

Essay on Your Intended Profession

If I say that I want to be a lawyer, it will perhaps raise a smile or even doubts regarding my sanity. Nevertheless, it is a fact that even today the bar has a strange fascination for me. I do not agree with those who decry the legal profession, for I believe that for every profession there is the right man who is bound to succeed in it. Of course, there are many who denounce the profession of law, whether one succeeds in it or not. They say that the profession serves a useful purpose; that lawyers are or ought to be unnecessary in a society where there is a perfect adjustment. But is that not a somewhat abstract approach to the question? For if that perfect society does not exist, – as surely it does not exist just at present, – why should not a man enter a profession which is a necessity in an imperfect society?

As society is now constituted, there is no doubt that lawyers perform a most useful function. Indeed I cannot imagine any society in which there will be no lawyer. If there is civilization, there must be law, and if there is law, there must be lawyers. Disputes occur even in the most nicely adjusted society, and they must be settled in terms of the law that prevails. Law exists for this – that when there is a quarrel it may not lead to the law of the jungle, where the weak is at the mercy of the strong. In civilized society law has superseded force and therefore to assist in the administration of the law is to help civilized life to function.

But it is said that the profession of law is such that honesty is impossible. This argument leaves me cold. For the dishonest man, there is dishonesty in every profession. If I keep to the straight path, I do not think I can do any harm, and even the temptation to be dishonest cannot touch me. My business as a lawyer, as I understand it, will not be to falsify facts or twist evidence, but to explain

facts and interpret the law in relation to those facts. I am sure if the client knows that I will not advise him against the trend of the law or the evidence available he will have all the greater respect for my advice, and he will come to me with redoubled confidence.

Of course, it is more difficult for me to answer the economic arguments against my joining the profession than the moral. It is said – and rightly said – that the profession is overcrowded. I have considered the matter deeply and my idea is that, for the unit and the inefficient, all profession is overcrowded. But there is always room at the top for the best. I mean to be among the best. I have seen new entrants to the profession low idling away their time instead of applying their minds whole-heartedly to the task of preparation, which is always and in every profession very difficult. I mean to spend the first years when briefs are few and far between, in reading hard and studying procedure and thus familiarizing me with the technicalities of the profession.

The legal profession is a highly intellectual profession it requires a keen and logical mind. It has no end of charm for those who delight in pursuing the truth through a labyrinth of complicated facts. In the study of law, Edmund Burke said, “this study renders men acute, inquisitive, dexterous, prompt in attack, ready in defense, full of resources.” And of lawyers, he said that “they augur mischief at a distance, and sniff the approach of tyranny in every tainted breeze.” Surely such people are the natural custodians of people’s rights and liberties.

One word more. The evil side of the legal profession is often a little too much advertised. I do not deny the existence of this aspect of the profession. But at the same time, one must not be blind to the great good that lawyers have done. They have been the guardians of law and liberty. They have protected the individual from

the tyranny of the high and the mighty. They have insisted that governments must also keep within the limits of the statutes. In all countries, it is the lawyers who have taken the largest share in protecting political rights and in denouncing executive tyranny. In our country, some of the greatest names belong to the profession of law. In joining such a profession I feel that I am not doing anything unwise or improper. On the country, I believe that I will be upholding the highest traditions if I can make good in this profession.