



English rendering of the text of PM's address at a function to mark the inauguration of Basava Jayanthi 2017, and Golden Jubilee Celebration of Basava Samithi

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My best wishes to all of you on the occasion of birth anniversary of Lord Basveshwar. I heartily congratulate the Basava committee which played an important role in spreading the noble teachings of Lord Basveshwara during the past 50 years of its existence.

I would like to gratefully remember former vice president of India, Mr. Jatti who carried forward this noble work. I offer my special regards to Mr. Kalburgi, who was the Chief Editor of this. Unfortunately he is not amongst us today. He dedicated his life for this work. Wherever they may be now they must be feeling happy that the work started by them achieved its goal. We all are politicians, stuck in political swamp. Our world revolves around power. And we have seen that whenever a political person passes away their family members solemnly appear before the public and commit that they would fulfill the incomplete work of their father. You know it very well, what it means when a political person's son promises to fulfill his father's incomplete work. Political people also know what it means. However, I congratulate Arvind Ji for fulfilling such duties in the true sense of the word. The person who discharged the glorious duty of vice president of India, who is remembered by the nation, his son showed how to fulfill the incomplete work of his father, to convey the message of Lord Basavaraj to the people, to every nook and corner of this country, to convey it to future generations. Mr. Jatti himself showed many ideals to us but brother Arvind has also set a remarkable example, particularly for political families by his noble deeds and I offer my regards to him for this.

Two generations have dedicated themselves to this work in the fifty years of the committee's existence. Many people would have contributed to this work, many would have spent their energy. I congratulate to all those who contributed to this cause in these fifty years.

My dear brothers and sisters, India's history is not only of defeats, setbacks and slavery. Neither is it the history of bearing with the atrocities and oppression. Our history is not only of poverty, starvation, illiteracy and of snake charmers. The country faced several problems in the course of history, some of which remained with us. But, these problems, shortcomings, and social evils are not our identity. Our identity is how we dealt with these problems, how we approached these shortcomings. India is the country that gave the world the message of humanity, democracy, good governance, non-violence and passion for truth (passive resistance). Down the ages, our country have given birth to many great men who set up dazzling examples for mankind through their life, their work, their ideas. Centuries before top western thinkers began talking about democracy and equal human rights ordinary Indians observed them as a way of life. These values were not only adopted by Indians at that time but they were also included in the system of governance then. Lord Basveshwar too created a democratic set up in the 11th century AD. He developed a system that was called Anubhav Mandap, in which anyone who was a Dalit, who was poor, who was oppressed or deprived, could come there and express his feelings before everyone. This was the unique power of democracy. In a way, this was the first senate of the country. Everybody was equal there, there was no discrimination, no hierarchy, this was the word of Lord Basveshwar. He used to say that where there is no exchange of ideas, where there is no debate based on logic or reason, then even the Aunbhav Mandap becomes irrelevant; and God does not dwell in such a place. It means that he considered the exchange of ideas as powerful and as essential as God itself. Could anybody imagine a more enlightened thought? It means that hundreds of years ago the power of an idea, the power of knowledge was considered equal to God. This may surprise the modern world, however, women were allowed to freely discuss the issues at Anubhav Mandap. Today, when this world lectures us on woman empowerment, these things are done with the aim to lower the dignity of India in the world. However, this hundreds of years old history is before us that Lord Basveshwar implemented the system for woman empowerment and equal partnership; he just did not discuss it but he implemented it too. Women from every section of the society used to express their ideas. Some of them were looked down upon due to social evils of that time. These women were not expected to speak among the so called elite of that period. These social evils were there in our society. Even those women had full rights to come in the Anubhav Mandap and express their ideas. We can see that in that period how important that effort was, that movement was for woman empowerment. And this is the uniqueness of our country; it's thousands of years old civilization for social evils to creep in; it happened, however, we also developed capacity to fight those social evils. When Raja Ram Mohan Roy mooted the idea of widow marriage, the society of that time would have vehemently criticized him, but he remained steadfast despite plenty of hurdles. Raja Ram Mohan Roy showed that this was a collective sin of the society on the mothers and sisters and it must go and he saw it through.

