



# Selfless service to humanity was the essence of devotion: Vice President Inaugurates 92nd Birthday Celebrations of Sri Satya Sai Baba

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The Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu has said that Selfless service to humanity was the essence of devotion. He was addressing the gathering after inaugurating the 92nd Birthday Celebrations of Sri Satya Sai Baba, in Prashanthi Nilayam in Puttaparthi, Andhra Pradesh today.

The Vice President said that Sri Sathya Sai Baba, a Loving God to His devotees, a universal teacher and humanitarian to others, inspired millions of people across the globe to actively participate in service of humanity. He further said that his teachings emphasize truth, love, peace, right conduct, and non-violence. The service activities of Sri Sathya Sai Baba's organisations that have worked in the national spirit are truly commendable, he added.

The Vice President said that the clarion call of Sri Sathya Sai Baba motivated devotees across the world to form service organisations in about 125 countries to serve the under privileged and needy. He further said that the Trust under the divine guidance of Sri Satya Baba has provided clean drinking water to over a million people in about 700 villages in Anantapur District of Andhra Pradesh. Such drinking water supply water projects were provided in East Godavari and West Godavari Districts of Andhra Pradesh and Medak and Mahabubnagar Districts of Telangana, he added.

The Vice President said that the service activities in the fields of Education, Health Care, Providing Safe Drinking Water and other free services undertaken by Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust under the guidance of Sri Sathya Sai Baba have been having great impact on the society in India and humanity worldwide.

The Vice President said that Sri Satya Sai Baba's principal message was love and he was the embodiment of selfless love and his life was a saga of selfless love for the humanity. Baba served all humanity irrespective of caste, creed, race or religion and he propagated and practiced Unity of all Faiths symbolized, he added.

Following is the text of Vice President's address:

"I am extremely fortunate to be with all of you on the eve of the 92<sup>nd</sup> birth anniversary of SriSatya Sai Baba and the launch of the archives today.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba, a Loving God to His devotees, a universal teacher and humanitarian to others, inspired millions of people across the globe to actively participate in service of humanity.

He was a great transformational leader. He transformed the physical landscape here at Puttaparthi. A small village has become a vibrant global spiritual retreat. He transformed the villagers' lives through the provision of drinking water. He transformed and demonstrated how values can be inculcated through education and how healthcare can be delivered to the poor. He established hospitals and educational institutions which are rendering services and imparting education completely free of charge.

His teachings emphasize truth, love, peace, right conduct, and non-violence. The service activities of Sri Sathya Sai Baba's organisations that have worked in the national spirit are truly commendable. It is heartening to note that the clarion call of Sri Sathya Sai Baba motivated devotees across the world to form service organisations in about 125 countries to serve the under privileged and needy.

The Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust was set up by Him in 1972 with the objectives of extending relief to the poor, including education and healthcare and any other objects of general public utility without any discrimination of caste, creed, or religion.

Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust is a Public Charitable Trust and not a religious Trust. It currently operates:

- two Super Specialty hospitals,
- two General Hospitals and
- two Mobile Hospitals
- a four-campus deemed university described by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) as a crest jewel of the Indian university education system;
- two residential schools with Classes I to XII

The Trust under the divine guidance of Sri Satya Baba has provided clean drinking water to over a million people in about 700 villages in Anantapur District of Andhra Pradesh.

Such drinking water supply water projects were provided in East Godavari and West Godavari Districts of Andhra Pradesh and Medak and Mahabubnagar Districts of Telangana.

A project to modernize Kandaleru reservoir in Andhra Pradesh and the canal from Kandeleru to Poondi reservoir in Tamil Nadu was taken up in order to provide drinking water supply to the city of Chennai.

The service activities in the fields of Education, Health Care, Providing Safe Drinking Water and other free services undertaken by Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust under the guidance of Sri Sathya Sai Baba have been having great impact on the society in India and humanity worldwide. Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust has been carrying on the service activities, which were started by Sri Sathya Sai Baba in the same spirit with which they were initiated.

