



English rendering of PM addresses 99th birthday celebrations of Dada Vaswani via video conference

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The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, today addressed via video conference, the 99th birthday celebrations of Dada Vaswani in Pune. He recalled that he had first met Dada Vaswani 27 years ago at the World Religions Conference in the United Nations. He also recalled their meeting in Pune in 2013.

The Prime Minister praised Dada Vaswani for his selfless service to humanity. Appreciating Dada Vaswani's thoughts on "Making the Right Choice," the Prime Minister said that if people resolve to make the right choice, evils such as corruption, casteism, drug-abuse, crime etc., can be overcome. He spoke of India's 75th anniversary of independence in 2022, and said India must resolve today, to fulfil the dreams of the freedom fighters by then. He urged the Sadhu Vaswani Mission to join this effort, in whatever ways it can.

Dada Vaswani thanked the Prime Minister, and described him as one of the greatest leaders of the world today. He said that initiatives launched by the Prime Minister, such as Jan Dhan Yojana, Make in India, Swachh Bharat etc. are having a visible impact. He said India has changed a lot in three years. He also said that not politics, but right education at the right time, is the key to nation-building. He said we should all strive to build a nation that all Indians can be proud of.

Following is the text of the Prime Minister's address:

I convey my best wishes to respected Dada J.P. Vaswani on the occasion of his 99th birth day.

It is Dada Vaswani's birth day but I have the good luck of getting his blessings. My hearty congratulations to all of you present in this program being held on the occasion of beginning of Dada Vaswani's 100th year. Lakhs of Dada Vaswani's followers are familiar with his innocent and sacred smile. It was 27 years ago when I first realized the simplicity and humility of his nature. At that time, the World Religion Conference was being held under the auspices of the UN and I also had the occasion to be there. Then I had hours of discussion with Dada Vaswani on nation building and social responsibilities. In 2013, we two jointly inaugurated Sadhu Vaswani College of Nursing in Pune. Last year when Dada Vaswani came Delhi I again had an opportunity to meet him. Even at that time we had a lengthy discussion on important topics like education and health. It would have been better if I could meet you today. I could not make it but for my engagements.

Friends, The personality of Dada Vaswani takes forward the spiritual journey of the sage tradition of modern India. Whenever I meet him I get the lively touch of the real power of fulfillment, humility and love that are there in his personality. The very basis of Dada Vaswani's life has been the tendency to sacrifice everything for others. I am reminded of one Dada J. P. Vaswani's sayings -You should do whatever good you can! Do good to as many people as you can. Do good in as many ways as you can. Do good as many times as you can.

These sacred words of Dada Vaswani open the avenue for empowerment of the entire mankind. In our society there are numerous people who are weak, who are sad, who are poor and oppressed, who are exploited and excluded. They have been struggling, they have been working hard to change the condition. Sadhu Vaswani Mission has been working for years to make their lives easier. I convey my sincere regard to them. Friends, I am very happy that you have begun this celebration. I would like to especially discuss the topic that was discussed by you two days ago. The topic, Make The Right Choice, is very relevant in the present context. I would like to repeat here the beautiful thoughts of Dada Vaswani on the topic of making the right and wrong choices in life.

Dada Vaswani has said, "We have to calm our awareness for making the right choices, we have to control our emotions. 'We can make the right choice by contemplating with an open heart while believing that God is present everywhere. Every experience in life teaches us a lesson. In what way we take that lesson, it depends on us.' Today's youth should take inspiration from these teachings of Dada Vaswani. A person has to always face this kind of situations in his life. Today, this is the root cause behind plenty of evils plaguing the society that several people choose the wrong path despite knowing that it is wrong. Whether it is corruption or casteism or crime or drug addiction, all of these can be tackled if the person improves his ability to make choices in the life. This is also the basis of an empowered society that every individual of the society makes the correct choices and follows them.

Friends, It's such a lovely coincidence that this year is the centenary year of the Champaran movement. Mahatma Gandhi not only introduced in the country the power of the passive resistance through Champaran Satyagrah but he also established people's participation as a powerful formula for fighting the social evils. Government is celebrating the centenary year of Champaran movement as a call for cleanliness. The blessings of Dada Vaswani will further strengthen the call for cleanliness (Swachhagrah). It will be helpful in realising the unfulfilled dream of Mahatma Gandhi.

Clean India mission is going on in the country like a people's movement. When this campaign was started on the 2nd October 2014 then the coverage of rural cleanliness in the country was just 39 per cent. Today, it has expanded to 66 per cent. One very healthy tradition has also begun. There is a competition among the villages, among the districts and states to declare themselves as open defecation free. Untill now 2 lakh 17 thousand villages of the country have declared themselves as open defecation free. Five states of the country - Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Uttarakhand, Sikkim and Kerala are part of this list. All of you are doing so much in the field of education, in the field of women welfare and in the field of health. Your contribution in the field of cleanliness campaign will not only teach people but it will also improve their health. Today, I would like to make an appeal to every social organisation of this country through this programme.

Friends, Toilets can be constructed by putting together bricks and stones, roads can be cleaned by gathering the workers, railway stations and bus stations can also be cleaned but in order to keep them clean on regular basis all of us will have to make collective effort. Cleanliness is not a system, it's a habit. It is necessary that it becomes the habit of all of us. If we make regular and concerted effort by considering the cleanliness as a tendency then it will automatically become the tendency of the society.

Similarly there is a need for regularly making the people aware about the environment protection. Today, climate change has emerged as a very big challenge before the entire world. The programs to plant more and more saplings, the programmes related with the waste to energy scheme, the programmes aimed at motivating people towards solar energy, the programmes aimed at inspiring people towards water conservation will strengthen our nature and environment.

Friends, I would also like to call upon your organisation with a sense of right as Dada Vaswani and his organisation have shown so much affection for me. Our country will celebrate the 75th year of its independence in 2022. Dada Vaswani himself had witnessed the freedom struggle. The dreams of those who sacrificed their lives for the sake of country's independence are still unfulfilled. In order to realise these unfulfilled dreams, today, the country is making a solemn pledge in 2017. This solemn pledge is for a New India.

The blessings of Dada Vaswani and the will power of Sadhu Vaswani Mission will help in realisation of this solemn pledge. So I urge your organisation to set its goals for 2022. These goals should be quantifiable. For example that every year you people will establish contacts with 10 or 20 thousand people to motivate them for cleanliness, like you people would reach out to 5 or 10 thousand people every year to encourage solar power, these are the pledges to be made by your organisation itself. When every individual of the country, every family and every organisation will decide their own goals and will work hard to realise them then the goal will be achieved and it will also realise the dream of a New India. Given the life of Dada Vaswani, all of us who love him and who have been loved by him, we will have to decide that how we are going to celebrate the centenary year.

I would suggest that this centenary year should be focused on one topic, under which every individual should do something for the society, he should live for the society and I am confident that the hard work of Dada Vaswani will bear fruits. Dada Vaswani's teachings will continue to inspire us to achieve this goal. I conclude with this hope that his blessings will continue to shower upon us like this. Once again I convey my best wishes to all of you.

Thank you.

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