

**ADDRESS BY THIRU BANWARILAL PUROHIT, HON'BLE GOVERNOR  
OF TAMIL NADU AT THE 21<sup>ST</sup> MAHAVEER AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN  
HUMAN ENDEAVOUR ORGANISED BY BHAGWAN MAHAVEER FOUNDATION AT  
KALAIVANAR ARANGAM, CHENNAI ON 02.12.2018 AT 4.30 P.M**

**Anaivarukkum Maalai Vanakkam**

**Hon'ble Vice President of India  
Thiru. Venkaiah Naidu ji**

**Thiru. D.Jayakumar,**  
Minister for Fisheries and Personnel  
and Administrative Reforms

**Thiru. T.S. Krishnamurthy,**  
Former Chief Election Commissioner of India

**Thiru. Prasanchand Jain,**  
Managing Trustee, Bhagwan Mahaveer Foundation

**Thiru. Pravin B.Chheda,**  
Trustee, Bhagwan Mahaveer Foundation

**Thiru. Vinodh Kumar,**  
Trustee, Bhagwan Mahaveer Foundation

**Distinguished Invitees**

**Ladies & Gentlemen**

I am delighted to be participating in the function organised by the Bhagwan Mahaveer Foundation in which the Hon'ble Vice President of India is conferring the Mahaveer awards for excellence in Human Endeavour.

Bhagwan Mahaveer, the 24<sup>th</sup> Thirthankara, who lived nearly 2600 years ago taught us to respect the voice of the soul. He said "A living body is not merely an integration of limbs and flesh but it is the abode of the soul which potentially has perfect perception (Anant darshana), perfect knowledge (Anant jnana), perfect power (Anant virya), and perfect bliss (Anant sukha)".

According to Mahavira, human beings are reborn, depending on one's karma (actions) as a human, animal, element, microbe, and other forms, on earth or in a heavenly or hellish state of existence. Nothing is permanent, everyone, is

reborn again based on their karma merits and demerits. It is the Jina who have reached Kevala Jnana who are not reborn again, and attain the siddhaloka or the "Realm of the Perfected Ones". Bhagwan Mahaveera's message forms the very basis on which the spiritual foundations of our nation rest.

Our Nation is the leader to the World in the field of spirituality. The spiritual greatness of India is evidenced by the sustainability of its civilization. Tolerance, mutual respect, acceptance and assimilation of all that is good have dictated our spiritual orientation.

The influence of Jainism in moulding the Tamil way of life goes back several centuries. Few in the audience would know that the Tamil Classics of the Sangam era dating back to more than 2000 years were influenced by Jainism. Sivaga Sinthamani and Valayapathi two great epics of Tamil literary tradition were written by Jain Monks.

Many royal personages of Tamil Nadu had embraced Jainism as a way of life. Among them can be mentioned the renowned king of the Pallava dynasty Mahendra Varma Pallava.

The last two hundred years have also seen a large number of Jains settling down here. They have mingled with the rest of Tamil Society in a mutually beneficial way.

Their first Educational Institution was started more than 100 years back and today there are several educational institutions managed by the Jain Community not only in Chennai but also in various districts of Tamil Nadu. These educational institutions render valuable service to society.

The business interests of the community have also widened. Branching off from their earlier occupations related to trade in textiles and jewellery. Jains have done themselves proved in every trends of economic activity including software development. Their presence has added colour to the cultural flavour of the city, of Chennai. Their hospitals, goshalas and stately temples continue to spread the message of Jainism- alleviation misery of suffering with vigour and aplomb.

The Mahaveer Awards being awarded today were first instituted in 1995. They are meant to honour citizens and institutions who through their noble services rendered have brought about change in the outlook and actions of society towards the weak, the destitute and the suffering. Today's awards are dedicated for the categories of Non-

Violence & Vegetarianism, Medicine, and Community & Social Service. I am informed that from the next year onwards awards will be given for the category of Women Social Entrepreneurship which is Indian in character.

It is heartening to know that the Foundation has so far honoured 63 individuals and institutions. Dr. Shiranee Pereira, who is receiving the award today for non-violence and Vegetarianism has made a pioneering contribution in the field of animal protection. She established the "People for Animals"-an institution that aims to promote animal welfare by educating society to treat them with compassion.

In the field of medicine the Jain Relief Foundation Trust, has been selected for their innovative role in helping people who require dialysis, but cannot afford the medical expenses. They have tied up with hospitals so that dialysis is provided to patients at Rs.800 per session. The trust bears Rs.500 and the patient is then required to spend only bears Rs.300 per session. Such selfless service to people who are suffering and are in need of assistance deserves praise and recognition.

The award under the category Community and social service goes to an organisation in Manipur. The Rural Health organisation provides short stay homes where disadvantaged women and ST girl children reside and receive vocational training programmes that enable employment and a life of dignity. These services are particularly deserving of praise and honour as they are being carried on in the remote hilly regions of the north eastern States of our country.

I congratulate the award winners and I am sure that many more will be inspired to follow them in their quest to serve society with selflessness.

I applaud the Bhagwan Mahaveer Foundation for their initiative to honour notable citizens of India who have distinguished themselves by their service to the poor and needy.

I extend my best wishes and greetings so that they may witness success in all their endeavours in the future. May their noble contributions to society continue with zeal and dedication and be guided by the message of Bhagwan Mahaveer.

Nandri Vanakkam....

Jai Hind...