a compelling form. This form could be a written or oral statement, a painting or film or sculpture and so on. You are trained to think contextually: about your work, its relevance to social issues and the impact it leaves on others. I am sometimes surprised how today we all talk about our 'selves'. A century ago, people didn't talk about themselves as much. Maybe a few of the rich folks did, and you used to read about it in novels and interviews, but

most people didn't. Why do we now always have this obsession with the self? This is so dominant at this moment in our society, whereas the sense of doing your public duty, or fighting a social cause or being involved in a political movement, where your self is absorbed into a greater project, has all but disappeared. In the last 100 years or so we have put the self on a pedestal and then certain influence groups and partially media play the role of cheerleaders for this process in many ways.

Remember that as educated and enlightened individuals, we have other sides to us which can be rational and more objective and less self-obsessed. We can think about things outside ourselves, not purely in terms of our self. And we can be inspired by those things outside. That capacity, it seems to me, is all but lost. I am not sure it has been lost forever but it doesn't serve the purposes of the current power structures who want us to meekly earn, spend, and endlessly shop for stuff we mostly don't need.

We always talk so much about our rights and not duties. The modern age is encapsulated in a paradigm of rights, and thus duties and responsibilities are totally overlooked and shunned. We all want to change the world but as the great sage Rumi says "Yesterday I was clever, so I wanted to change the world. Today I am wise, so I am changing myself."

Without changing ourselves and looking outward we can not be in unison with the world.

The ethos of this institution written by its founders in its vision statement emphasizes on being a good human being before anything else. Some people think that being a good human being is as simple as not doing harm to another. But it is not always about what you don't do, but what you do for others. You must decide what you believe being a good person entail. Philosophers have been debating what is good and what is not for centuries, and many people find that it's more complicated than just being kind to others. While every person's journey is different, being good has a lot to do with discovering yourself and your role in the world. You may ask, what makes for a life well-lived. In order to answer that question, you will have to give a great deal of thought to what brings meaning to your life. And how the choices we make in our daily lives—including our careers, friendships, family, obligations to our communities—are informed by that overarching notion of the good life. There is real joy in discovering the purpose of

your life. And a very deep satisfaction too. I urge you to march on the path of self-discovery and find the purpose of your life.

On this singular occasion of the 25th batch of students graduating from IVS let me my personal thanks and those of the members of the Board to the founders, sponsors, donors, past and present Board members, administrators, faculty members and alumni for making the school what it is today. Their support, inspiration and efforts have made it possible for this institution to become a leading centre of excellence in the field of Arts and Architecture.. Pursuant to our vision 2025, we would continue our efforts in promoting a culture of excellence in research and innovation, contributing towards a just and tolerant society and enabling our students to serve as instruments of positive change.

For many of you, this day will be an extremely happy one. You are graduating from one of the finest educational institutions in the region, with the dream of a splendid future in front of you. When you reach my age, if all goes well, we will have eliminated poverty and be nudging into the ranks of developed countries in the world. Some of you will have climbed your way to the top of Fortune 500 companies or design houses. Some will be charismatic political leaders, and some learned university professors. Several will choose to dedicate your lives to helping others through social work or raising up a family. The one certainty is that you will all face challenges - after all, that is what makes life exciting - but you will also have the training to overcome them. If you survived your years in IVS, you can survive almost anything.

A final word about your future path in professional life. Let me assure you that it will not be without some difficulties. It is possible to be overwhelmed and forget to experience all the greater things that life has to offer. So, I want to pass on what has kept the vibrancy in my five decades of professional life. My meager words of wisdom, if you will. Mistakes are bound to happen. Problems are going to arise. But just as the problems arise and mistakes made, solutions will also be found. It's that simple. You can, and you will overcome these hurdles. And believe me it's not easy. But you will deal with whatever arises because you are braver than you believe, and you are stronger than you think.

You create your own life and work.

Please give us your best...best of your art...best of your thoughts. We crave it with great hunger. Help us to see ourselves and illuminate our lives;

and of course, live long meaningful lives and prosper.

Thank you