And that is why sometimes I think; today this big debate is going on over the Triple Talaq issue. However, given the great tradition of India, I'm hopeful that this country has produced many great men who broke obsolete customs and developed modern systems. There could be many wise men in the Muslim community who would come forward and fight against the injustice perpetrated against the Muslim women. These Indian Muslims will give guidance to the Muslims world over. This is the power of this soil. That's why despite untouchability and social order prevalent at that time, Lord Basveshwar used to say that even the women from the lowest class could and speak at the Anubhav Mandap. That was the power of Indian soil that wise people would come up from the Muslim community to protect their mothers and sisters facing the dangers of Triple Talaq. And I will urge upon members of the Muslim community not to look at this issue from the prism of politics, please come forward and resolve the problem. And that resolution of the issue will give you immense satisfaction and future generations will benefit from this.

Friends, the seven principles derived from the teachings of Lord Basaveshwara still cover this place from one end to the other like the seven colours of a rainbow. It could be anybody's faith, faith could be for anyone but everyone must be respected. He vehemently supported equal rights for everyone and elimination of social evils like caste system and untouchability.

He saw God in every human being. He said this human body is like a temple and your soul is God's spirit residing in it; and this discrimination of upper caste, lower caste must end from the society and everyone should be respected. And society's thought process must be developed on scientific and logical basis. And everyone should be empowered. These principles are like a solid foundation for any democratic society. He used to say that don't ask the caste of someone, instead you say that this person is ours, he is one from amongst us. And a strong country is developed on this foundation. These principles work like the directive principles for a nation. It's a matter of great pride for us that 800 years ago Lord Basaveshwara used these ideas as a foundation for public opinion and democracy in India. His message of taking everyone along is reflected in this government's policy of Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikaas (Support for everyone, development for everyone). Everyone in this country must have his home without any discrimination. There should be no discrimination; everyone should get round the clock electricity without any discrimination, roads must be laid to every village without any discrimination, without any discrimination every farmer should get water for irrigation, and also fertilizer and crop insurance. This is precisely Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikaas (Support for everyone, development for everyone) and this is essential for this country. Everybody can be developed by taking everyone's support, due to everyone's efforts.

You must have heard of Mudra scheme of the Government of India. This scheme was launched to provide loan to the youth to start enterprises to make them self reliant. Under this scheme, over three lakh crore rupees have been advanced to nearly 3.5 crore people without any guarantee. And you will be surprised to know that, even 800 years after his demise, Lord Basaveshwara would also be happy to note that under this scheme 76% beneficiaries were women. To be honest with you, when this scheme was started we had no inkling that women would come forward in such a large number to associate with this scheme and develop themselves as entrepreneurs. This scheme is playing very important role in women empowerment. Mudra Scheme has created large number of women entrepreneurs across the villages, across the streets and across the small towns. Brothers and sisters, Lord Basveshara's word are not only a true philosophy of life but they are equally useful in good governance, equally useful for political class. He used to say that the power of knowledge can destroy ignorance. Power of light can destroy darkness. Power of truth destroys falsehood. Power of Midas stone converts the properties of iron. If the falsehood is removed from the system then that is the good governance. When the subsidy meant for poor reaches him, when the ration meant for poor reaches him, when recommendations don't work for appointments, when efforts are made to set the poor free from corruption and black money then the truth within the system flourishes; and the message of Lord Basveshawar is the same. Good governance is removing the unfairness and falsehood from the system.

Lord Basweshwar used to say that a man's life can attain glory only through selfless service of others, selfless service. Mr. Education Minister, if the selfless service gains prominence in the society then corrupt practices will be reduced in equal measure. Corrupt practices are like a termite that is weakening our social system from inside. It snatches the right of equality from man. If a man, who has been working hard to earn his bread, if he sees that the other person has made his life comfortable by corrupt means then for a moment he might think that the path chosen by him was not correct. He might be compelled to abandon the path of honesty. It's our duty to eliminate this feeling of inequality. That's why anyone can see this thing in the policies of the government that selfless service has been given the preference, you will find selfless service and will experience it all the time. Today, one can see that the power of Lord Basveshwara's ideas flowing out of the boundaries of state of Karnataka and has reached to the banks of Thames river in London.

