

Sathya Sai Community Projects

The world is one big community of which each individual is a member, sharing its fundamentally Divine nature. The Love in the heart of each one of us is the energy which takes the form of SERVICE; this service is the reason for living our life together in society. In India Sai Baba continues the ancient tradition of the Revelation of the Vedic Scriptures both in word and deed. He teaches that education, health and access to basic necessities are a God given right to humanity with no distinction made for social class, colour or religious creed.

From early youth he initiated various projects, culminating in the Grand Social Achievements of recent years: The Institute of Higher Education, the Higher Institute of Medicine, and the Water project. These enormous projects offer the population:

- ♥ access to all levels of education up to university
- ♥ the most modern technology for the treatment of all pathologies
- ♥ essential drinking water

all free of charge.

EDUCATION

Bukkapatnam, a village near Puttaparthi, was the site of the first school built by Sai Baba and inaugurated on 8th August 1950. For permission to realise this project he went in person to the Prime Minister in Madras and paid the required fee of 15,000 rupees. This was just the beginning of great things to come.

Sai Baba has achieved amazing results in the field of education: elementary schools, secondary schools, universities, as well as student hostels have been built all over India. No charge is made for either education or board and lodging and no distinction is made for class, colour, creed or background. As well as the government programmes the children in Sai Schools are taught to recite Holy Scriptures and texts from the Vedas as a means of maintaining the principles and moral codes of the holy Texts, long ignored by state institutions.

All Baba's teachings are taught through the five Human Values of Truth, Right Conduct, Peace, Love and Non-Violence, so that the children put them into practice in their daily lives and learn how to conduct themselves, in school, at home and in society.

As well as children, Sai Baba teaches everyone of every race and creed, to practise Human Values in all their relations with other people. He never tires of repeating that only Unity and the Brotherhood of man and nations will bring true Peace and happiness to the world.

"The aim of education is character. The aim of knowledge is Love." -Sathya Sai Baba-

Many years ago, Puttaparthi was a tiny isolated village with no facilities whatsoever; Sai Baba's mother, Ishvaramma, asked her son to build an elementary school at Puttaparthi, so that the children wouldn't have to walk miles to the next village, and he readily complied.

In her simplicity and humility, Ishvaramma was the embodiment of all the most noble qualities of a woman and a mother. The Higher Institute of Prashanti Nilayam was dedicated to her by Baba in May 1972.

'Education is for Life, not for earning a living' -Sathya Sai Baba-

In 1985 Baba opened the modern Planetarium, whose technology allows the projection of the images of 4054 stars, 88 constellations, the Milky Way, several galaxies and many Celestial Bodies.

Thanks to its dome it has become a research centre for the students from Sai schools who wish to improve their knowledge of astronomy, mathematics and science.

Muddenahalli, Alike, is one of the many poor villages in the state of Andhra Pradesh that had no school. Baba built schools like this one in Peddapalli to bring education to the remotest and poorest rural centres.

Sathya Sai schools have sprung up in many countries outside India, for example Thailand, New Zealand and Canada. All of them follow the guide lines laid down by Sai Baba and have adopted the programme of Education in Human Values: Truth, Right Conduct, Peace, Love and Non-violence.

The aim of these institutions is to form the personality of the young people so they grow into complete and well balanced adults. To this end the curriculum includes not only government programmes but also the development of a virtuous and disciplined character capable of cultivating love, tolerance and compassion.

Two splendid museums have been built at Prasanthi Nilayam. They illustrate, with clarity and simplicity many otherwise obscure concepts concerning the creation, different religions and spiritual philosophies, as well as the works and mission of Sai Baba.

The Museum of Religions is a monument to Man's eternal search for his innate Divinity. It was inaugurated by Baba in 1990. The exhibition is spread over three floors and shows the main elements and disciplines of the most important religions, as well as the teachings of sacred Hindu Scriptures such as the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Gita etc.

The Chaitanya Jyoti (Light of Universal Awareness) Museum was built at the time of Sai Baba's 75th birthday. It houses an exhibition concerning His life and mission. This unusual and splendid construction is the work of a Malaysian architect who has blended various cultural and architectural styles; the roof, in the style of an imperial Chinese palace, is flanked by two Moorish domes decorated with a semicircular crown of Gothic arches. The museum was opened by Sai Baba on 18th November 2000.

