

From dusk to dawn, a spiritual tribute—

Bhansali Among Those Conferred With Mahavir Mahatma Awards

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: The convergence of music and spirituality can draw people even at midnight. This was evident at the Mahavir Mahatma Awards 2005 for Oneness—a midnight celebration of Divinity by the Oneness Forum, a Times Foundation initiative—on the auspicious occasion of Gudl Padwa on April 9.

Awards were conferred on Hindustani classical singer Sanjeev Abhyankar, film-maker Sanjay Leela Bhansali, fashion designer Krishna Mehta, architect Jimmy Mistry and social worker Sameer Salgaocar for putting their time, effort and spiritual thoughts to create something unique in their chosen field. The awards ceremony was held at the ITC Grand Maratha Sheraton, Sahar.

Abhyankar said the award meant a greater sense of responsibility “as I need to take Hindustani classical music forward and do justice to the award”. His contribution in the field of Hindustani classical music is not limited to just vocal but also the spiritual content of singing, leading to oneness.

Bhansali, who came with his mother, believed that his work would do the talking. While giving away the award, Sarabjit Dhawan, vice president-west of ITC Hotels, said, “What should I say about this man who has dealt with such a difficult subject,” referring to Bhansali’s latest film *Black*. Bhansali was chosen for the award for making socially relevant films that appeal to the universal human consciousness, thus leading to oneness.

Krishna Mehta was awarded for her sincere promotion of khadi fabric and non-leather products in the world of fashion, symbolic of taking ahead the legacy of Mahatma Gandhi, leading to oneness. Mistry, who was honoured for his contribution in the fields of design and architecture, said, “When awards come from outside my fraternity, they are dear to me.”

Salgaocar’s social work at the grassroots level and promotion of Indian

Spiritual artist and founder of Adhyatmic Raj Gurukulam, associated with the award, Uday Geetanjali Gadnis, now known as Sadhak Shivananda Saraswati (Shiva) and Dhristi Foundation along with painters, poets and musicians also paid a spiritual tribute to the great saints of India on the occasion. “To pay a tribute to the divine saints of India is to discover the pathway to the saint within,” said Saraswati, who unveiled a 30 x 30 feet

spiritual painting. He chose four women—singer Anuradha Paudwal, television actress Smriti Irani, sports personality Anjali Bhagwat and professor Pratibha Naithani—to do the honours in keeping with the theme of the painting ‘Dasha Maha Shakti Nidhis (goddesses of different powers)’, ‘mudded’ with 22k gold with rush ruby paste finishing.

The programme began at 6 pm on Saturday with Hindustani and Classical vocal by advocate Manohar Patwardhan, who sang the ‘Naradiyakeertan’. Ustad Rashid Khan mesmerised the audience with his rendition of ‘Sant Meerabai’, followed by Deepa Thyagarajan who sang ‘Sant Purandaradasa’ and Pandit Ajay Pohankar who recited ‘Sant Kabir Das’.

The music continued from dusk to dawn, with an early Sunday morning spiritual chanting ‘Bramhamuhurtam’.

The various district and state-level Mahavir Mahatma Awards will culminate on Mahavir Jayanti on April 20, at the award ceremony of the Oneness Forum organised by the Bharatiya Jain Sanghatna at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi.



MIDNIGHT MAGIC: The first ever prize-winners of the Mahavir Mahatma Award for Oneness, initiated by The Times Foundation and Adhyatmic Raj Gurukulam from left to right: Sameer Salgaocar, Jimmy Mistry, Sadhak Shivananda Saraswati, Krishna Mehta, Sanjay Leela Bhansali and Sanjeev Abhyankar

handicraft, weavers, education of the rural girl child and nurturing training institutes in the field of art and culture got him the award. SNTD Women’s University’s vice-chancellor Rupa Shah, while giving away the award, said, “I am honoured to give away this award to Sameer as he has been instrumental in promoting education of the girl child in rural areas.”