



English rendering of PM's address at birth centenary celebrations of Sri Sathya Sai Baba at Puttaparthi, Andhra Pradesh

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Sai Ram!

ऐंदरो महानुभावुलु, अंदरिकि वंदनमुलु।

Chief Minister Shri Chandrababu Naidu Ji, my colleagues at the Centre, Rammohan Naidu Ji, G. Kishan Reddy Ji, Bhupati Raju Srinivasa Varma Ji, Sachin Tendulkar Ji, Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan Ji, Minister in the State Government Nara Lokesh Ji, Managing Trustee of Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust R. J. Ratnakar Ji, Vice Chancellor K. Chakravarthy Ji, Aishwarya Ji, all other dignitaries, ladies and gentlemen, Sai Ram!

Friends,

It is an emotional and spiritual experience for me to be present among all of you today in this sacred land of Puttaparthi. A short while ago, I had the opportunity to pay my respects at Baba's Samadhi. Bowing at his feet and receiving his blessings is an experience that always fills my heart with emotion.

Friends,

This birth centenary year of Sri Sathya Sai Baba is not just a celebration for our generation; it is a divine blessing. Though he is no longer with us in physical form, his teachings, his love, his spirit of service are still guiding millions of people. Millions of lives in more than 140 countries are moving forward with new light, new direction, and new resolve.

Friends,

The life of Sri Sathya Sai Baba was a living embodiment of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam." Therefore, this year of his birth centenary has become a grand festival of universal love, peace, and service for us. Our government is fortunate that on this occasion a commemorative coin of Rs 100 and a postage stamp have also been issued. This coin and postage stamp reflect his service works. I extend my heartfelt greetings and best wishes to all the devotees, fellow-sevaks, and followers of Baba spread across the world on this auspicious occasion.

Friends,

The central value of Indian civilization is Seva or service. All our diverse spiritual and philosophical traditions, ultimately lead to this one ideal. Whether one walks the path of Bhakti, Gyan or Karma, each is connected to Seva. What is Bhakti without service to the divine present in all beings? What is Gyan if it does not awaken compassion for others? What is Karma if not the spirit of offering one's work as service to society? सेवा परमो धर्मः is the ethos that has sustained India through centuries of changes and challenges. It has given our civilization its inner strength. Many of our great saints and reformers have carried forward this timeless message in ways suited to their times. Sri Sathya Sai Baba placed Seva at the very heart of human life. He often said, "Love All Serve All". For him, Seva was love in action. His institutions in education, healthcare, rural development, and many such areas stand as living proof of this philosophy. They show spirituality and service are not separate, but different expressions of the same truth.

Further, someone inspiring people while physically present is not uncommon. But the Seva activities of the institutions created by Baba are increasing day by day, despite him not being with us physically. This shows that the impact of truly great souls does not decrease with time, it actually grows.

Friends,

The message of Sri Sathya Sai Baba has not remained confined to books and discourses and ashrams only. The impact of his teachings is visible among the people. Today, from cities to small villages, from schools to tribal settlements, there is a wonderful flow of culture, education and medical services in India. Millions of Baba's followers are engaged in this work selflessly. Service to humanity is service to Madhava, the greatest ideal of Baba's followers. He left us many such thoughts, which contain the essence of compassion, duty, discipline and philosophy of life. He used to say, "Help Ever, Hurt Never, Talk Less, Work More." These life principles of Sri Sathya Sai Baba continue to resonate in all of us even today.

Friends,

Sai Baba used spirituality for the welfare of society and people. He linked it with selfless service, character building and value-based education. He did not base his power on any opinion or principle. He helped the poor and worked to alleviate their suffering. I remember, after the Gujarat earthquake, Baba's Seva Dal and all the Sevavritti stood in the front line to provide relief to the victims. His followers remained engaged in service with full devotion for many days. They made significant contributions in reaching out to affected families, providing essential supplies, and psycho-social support.

Friends,

If someone's heart melts in one meeting, if the direction of someone's life changes, then it shows the greatness of that person. Here at this event today, there are many among us who have been deeply impacted by Sathya Sai Baba's messages, and whose entire lives have been transformed.