I was fortunate to unveil the statue of Lord Basveshwara in London. In a country, where the sun never used to set in its empire, installation of a statue of Basvacharya Ji who conceptualized the democracy, is no less than a pilgrim. I still remember that there was incessant rain when the statue of Basvacharya Ji was installed and the rain God himself was showering his blessings and it was very cold, but despite bad weather people were listening about Lord Basaveshwara with curiosity, they were curious that hundreds of years ago there was so much discussion about democracy, woman empowerment and equality in our country. I think that it was surprising for them. Friends, you see it was either the shortcomings of our education system or it was our ignorance towards our history but millions and millions of youth in our country still do not know about the movement that was launched 800-900 years ago for generating public awareness in our country, for the establishment of social values. What kind of movement it was, it touched every corner of the country. That was 800 years ago, it was a period of slavery when it was started to eradicate social evils from the society. Our sages, our saints started the foundation for people's movement. They linked that people's movement with devotion to God. Devotion to God and devotion to the society started from south further expanded to Maharashtra and Gujarat and then it touched North India. During this period, people from different classes, people speaking different languages tried to enlighten the society. They acted like a mirror to the society; they not only showed what was good and bad in the society but they also showed the path to get rid of those evils. They adopted the path of devotion for salvation. Today we hear a lot of names, Ramanujacharya, Madhavacharya, Nimbakacharya, Saint Tukaram, Meera Bai, Narsingh Mehta, Kabira, Kabir Das, Saint Raidas, Guru Nanak Dev, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the Bhakti Marg was strengthened due contribution of many great saints. And due to their influence the country can remain steadfast in its spirit, could save its soul. We could develop; we could save ourselves despite all the dangers, despite the period of slavery. If you notice, you'd find that all of them tried to convey their message in a very simple, very easily understandable language. During the Bhakti period, a confluence of religion, philosophy was established, that trinity still inspires us. Their couplets, their poems, their songs are still invaluable to our society. Their philosophy is still totally relevant in this modern time. Whatever, Lord Basaveshara said 800 years ago that still feels right. Does it feel right or not?

Friends, today there is a need to spread Bhakti Movement, its feeling throughout the world. I'm happy to note that the work to translate Lord Basveshwara's words in 23 languages has been completed today; I express my gratitude to all those people associated with the work of translation. Lord Basaveshwara's word would reach every household due to your efforts. I'd also request Basava Samiti for something on this occasion. Shall I? It's better to ask people in a democratic set up. Can we do one thing, can we prepare a quiz bank on the basis of these teachings? All the questions and teachings must be digitally available online; every year people from different age groups should participate in this competition online. The competition should be conducted at Tehsil level, at district level, state, interstate and then at international level throughout the year. You should target participation of fifty lakh to one crore people, they should participate in the quiz competition. They will have to study Vachnamrita, his teachings, as a student. I believe, Arvind Ji, you can certainly do this. Otherwise, we'd forget these things. When we met in the parliament, at that time the note ban decision was talk of the town. People were walking with their hands in their pockets. People who used to eye others' pocket were saving their own pockets that day. Then Arvind Ji narrated a quote of

Basvacharya Ji. That was so perfect that had I got that quotation on the seventh October then I'd have certainly mentioned that quote in my address to the nation on 8th October. And then you can guess what would have happened in Karnataka. Therefore it's my wish that we must organise this quiz competition. And we should not stop there, today's new generation considers Google as its Guru. Therefore this is the right way for them, second, we can also organize a quiz competition on the relevance of Vachan Amrit and today's ideas. Then the people will realize that there was more sharpness in our people 800-900 years ago than the words spoken by the greatest philosopher of the world. One more thing, the people present here in this hall and also those who are watching this programme world over, we're completing 75 years of our independence in 2022. Shall we waste that year the way we wasted 75 years? Do you want to just organize one more programme like this on that occasion? No. We'd decide today itself. Every individual, every institution, every family, every village, every city, they all must set their target of what they want to achieve by 2022. The people who risked their lives for India's independence, spent their lifetime in jails, sacrificed their lives for the country; their dreams are not fulfilled and it is our duty to fulfill them. If 1.25 billion Indians decide that by 2022 the country must achieve these things, and this must be accomplished due to our own efforts. Otherwise, there is no dearth of people offering their advice that the government must do this or that; it should be like this and not like that. What will the 1.25 billion people of this country do? They must march ahead towards their target and we should march ahead with strength. And therefore I urge you through this committee which has done very good work on Lord Basweshwar's ideas to march ahead. Today I am fortunate to meet those knowledge workers who worked tirelessly to finish this noble task; those who learnt Kannada, those who translated his teachings in Gujarati, others who translated them in Sania, in Urdu. I am fortunate to meet all of them and I offer my kind regards to all of them who spent their day and night to fulfill this noble work, applied their knowledge, their strength to fulfill this work. I am fortunate to join you in this holy work and listen to those noble words. I also got oriented to these teachings through this program. I am thankful to you and lucky to meet you. Once again I thank all of you and convey my best wishes to you.

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