Sai Baba has always given priority to schools and Universities where scholastic instruction is integrated into the greater concept of EDUCATION, seen as the full development of human potential, self knowledge and the knowledge of one's Divine Nature.

Purnachandra is a huge auditorium, 60 metres long. It was built in 1973 and can seat 15,000 people. Here Sai Baba celebrates particular festivals and functions, and the students are allowed to produce theatrical works, usually inspired by the main characters described in the Ancient Epic Poems and sacred texts.

The Music Museum houses musical instruments from all over the world and from every era right up to the modern day. It is built in the shape of a cymbal with a trumpet on either side, the columns are in the form of a guitar and a Vina (ancient corded Indian instrument).

Next door to the museum is another building. On the ground floor –the administration offices and on the second floor is the Music School. The Dance School is in a circular building at the back.

The 20th November 2000, at Prasanthi Nilayam marked a milestone of Integral Education with the inauguration of the Museum and school of Music and Dance in the presence of Baba. The aim of Integral Education is to develop human excellence in every field, including art and music.

A boarding school for girls was opened on 22.07.1968. Sai Baba gives great importance to a good level of education for girls, especially in human values. Thanks to their innate spirit of dedication and sacrifice, women who demonstrate ideals and virtuous behaviour become the cornerstones of the family and society.

As well as scholastic achievement, Sai Education aims to develop a noble and upright character in young people through the daily practice of human values. The most incredible 'miracle' performed by Sai Baba is this gradual silent transformation of the human soul; with the strength of his Love he guides all men towards morality, peace and all that is good.

Millions of rupees were spent to build this college – not just for the sake of opening yet another school in the country, but so that a generation of women could be educated to live according to the ideals that are the cultural treasure of India, thereby maintaining the dignity and improving the destiny of women.
-Sathya Sai Baba-

HEALTH

There is no free National Health system in India –there are only private insurance companies, whose premiums are way beyond the means of millions of citizens from the poorer rural classes. Even correction of a simple cataract which limits the sight of the head of the family can mean financial ruin for the whole family, leaving them destitute.

In 1963 Sai Baba started putting his plan into action with the opening of the 100 bed general hospital situated near the Ashram in Prasanthi Nilayam. This hospital offers efficient medical assistance entirely free.

The body is the temple of the soul. -Sathya Sai Baba-

Nearly 30 years later, just 6 kms from Puttaparthi Sai Baba built the Super Speciality Hospital which was inaugurated on 23rd November 1991. Medical care, the stay in hospital, all therapies and surgical operations, even the most sophisticated and complicated, are offered entirely free of charge. This second hospital complex exists to meet the needs of the poorer classes, who cannot afford the expense of essential and complicated operations for cardiac pathologies. It has 280 beds and is specialised in cardiology, urology, nephrology, and ophthalmology. A plastic surgery department was added in September 1997, and in July 1999 a lithotripsy centre for crushing stones in the urinary tract. Thanks to its exquisite architectural style this polyclinic looks more like a 'Temple of Health' than a hospital.

Physical health is important, because disease disturbs mental stability and concentration. If the body is sick, so is the mind; so this raft which is your means of crossing the sea of Samsara, the sea of joy and pain, of births and deaths, should be kept in good condition. -Sathya Sai Baba-

The directors of the Super Speciality Hospital recently published the following official statistics regarding surgical operations and therapies:

Cardiac operations	13.526
By-pass operations	1.424
Cardiac valve operations	5.469
Correction of congenital deformities	4.787
Removal cardiac tumours	119
Aneurysm of the aorta	39
Cardiac catheter operations	13.556
Pacemaker implants	290
Echocardiograms	306.828
Blood donations	42.289
Urological and renal operations	21.750
Kidney transplants	74
Dialyses	5.725
Eye operations	22.190
Angiograms	1.384
Laser therapies	3.692
Outpatients treated	797.904
Hospital stays	61.481

This hospital is located in a rural area to ensure that patient care takes place in an atmosphere of love and devotion. No fee is required for any service.

Hospital care is not restricted to local people but is an opportunity for everyone to regain their health and return happily to their homes to continue their duties and shoulder their responsibilities.