Friends,

I am satisfied that inspired by Sri Sathya Sai Baba; Sai Central Trust and its associated organizations are carrying forward the service as an organized, institutional and long-term system. Today it is before us as a practical model. All of you are doing amazing work in areas like water, housing, healthcare, nutrition, disaster-support and clean energy. I would like to specifically mention some of the service

works. For example, when there was a serious problem of drinking water in Rayalaseema, the Trust laid a pipeline more than 3 thousand kilometers long. In Odisha, the Trust built 1,000 houses for flood-affected families. Poor families who visit Sri Sathya Sai Hospitals for the first time are often stunned to find there's no billing counter. Even though the treatment here is free, the patients and their families do not face any inconvenience.

Friends,

Today itself, Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana accounts have been opened in the name of more than 20,000 daughters. This has ensured the education and secure future of those daughters.

Friends,

The Government of India had started this Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana 10 years ago keeping in mind the education of daughters and for their bright future. This is one of those schemes in the country in which our daughters get the highest interest rate of 8.2 percent. Till now, accounts of more than 4 crore daughters of the country have been opened under Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana. And you will be happy to know that till now an amount of more than Rs 3.25 lakh crore has been deposited in these bank accounts. It is a very good effort that Sri Sathya Sai family has done the noble work of opening 20 thousand Sukanya Samriddhi accounts here. Well, I am the MP from Kashi, so I will give an example from there also. In February last year, we had opened Sukanya Samriddhi accounts for 27 thousand daughters there. And Rs 300 were also transferred to the bank account of each daughter. Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana is playing a big role in the education and better future of daughters.

Friends,

Over the past 11 years, numerous schemes have been launched in the country that have significantly strengthened the social security coverage of citizens. And the poor and deprived of the country are continuously coming under the ambit of social security. In 2014, only 25 crore people in the country were covered under social security. Today I say with great satisfaction, and sitting at Baba's feet I say, today this number has reached almost 100 crores. India's welfare schemes and social security schemes are being discussed abroad, in all international forums.

Friends,

Today itself I have got the opportunity to participate in the cow donation programme here. 100 cows are being given to poor farmer families by the trust. In our tradition, the cow is considered a symbol of life, prosperity, and compassion. These cows will help in the economic, nutritional and social stability of these families.

Friends,

The message of prosperity through the protection of mother cow is visible in every corner of the country and abroad. A few years ago, under the Rashtriya Gokul Mission, more than 480 Gir cows were distributed in Varanasi. And I had a rule that I would take back the first female calf born and give it to another family. Today, the number of Gir cows and calves in Varanasi has reached about 1700. And a tradition we have started there is that the female calves born from the cows that have been distributed there are given free to farmers in other areas. Therefore, the number of these cows is also increasing. I remember, during my visit to Rwanda in Africa 7-8 years ago, I visited a village there and presented 200 Gir cows from India. And this tradition of giving donations also exists there.

There is a custom called Girinka, meaning “may you have a cow,” in which the first female calf born to a cow is donated to a neighboring family. This practice has increased nutrition, milk production, income, and social unity there.

Friends,

Brazil has also adopted India's Gir and Kankrej breeds and nurtured them with modern technology and scientific management. Today, they have become a source of better dairy performance. All these examples show that when tradition, compassion and scientific thinking go together, the cow becomes a symbol of faith as well as a means of empowerment, nutrition and economic progress. And I am delighted that you are carrying forward this tradition here with such good intentions.

Friends,

Today, the country is moving forward towards a developed India with a sense of duty. Citizen participation is essential to achieve this goal. And in this, this birth centenary year of Satya Sai Baba is our biggest inspiration. I urge that this year we should especially resolve to strengthen the mantra of Vocal for Local. To build a developed India, we must promote the local economy. We have to remember, when we buy local products, we directly empower a family, a small enterprise, and the local supply-chain. This also paves the way for a self-reliant India.

Friends,

All of you, inspired by Sri Sathya Sai Baba, are continuously contributing to nation-building. This sacred land truly possesses a remarkable power. Compassion is evident in every visitor's words, peace in their thoughts, and a spirit of service in their actions. I am confident that wherever there is deprivation or suffering, you will similarly stand as a beacon of hope and light. With this spirit, I extend my heartfelt best wishes to the Sathya Sai family, all institutions, all service teams, and all devotees from across the country and the world for carrying forward this Yajna of love, peace, and service.

Thank you very much. Sai-Ram!

MJPS/VJ/SS

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