



Dr. Saleem Badat
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My entire schooling was at Orient, and the school occupies a very special place in my life. It was here that I developed my love for knowledge and learning under the guidance of dedicated teachers. Whatever we may have lacked in facilities and resources under the apartheid education system of that time was made up for by these committed and often outstanding teachers. These were happy years with happy memories and the education that I acquired has been the key that has opened many doors as I have made my way through life.

Education, the great Irish poet W.B. Yeats reminds us, 'is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire'. Teachers and schools must kindle and cultivate a love for learning, knowledge and understanding of our natural and social worlds, and education must be an exciting journey of discovery of humanity's rich and diverse intellectual, scientific and cultural inheritances in the form of books, art, pictures and music. We become human through learning and education, and education is a vital part of cultivating the oneness of our common humanity. It is often said that 'you are who you are'. That is not quite true. You are who you *learn* to become, and it is the important task of teachers to support students not only to learn, but also to learn to become.

In today's world, education is indispensable for intellectual, economic and social well-being. Without good schooling and solid foundations in reasoning, literacy, communication and numeracy, and further or higher education, many of life's opportunities will be closed. All the certainties of the past are disappearing and we now have to be life-long learners who can think, adapt, innovate and navigate a challenging and fast-changing world. The schools of our land, including Orient, have to prepare our children and youth for this new world. Moreover, in accordance with constitutional obligations which

promise human dignity, equality, social justice and human rights and freedoms, they have to help realize the talent and potential of our children and youth so that they can live productive, rich and rewarding lives.

Orient has a proud history. Who can forget the indomitable history teacher who continuously subverted apartheid by making us think of history in other ways; the brilliant biology teacher who lectured us daily without a note in front of him; and the English teacher who inspired us by playing tape recordings of Jawaharlal Nehru's powerful oration on the eve of Indian independence! It is a school that has produced outstanding thinkers, professionals, sportspersons and humanitarians, nurtured by dedicated teachers. This is a rich legacy that must continue to be emulated.

Congratulations on your 50th anniversary.

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