I must remind the doctors on duty that the sweetness of their words, their love and compassion can heal patients even more than the prescribed medical care. I address myself to you so that you remember to keep this in mind under all circumstances.-Sathya Sai Baba-

28th August 1976 – Inauguration of modernisation of the General Hospital at Whitefield

Everything started in the 1970s when Sai Baba asked dr.Rajeswari to be the director of the hospital at Whitefield, a village near the city of Bangalore. At the time she was planning to move to England. When she went to look at the hospital she was amazed that it consisted of only one room with not much more than a thermometer in the way of equipment.

During the following years it grew into a modern general hospital equipped with modern apparatus and highly qualified medical staff capable of treating a wide range of disorders. The present hospital was inaugurated by Sai Baba on 28th August 1976.

As the cost of diagnostic and specialised surgical interventions has risen prohibitively especially in the fields of cardiac, renal and brain surgery, Baba wished to extend free, highly specialised hospital care to the state of Karnataka, and in particular to the more vulnerable social classes.

Sai Baba, living symbol of 'Love in Action', built the imposing hospital complex at Whitefield (Bangalore) in a record time of 8 months. The magnificent architecture diffuses a sense of peace and wonder to all who go there.

Surgical Operations carried out at the Super Speciality Hospital of Whitefield:

Cardiac Operations	3.942
Neurological operations	3.214
Cardiac catheters	6.642
Neurological catheters	214
X-rays	28.076
Magnetic resonance imaging	12.628
Gamma room	1.437
Rehabilitation & physiotherapy treatments	37.994
Cardiology outpatients	73.561
Neurology outpatients	42.746
Blood donations	8.278

This 300 bed hospital with 12 operating theatres was inaugurated by Baba 19th January 2001. It specialises in Cardiology, vascular and cardio-thoracic surgery, neurology and neuro-surgery. It is equipped with the most modern and advanced technology, including radiology and nuclear medicine; it has a blood bank, an efficient laboratory and is designed to be able to treat up to 1000 outpatients daily.

Many operations have prohibitive costs for most people, and for many years Sai Baba has been offering a high level of specialised medical and sanitary care -available to all free of charge. With this project he aims to demonstrate that modern medicine must return to its original purity of intent, free of the constraints of commerce.

If disease and suffering do not discriminate between the rich and the poor, why should we? -Sathya Sai

" . . . numerous doctors and patients have experienced healing through the Love and Grace of Baba, even in situations where there was no hope. For example: we carried out a complicated corrective operation on a year old baby who was cyanotic due to the inversion of the main arteries. Two days after the operation there were serious complications concerning the heart rate and respiration and we had to take him back into intensive care. After we'd tried everything in the way of diagnosis and care we applied Vibhuti (sacred ash) and prayed to Baba to intervene. Baba simply said: "Do your duty and don't worry – everything is fine." At the time, from a medical point of view it was impossible that anything was fine! However we continued to do what we could and we were able to witness a gradual complete healing."

-Testimony of dr. Mantravadi Sridar.-

The funds for the construction of this imposing hospital complex come from donations flowing in from all over the world to the Central Trust.

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba expects all the staff in the hospital to be sensitive with respect and compassion in thought word and deed, so that the human values of Truth, Right Conduct, Peace, Love and Non-Violence shine through every contact they have with patients.

BASIC NECESSITIES:

WATER PROJECT

Back in the 1940s Baba had the first well dug to fulfil the wish of his mother, so that village of Puttaparthi would have at least one source of fresh drinking water. Otherwise the only available water supply was the river - 1 km away.

For the 2.000.000 people living in the villages of Andhra Pradesh access to drinking water was a daily torment. It meant walking miles to the nearest well and coming back balancing a heavy container on the head with enough water for the whole family for at least a day. Even this trip was in vain when the collection tanks were empty. There was no guarantee of cleanliness of the water and often only polluted water was

available. In some areas the water in the wells had such a high fluoride content that it damaged teeth and bones causing malformations in children.

*Service to Man is service to God
Spend your time, your energy, your wealth in serving the poor.
This is what I wish from you. -Sathya Sai -*

Having made fruitless requests to the Government to deal with the problem of water distribution, in March of 1994 Baba launched a project unequalled in size and speed of execution destined to grow beyond anyone's wildest dreams. In July 1995 water started flowing to the first villages.