Sri Satya Sai Baba's principal message is love. He is the embodiment of selfless love and His life is a saga of selfless love for the humanity. Baba served all humanity irrespective of caste, creed, race or religion. Sri Satya Sai Baba propagated and practiced Unity of all Faiths symbolized by His statement:

***There is only one religion; the religion of Love***

***There is only one language; the language of the Heart***

***There is only caste; the caste of Humanity***

***There is only one Law; the Law of Duty***

***There is only one God, He is Omnipresent.***

Baba always exhorted people to do selfless service. He says, "Hands that help are holier than the lips that pray".

In fact, this is in the grand Indian tradition of seeing every human being as divine and therefore, serving human beings is taken as service to God.

I am pleased to note that Sri Sathya Sai Seva organisation which plays a key role in many service activities undertaken by the Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust is spread through the length and breadth of India having very active units in all the states of the country. I am impressed by the fact that there are 14,700 Balvikas centres where in nearly 300,000 children are given orientation in Indian culture and taught Human values.

The universal message of Sri Sathya Sai is being spread across the globe in 125 countries by the Sri Sathya Sai International Organisation.

After the Mahasamadhi of Sri Sathya Sai Baba in 2011, the Trust has continued its public welfare works with the same spirit of service.

I am delighted that the Trust completed a project for supply of drinking water to another 118 villages in Anantapur district, constructed 300 more houses to flood affected people of Orissa and participated in the disaster relief operations of Hudhud Cyclone and in the Chennai cyclones.

About 100 Sri Sathya Sai Schools in the country, set up by devotees, are being provided with financial assistance to improve their infrastructure like buildings, furniture and computer facilities to improve the quality of education.

The divine inspiration provided by Sri Sathya Sai Baba continues to drive the Trust's new initiatives.

Among the recent additions is a new building in Sri Sathya Sai General Hospital, Prasanthi Nilayam, modernization of both the Super specialty Hospitals, advanced Research Centre of Sri Satya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, 2nd Mobile hospital in Chennai, a new women's college building and a school building in Dharwad, Karnataka and construction of new buildings at Sathya Sai Baba School, Mysuru.

I am extremely happy to inaugurate the Archives today.

In His lifetime, Sri Sathya Sai Baba had written several books, addressed devotees in thousands of forums, written letters and messages to people of all walks of life.

Many of these teachings and messages are available in different formats, both audio and visual. The Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust has collected these and has preserved them for posterity so that they would be available for seekers of knowledge in the years to come. There is a veritable treasure house of 7000 manuscripts, 9000 audio spools, 5,50,000 feet of films, 5000 CD / DVDs, 10,000 Video tapes of about 18,000 hours and 1, 50,000 photos. These can be used by researchers and those who wish to study the message of this great sage.

A state of the art Archives centre has been established as per International standards in Prasanthi Nilayam for this purpose. The Archives centre which is one of its kind in the country is built on multiple levels with custom designed special vaults. The building has inner and outer shells, sterile corridors, illumination at 300 lux, high levels of dust control and robust security systems. I am told that this system can ensure preservation of the archived material for hundreds of years.

These items have been digitized and kept in the Archival building. This would facilitate content access in electronic form and help disseminate the message of Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

Sri Satya Sai Baba was a great spiritual leader who distilled the essence of Indian philosophical heritage and conveyed it in a very simple but effective way to the masses.

As the great sage Narada describes a divine person: Sa tarati lokaanstaarayati (He not only navigates the ocean of life but also helps all others to cross this ocean).

He used to address his devotees as "paramatma swarupallara" (embodiments of divinity). With this perspective, he said, "If you lift the hand to serve, to help, to console, to encourage another man you are lifting it for God, because in every man is God." He had also said, "Service is worship. Each act of service is a flower placed at the feet of God."

For Him, Selfless service to humanity was the essence of devotion. This echoes the conception of devotion that Narada gives us in his Bhakti Sutras: "Saa parama prema roopa". This unconditional, sublime love can transform human beings into devoted souls serving God through service to humanity.

That is the grand ideal set by Sri Satya Sai Baba before us and demonstrated through his speech and actions that this is really possible. It is the same spirit and the eternal flame he has kindled that is making our lives more meaningful.

I invoke Baba's gracious blessings on the Trust and all of us around the world so that we can lead fulfilled lives. May we follow the path of Satya, Dharma, Prema, Shanthi that he has shown us.

May we commit ourselves to work, as Sri Satya Sai guided us, for the progress of humanity, with love, compassion, right conduct and truthfulness.

Jai Hind!"

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KSD/BK

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