

**ADDRESS BY THIRU BANWARILAL PUROHIT, HON'BLE GOVERNOR
OF TAMIL NADU AT THE INAUGURATION OF PRERANA (INSPIRATION)
PRESIDENTIAL CONFERENCE 2019 ORGANISED BY ROTARY
INTERNATIONAL DISTRICT 3232, CHENNAI AND CONFERENCE
TEAM AT CHENNAI TRADE CENTRE, NANDAMBAKKAM,
CHENNAI ON 05.04.2019 AT 4.30 P.M**

Anaivarukkum Maalai Vanakkam

Thiru. Basker,
Rotary International Director

Thiru. Babu Peram
District Governor, Rotary International

Thiru. John Daniel,
Rotary International President Representative

Thirumathi. Anita Babu

Thiru. Sv. Rm. Ramanathan,
Conference Counsellor

Thiru. M. Chakravarthy,
Conference Advisor

Distinguished Invitees

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am happy to be here at the function organised by the Rotary International District, Chennai on the occasion of the inauguration of PRERANA 2019, at which the members of 119 Rotary clubs are participating.

The Rotary movement as you are all aware was founded by Paul Harris in 1905 to bring together business and professional leaders and harness their potential for providing humanitarian services to society, thus advancing the cause of goodwill and peace around the world.

Today, the movement has more than 1.2 million members spread over more than 200 countries across the world. In India, there are more than 40 Rotary Districts which are functioning with more than 1 lakh 70 thousand Rotarians. I am informed that the Rotary District 3232, Chennai has 4880 members enrolled with it.

They have all been dedicating themselves to the task of community welfare. The city has indeed benefitted by their numerous activities. To mention a few these are activities such as

- creating infrastructure for schools,
- undertaking calamity relief work during times of cyclones and floods etc.
- taking up restorations of water bodies and other projects for environmental protection and
- providing hospital equipment thus enabling better medical care etc.,

to mention a few.

I commend the Rotary International District, Chennai for the yeoman service rendered and wish to exhort them to expand their activities manifold in the coming years.

The message of Rotary International to place service above self lies at the core of India's psyche. Viewing the humanity of the world as one family is fundamental to our way of thinking and Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam is the driving force behind India's spirituality.

The Rig Veda says and I quote,

“Assemble, speak among yourselves as one, be united in your minds, partake together of common benefits, may your aims be one and true, may your assembly be synthesized and harmonious: A common purpose do I lay before you;

Address your endeavours unitedly, common be your aim and your hearts united;

May you be of one mind that all may gain true happiness”.

Swami Vivekananda who interpreted the essence of India's Sanathana Dharma, about a 100 years back also said and I quote,

“It is a privilege to serve mankind, for this is the worship of God. God is here, in all these human souls. He is the soul of man.”

This has also been the message of all religions.

The Bible says “Know thou, that in the service of thy fellowmen, do thou serveth me.”

Prophet Muhammed said, “Charity is a duty unto every Muslim; He who hath the means there to, let him do a good act and abstain from an evil one. That is his charity.”

Saint Kabir in his inimitable poetic style says “a river or stream does not dry up if a sparrow lifts a drop of the water through its beak. Similarly the wealth of a person does not get drained out or exhausted by charity to fellow human beings.”

That social service has always been a part of our way of thinking has been evidenced by our literature. Ancient Tamil classics have particularly eulogized the lives of great kings who have considered the welfare of their subjects as more important than their comforts. We are all aware of the legendary greatness of King Pari who provided his chariot to a creeper plant that needed support to spread out and grow. The munificence and generosity of kings like Karna are legendary and find place in our epics.

A complete life is experienced when an individual goes beyond the intellectual and analytical level to the feeling of oneness and compassion which can spring only from the altruistic heart. Let us hope and take the pledge this year that we will expand our heart with altruism, fellow-feeling, kindness, and uphold service above self.

This indeed is the motto of the Rotary movement “It is the duty of all Rotarians,” states the Manual of Procedure, “to be active as individuals in as many legally constituted groups and

organizations as possible to promote welfare, not only in words but through exemplary dedication, awareness of the dignity of all people and the respect of the consequent human rights of the individual.”

I have been touring the State extensively in the last 18 months that I have been here as the Governor of Tamil Nadu. I have also had the privilege of interacting with persons from all sections of society in the 300 and odd functions that I have attended. At all these events I have repeatedly stressed the need for character, discipline and integrity in public life.

A nation can become great if its citizens are willing to serve the nation with sense of selflessness. Men and women of character can alone successfully lead society towards peace and prosperity. All of you assembled here have the ability to change society. Therefore plan carefully before you act. Once you have decided to act, please do not look back. Your actions should be free from attachment and be only guided by the benefits they will confer on your society, the state and the nation. I am sure that this thought will permeate the deliberations that are to take place at this annual conference of Rotarians.

I congratulate the Rotary International District 3232, Chennai and its members for their quest to bring about an improvement in societal welfare.

I request the Members of the Rotary Club to contribute their time and money liberally for the success of their projects. It is also important to make more and more youth take to social service by inculcating in the youth a passion for selfless service and the urge to dedicate oneself for social good. I convey my warm felicitations to the office bearers and members of the Rotary International District 3232, Chennai and to all those who have been engaged in promoting the cause of the organization in a selfless and dedicated manner as has been expounded in the Thirukkural.

In couplet 953, Thiruvalluvar says,

“Smile, Charity, pleasant words and civility-These four are marks of true nobility.”

May these noble features find complete expression in the Rotarians assembled here.

I thank the office bearers of Rotary International District 3232, Chennai for this opportunity given to me to share my thoughts, ideas and concerns with so many opinion makers of Chennai city. May welfare oriented movements like the Rotary swell in size, multiply in magnitude and fill the earth with goodness and humanity.

Nandri Vanakkam.....

Jai Hind....