The completion of the first section in eighteen months and the arrival of water in 731 rural villages in the district of Anantapur brought a smile back to the faces of more than a million people. In May of 1999 work began in the districts of Medak and Mahabubnagar, frequent victims of drought and fluorosis. By November 2000 another 320 villages and a further million people had a water supply.

In all the affected regions the population is involved in the project, so that the independent company in charge of care and maintenance of the installation has been able to offer permanent work to hundreds of people.

All of humanity is my family. There is no-one in the world who does not belong to me. -Sathya Sai-

Bringing about this project has cost so far € 75 million euros, money that has arrived without a great deal of publicity; this is yet another proof of the immense Love Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has for humanity.

The Project in Anantapur is composed of 4 different systems:

- a) Infiltration and collection wells, fed by the levelling basin of the river Chiravathi, plus pumping station which supply 169 villages. Other infiltration wells of the rivers Pennar and Hagari supply a second hydro-network covering 93 villages.
- b) Direct pumping from the levelling basin of Pennar Ahobilam through rapid sand filters to 93 villages.
- c) Deviation of water from the Tungabhadra Canal during the rainy season to be accumulated in seven collecting tanks for the dry season, covering an area of 405.000 sq.m., serving 97 villages.
- d) Deep wells with pumping system into overhead tanks for 279 villages.

In the region between Medak and Mahabubnagar 70 villages have been supplied with deep wells and a further 250 with infiltration wells.

My life is my message -Sathya Sai Baba-

Baba has guided the Water Project to Completion inspiring all involved with a sense of unity despite the many differences between them –politicians, technicians, financiers, not to mention the population. Everyone was inspired by unity of intent to work in perfect harmony of thought word and deed.

In the region of Anantapur The project includes:

- ◆ 43 tanks with a capacity of 100.000 to 2.5 million litres
- ◆ 2000 km pipelines – diameters from 80 – 600mm
- ◆ 18 levelling tanks of between 300.000 and 1 million litres built on natural high ground.
- ◆ 125 ground tanks with a capacity of between 20.000 and 80.000 litres.
- ◆ 270 water towers with a capacity of between 40.000 and 300.000 litres
- ◆ Finally 1.500 concrete cisterns of 2500 litres equipped with taps supplied to 731 villages.

*The worship of God in temples and at altars sanctifies time and sublimates instincts and impulses.
Research into Reality helps dissipate the fog of doubt.
Activity in the form of service with Love takes us towards our goal on the path to God.
All hands are His, all feet, all, eyes, all faces, all tongues are HIS.*

*It is HE who works with all hands, walks with all feet, sees through all eyes
It is He who eats and speaks through every mouth.
All is God. -Sri Sathya Sai Baba*

In all phases of the Water Project the strategy was to use water from rivers, artificial reservoirs and pre-existing canals in any given area. In this way the water was collected, filtered and distributed to arid areas with the help of reserve storage tanks, sedimentation plants, delivery pumps and a far-reaching pipeline network. Bringing the project to completion required major intervention in the way of earthworks, removal of rocks and obstacles as well as the construction and laying of pipelines. This huge and complicated enterprise was completed in a very short time thanks to the many personal interventions of Sai Baba and his great encouragement to the thousands of technicians and workers involved.

In March 1994 Baba's instructions to the Central Trust were very clear: "Safe drinking water must be available throughout the year to as many villages as possible, never mind the difficulties or the costs involved in the undertaking; this project must be completed and operational as soon as possible.." His words became fact and now millions of people in thousands of villages have drinking water throughout the year, almost on their doorstep.

19th January 2002, on the first anniversary of the inauguration of the 'Super Speciality Hospital' at Whitefield, Sai Baba made an electrifying announcement:

"Today I have made a decision: the city of Madras (8 million inhabitants) is suffering because of a shortage of drinking water. The rich can buy water brought to them in tankers, but what about the poor people? They have to make do with rainwater that collects in ditches and puddles, risking their health. So I have decided to bring drinking water to Madras, however difficult or expensive it may be. This is my will and it will surely come about."

