



**Mr. Shekhar Bajaj**  
**Chairman, Jamnalal Bajaj Foundation**

Namaste to all who are here, and to you who are present online in India and overseas. A very warm welcome to the 44th Jamnalal Bajaj Awards function of the Jamnalal Bajaj Foundation.

While we all are missing the presence of late Shri Rahul Bajaj, we are comforted by the thought that he has set an example for us to follow in our philanthropic pursuits. To me he was my brother, Rahul Bhaiya – always approachable and always willing to guide. He was simple and easy going, fair to all; most importantly for me, he was devoted to the family and kept us all together.

My key responsibility is to continue to highlight the good work of our community heroes and their contribution as part of the Jamnalal Bajaj Awards initiative. This was established in 1977 by my father Shri Ramkrishna Bajaj. After his demise in 1994, Shri Rahul Bajaj took over as Chairman. Besides steering the Foundation proficiently, he has been responsible for building an impressive panel of trustees and advisors. My job as the new Chairman hence becomes easy due to the high standards and processes set by Rahul Bhaiyya for the last 28 years and prior to that, by my father.

I warmly welcome and thank Dr. Raghunath Mashelkar for accepting our invitation to present the Jamnalal Bajaj Awards this year. Dr. Mashelkar is such an eminent person, widely known for his world class scientific research, transformative leadership of research institutions and his pioneering game changing Indian movements Dr. Mashelkar has been an influential thought leader in shaping Science, Technology & Innovation policies in post liberalized India.

An ardent champion of inclusive innovation, he pioneered the concept of Gandhian Engineering. He has been conferred the Padma Shri, Padma Bhushan and Padma Vibhushan and honoured with 45 honorary doctorates from universities around the world. The Bajaj Family and the Jamnalal Bajaj Foundation Family have a very special relation with Dr. Mashelkar and we hold him in high esteem. He is also very attached to the family and we share many fond memories.

Today we have gathered to felicitate and congratulate our four special awardees –

Shri Nilesh Desai, Shri Mansukhbhai Prajapati, Smt. Sophia Shaik, Dr. Ogarit Younan and Dr. Walid Slaybi.

A huge congratulations to them. All our awardees have something in common. They are liberated from external societal pressures, such as cultural and social expectations, political and economic influences. They are beyond ego and material attachments. They have attained this unique quality of self-realization. We have witnessed this philosophy in the lives of Mahatma Gandhi and Shri Jamnalal Bajaj. I strongly feel in today's world of extreme inequity, self-realisation is more than a choice. Only when you have attained a certain level of self-realization, can you move towards the welfare of others around you.

Our awardees have paved the path for us to follow. And follow we must.

I feel honoured and humbled to have been asked to chair the prestigious Jamnalal Bajaj Foundation; to serve the ideals of Shri Jamnalal Bajaj and promote the Gandhian legacy in India and abroad. My work has been simplified by the remarkable Council of Advisers and the Selection Committees for their time and insight in making the significant selections. Each and every individual is himself/herself an asset to our community and together they have accomplished an outstanding job of selecting the gems of social change.

I warmly welcome and express my sincere gratitude to them.

Let us now felicitate and celebrate the contributions of our Chief Guest Dr. Mashelkar and our four awardees.

