

## *Gandhi's Voice of Conscience - A Century Later*

DMI has chosen to have its Convocation Ceremony on April 18 every year, to coincide with and in honour of Mahatma Gandhi's statement on 'obedience to the higher law of our being, the voice of conscience' made exactly a century ago on April 18, 1917 before the Magistrate in Motihari, as given below :



“With the permission of the court I would like to make a brief statement showing why I have taken the very serious step of seemingly disobeying the order made under Section 144 of Cr.P.C. In my humble opinion it is a question of difference of opinion between the local administration and myself. I have entered the country with motives of rendering humanitarian and national service. I have done so in response to a pressing invitation to come and help the ryots, who urge they are not being fairly treated by the indigo planters. I could not render any help without studying the problem. I have, therefore, come to study it with the assistance, if possible, of the administration and the planters. I have no other motive and cannot believe that my coming can in any way disturb public peace and cause loss of life. I claim to have considerable experience in such matters. The administration, however have thought differently. I fully appreciate their difficulty and admit too that they can only proceed upon information they receive. As a law-abiding citizen my first instinct would be, as it was, to obey the order served upon me. But I would not do so without doing violence to my sense of duty to those for whom I came. I feel that I could just now serve them only by remaining in their midst. I could not, therefore, voluntarily retire. Amidst this conflict of duty I could only throw the responsibility of removing me on the administration. I am fully conscious of the fact that a person, holding in public life of India a position such as I do, has to be most careful in setting examples. It is my firm belief that in the complex constitution under which we are living the only safe and honourable course for the self-respecting man is, in the circumstances such as face me, to do what I have decided to do, that is, to submit without protest to the penalty of disobedience. I venture to make this statement not in any way in extenuation of the penalty to be awarded against me, but to show that I have disregarded the order served upon me, not for want of respect for lawful authority, but in obedience to the higher law of our being, the voice of conscience.”