Not only Madras, but all villages along the pipeline channelling water from the river Krishna will benefit from this new project.

The city of Madras, (now known as Chennai), in the State of Tamil Nadu has always had a water shortage problem. This problem has worsened over the last decades with the growth in population – now up to 8.000.000 inhabitants. With the collaboration of the State of Andhra Pradesh, Sai Baba has already launched this great project involving over 4.000 people working day and night to divert water from the river Krishna to the city, a distance of around 100 kms. A pre-existing canal, dug some 10 years earlier, from Kandaleru to Poondi, was inefficient because it lacked a proper cement lining. Crumbling embankments led to earth sliding into and silting up the canal, causing a reduction in the quantity of water reaching Madras. The city needs roughly 710 million litres of water per day, whereas the present volume of water from local sources is only 250 million litres per day. The situation is even more critical in years when the rains are insufficient or fail altogether. At the moment the water basin at Kandaleru has been enlarged, with massive excavations to remove vast amounts of earth. This has increased the capacity of the canal, which is now lined for a length of 165 kms. The lining is made of a layer of polyethylene between two layers of concrete.; this allows the water to flow freely with no infiltration loss.

Statistics up until August 2003:

11.000.000 cubic metres of earth excavated.
100.000 cubic metres of rock removed
15.000 cubic metres stone wall installed
30.000 cubic metres stone embankments
185.000 sq. metres of concrete lining for the embankments.

There are many other philanthropic projects initiated by Sai Baba, of which we can mention but a few.

Distribution of Basic Necessities.

Under His precise direction the students and teachers of the Higher Institute of Education in Prashanthi Nilayam regularly visit the poor and needy in villages, taking clothes, food prepared in the kitchens of the Ashram and creature comforts, which they deliver door to door to every family according to need. These gifts

are brought to the remotest, tiniest nameless hamlets where there are no roads so that the inhabitants can feel the friendly presence of Someone who is thinking of them. Baba has named this project 'Love in Action', rather than voluntary work.

*Love yourselves because you are Incarnations of God
Love and serve others because they are Incarnations of God who speaks and acts through them.*
-Sathya Sai Baba-

ADOPTION OF VILLAGES.

For many years the adoption of villages has become a tradition connected with Sai Baba's birthday: a group of rural communities, sometimes very far from Puttaparthi, is selected to receive tangible help in the way of voluntary work. Usually this means building an elementary school, repairing and whitewashing the local temple, as well as private homes (often no more than huts), doing maintenance on wells, giving medical and veterinary assistance and generally cleaning up the village. These schemes are aimed at stimulating initiative in the local population and creating a community spirit. The Sai service group responsible for the initial aid maintains a follow-up relationship with the villages concerned.

For many years in the Ashram in Prashanti Nilayam hundreds of poor people have been able to count on food and decent shelter. Help and hospitality are offered to anyone regardless of whether they believe in Baba or not, and whether or not they are involved in Ashram activities.

NATURAL DISASTERS

In case of catastrophe, for example flooding, or the recent tragic earthquake in India in the state of Gujarat, Baba has organised a convoy of vehicles loaded with every kind of basic necessity, and personal goods, with attendants responsible for distribution.

Tools for earning a living.

Everyone needs a source of income, main or supplementary, and a means of earning one's living is often an indispensable requirement for regaining human dignity. Baba has donated many many sewing machines to women in poor families. He has also given a number of motor-rickshaws to young men in Puttaparthi, who then offer a 'taxi' service to the millions of visitors to the Ashram and gain a measure of financial independence. Many travelling stall holders have received new handcarts from Baba to facilitate their work.

Sheltered village accommodation for widows and orphans.

Among the poor, widows and orphans are a particularly vulnerable and needy category. A large number of these unfortunate people are literally picked up off the streets and relocated in decent accommodation: they receive a monthly income to cover their basic needs, and education for the children, totally free. When Baba started this project in 2001, He asked the government authorities to allocate land for the construction of an orphan village, but with no success. Without wasting time He himself undertook everything that was necessary to bring the village into existence, and with it to restore a smile to the face of the abandoned orphans.

