

**ADDRESS BY THIRU BANWARILAL PUROHIT, HON'BLE GOVERNOR  
OF TAMIL NADU AT THE SEMINAR ON "GANDHIAN THOUGHTS AND  
PHILOSOPHY" ON THE OCCASION OF 150<sup>TH</sup> BIRTH ANNIVERSARY  
CELEBRATIONS OF MAHATMA GANDHI AT DURBAR HALL, RAJ BHAVAN,  
CHENNAI ON 25.10.2018 AT 5.00 P.M**

**Anaivarukkum Maalai Vanakkam**

**Honourable invitees and distinguished guests**

**Ladies & Gentlemen**

It is a privilege to be inaugurating the seminar on 'Gandhian thoughts and philosophy' today. As you are all aware this is one of the many events that Raj Bhavan is organising this year as a part of the 150<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary celebrations of Mahatma Gandhi that commenced on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2018.

Gandhiji the Father of the Nation is an inspiration to all of us. There are so many facets of his contribution to the nation which need elaboration. Millions of peoples know him as the person who brought freedom to India. A greater number is aware that the path of truth and non-violence that he practised was unique. In world history this spiritual path of virtue was never traversed before. It was a path of goodness – a path to which the common people could easily relate – a path that ensured success and above all a path that shines as a beacon light for the whole world from which leaders like Martin Luther King (Jr.) and Nelson Mandela derived enlightenment.

Gandhiji summed up his philosophy of life with the words "My life is my message". On the eve of the Quit India Movement he declared 'I want to live the full span of my life and according to me the full span of life is 125 years. By that time India will not only be free, but the whole world will be free. I believe in the voice of God. This is a fundamental truth that I am telling you.

Gandhiji indeed saw the emergence of India as a free nation in his lifetime. If he had lived the full span of life that he envisioned he would have indeed seen the whole world becoming free.

For Gandhiji, truth was God and his prayer meetings were meant to bring out the inner strength in an individual. To him the spinning wheel stood for dignity and freedom

from the rule of merchandise. He was not an orthodox economist and believed that spiritual values should be the foundation for economic planning. One such strand can be seen in his espousal of trusteeship as a way of life. The Gandhian ideal encompassed the principles of dignity of labour, equitable distribution of wealth, communal self sufficiency and individual freedom.

Sarvodaya or Sarva-Udaya means 'universal uplift' or 'progress of all'. The term was used by Mahatma Gandhi as the title of his 1908 translation of John Ruskin's *Unto This Last*. In this context let me narrate to you an interesting anecdote.

Gandhiji received a copy of Ruskin's *Unto This Last* from a British friend, Mr. Henry Polak, while working as a lawyer in South Africa in 1904. On a twenty-four-hour train ride to Durban he first read the book and was so much in the grip of Ruskin's ideas that he could not sleep at all. He wrote and I quote: "I determined to change my life in accordance with the ideals of the book."

Tamil Nadu was always close to Gandhiji's heart. It is important to recall that when Gandhiji started the Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad, in which there were initially 25 inmates, 13 of them were Tamilians. People in the audience may know that Gandhi visited Tamil Nadu 20 times between 1896 and 1946. During his first visit in 1896 he tried to learn Tamil and bought 9 Tamil books for the purpose. During a subsequent visit in 1921, when in Madurai, Gandhiji made a change from donning the typical elaborate attire to wearing the simple dhoti and upper cloth that clothed him for the remaining years of his life. About this he himself has written and I quote,

"All the alterations I have made in the course of my life have been effected by momentous occasions. Such a radical alteration in my dress I effected in Madurai."

The documentation of such experience will help to enlighten the present and succeeding generations about the many facets of Gandhiji's personality. Truly he was a multifaceted personality about whom one can go on speaking for hours on end.

Albert Einstein the greatest scientist of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century had this to say about Gandhiji "Generations to come will scarce believe that such a person in flesh and blood ever walked upon the earth".

Three eminent speakers will be sharing their thoughts on - Gandhian thoughts and philosophy today with all of us. I request the members of the audience to pick up the threads from there and propagate the message of Bapuji far and wide. By doing so, we will be performing a great service to the nation, our society and the succeeding generations.

Nandri Vanakkam.....

Jai Hind....