Help the poor, the sick, the needy, without seeking reward or fame. Feed the hungry. Food is God, don't waste food. -Sathya Sai Baba-

Voluntary Work

Baba's teaching has inspired devotees all over the world to take up a huge volume of service projects for the needy. These include buildings, such as canteens, hospitals, schools and nursery schools, as well as aid, instruction, and the distribution of food and clothes to the poor and derelict.

The name of Baba does not necessarily appear connected with these projects, and nor do they receive any publicity: what is important is the spirit which fires them, the strength and commitment to the quality of service rendered. The Human Values of Truth, Right Conduct, Peace, Love and Non-violence do not need to be proclaimed, but practised.

Particularly worthy of mention is the organisation in India, active throughout the country in 5000 independent local centres. They offer instruction, give aid to calamity victims, replant deserted land, aid lepers, clean

and restore temples, organise blood donation, open roads, and set up medical and veterinary camps, and refreshment stops on pilgrim ways etc.

The medical camps offer free medical care with the service of dentists, opticians, oculists, physicians etc. This is the most extensive sanitary care at present in rural India: it includes diagnosis, minor surgical operations (thousands of cataract operations) and distribution of medicine. Thousands of patients converge on the camps from the surrounding area, some walking for many kilometres. These camps reach out to tribal communities in the remotest areas.

From 2nd to 9th June a medical camp was held in a Sai Centre in Russia. 14 doctors and nurses came from England, as well as Russian doctors, technicians, cooks etc. 3.000 patients received medical attention. Free medicine and spectacles were distributed as well as food and clothes for the poor. At the same time other volunteers were busy whitewashing the houses of old people and the walls of a nursery school.

Sometimes the volunteers work from 8 in the morning until 2 at night, many of them are not young, but all of them are very happy.

Several miracles manifested and the atmosphere was one of unity. The presence of Baba was felt and he helped resolve many tricky situations.

-from a Sai Organisation bulletin-

The stone age was barely over in Puttaparthi when little Sathya Narayana, later to reveal himself as Sai Baba, was born on 23rd November 1926.

When the first devotees, pilgrims, and curious visitors started turning up at the village at the beginning of the 1940s there were only the trees to offer shade and shelter. The first visitors had to bring with them everything they needed for their stay. The only water available came from the river Chitravathi.

Today, visitors to the Ashram of Prasanthi Nilayam are accommodated in rooms with running water and a bathroom, or else in large dormitories, all for a minimum cost. There are three canteens offering three types of cuisine and everything possible is available within the ashram: bank., post office, telephone, bookshop, shops, and supermarket. This is a relief for visitors and saves them from becoming victims of local speculation.

"Every day around ten bullock-carts arrive, full of men and women; Subbamma and I cooked for them until we fell into an exhausted sleep; nobody was sent away hungry."

From the memoirs of Mrs Karnam Kamamma in the early 1940s

Nobody comes to Puttaparthi unless I call him. -Sathya Sai Baba-

In the 1990s the number of both foreign and Indian visitors to the Prasanthi Nilayam Ashram grew to an extraordinary degree. To deal with this influx, in 1993 Sai Baba launched a building campaign which included the replacement of the old sheds with four-storey blocks. The open courtyard, originally sand, then cement, where the devotees assemble to meet Baba was no longer adequate for the huge crowds. Now, on any day of the year, at least 8.000 people gather together and on festival days there are many tens of thousands more. The courtyard was replaced with a marble floor and covered with an 8.900 sq. m roof resting on well-spaced columns. It can shelter up to 25.000 people from the baking sun and sudden summer showers.

Not far from Bangalore, the Whitefield ashram also needed altering to accommodate the 'commuters' who travel out from the city when Baba is in residence. The Sai Ramesh Krishan pavilion was built several years ago, and although comfortable and practical, many people think back fondly to the time when Baba used to sit under the fronds of the big old tree surrounded by hundreds of his devotees.

Sai Baba always sees how events are going to develop well ahead of time. When it was built many thought that the stadium was totally out of proportion for Prasanthi Nilayam student sports events, but time proved him right.

Today tens of thousands of devotees gather in the huge stadium for the major festivals, such as Swami's birthday.

11th January is dedicated to sports. Every year the students from Prasanthi Nilayam, Brindavan and Anantapur train for the honour of participating in this meeting, which was started as a way of teaching young people loyalty and unity. In the presence of Sai Baba the school children, from the youngest, to the most senior put on an acrobatic display of gymnastics for the public seated on the terraces. The group choreographies demonstrate a high level of difficulty and co-ordination. The magnificent multicoloured costumes provide a joyful background, bringing a touch of elegance to these special 'Olympic games'.

CONNECTION FACILITIES

The railway arrived as far as Penukonda, then one had to find a bullock-cart or take a steam bus to Bukkapatnam. There was a great rush for the front seats to avoid the ones at the back that were over the cylinders of the boiler, or the ones over the wheels with no suspension.

Testimony 1945

To get to Baba's ashram multitudes of Indian devotees usually travel by train and then bus; the ones who come from a greater distance travel for up to three days, and even now the journey is extremely tiring, especially in the hottest months. When Baba announced that he would extend the railway, his words were met with cries of joy from the crowd. A regular service was inaugurated in November 2002 with an express train coming directly from Secunderabad.

As well as the visitors to the ashram, the railway is also a great relief to the people travelling to the Super Speciality Hospital, as well as the commuters from Puttaparthi.

Start the Day with Love
Fill the day with Love
Spend the day with Love
End the day with Love
This is the way to God
-Sathya Sai Baba-

In 1991, at the same time as the Super Speciality Hospital was inaugurated, a small airport was opened in Puttaparthi, served by regular flights on the Indian national airways from Bombay – Puttaparthi – Madras.

"We got to Bukkapatnam (the neighbouring village to Puttaparthi) at midday. It was a hamlet with about ten houses; the people were rough and it was revoltingly dirty. They told us that there were a further 8 kms to travel on a bullock cart. We spread our straw mats on the cart; the road was very bumpy . . . we were annoyed with Swami because he had chosen to live in such a horrible place.

-Testimony 1945-

This obelisk at Prasanthi Nilayam is a symbol of unity of all religions, from which Man rises to permit the lotus flower of Divine Consciousness to bloom.

Swami's style is in the way he manages projects.

The astonishment for the size, splendour and utility of the social works promoted by Sai Baba is equalled only by the amazement at the speed with which these projects are carried out. The first to be surprised are the managers of the building contractors involved. Usually the new project is revealed on the occasion of His birthday and the inauguration usually takes place on the following birthday, if not sooner!

The Super Speciality Hospital at Puttaparthi was inaugurated 8 months after the laying of the foundation stone, not with the cutting of a ribbon, but with three cardiac operations.

What is the reason for this super efficiency? It is the irresistible energy that Sai Baba instils in all his workers, technicians, suppliers, drivers, not to mention his inimitable management style.

He makes suggestions and checks the aesthetic quality of the architecture, inspiring the blending of traditional form and harmony with simplicity and function: human rationalism.

For the technical side Baba requires economy and modern technology, and is often ahead of the engineers, spying unforeseen problems.

To keep costs under control, all the Central Trust fund administrators, together with the contractors, undertake to find ways to economise on materials and service; often the suppliers and Public Administrators grant special prices. Suppliers and foremen are chosen on the basis of trust in a solid reputation rather than a comparison of tenders, thus saving time and avoiding surprises; but above all the purity of intent and the nature of the projects is what inspires all the people involved, a special interest that brings out the best in them.

The Shri Sathya Sai Central Trust manages the funds from free donations that flow in from all over the world.

For some specific projects Baba has authorised the acceptance of notable sums of money, without mentioning the names of the donors.

There is only one caste: the caste of Humanity

There is only one language: the language of the heart

There is only one religion: the religion of Love

There is only one God: He is omnipresent.

-Sathya SaiBaba-

Sai Baba was born 23rd November 1926 at Puttaparthi, a little village in Southern India. With the example of his life and teachings he has shown mankind the way to awareness of Self, and rigorous respect for all religions and universal spiritual values. His teachings have great simplicity, ranging from advice on how to behave in everyday life to the deepest philosophical discipline.

He is known all over the world for his great miracles of healing and his materialisations, but his greatest miracle is the transformation of the human soul. He has launched a huge number of social projects in various fields, for which he has never asked anyone for money; however he awakens the awareness of people with wealth to share their resources with people in need.

Hands that help are holier than lips that pray. -Sathya Sai Baba-