

[Sai Baba Opens New Hyderabad Culture Center](#)

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Though holy ash still inexplicably appears from his palm - while devotees cry and cynics sigh - the colossal reputation of this salmon-robed figure neither rests on his magic, nor is diminished by his 4' 11" height. Seventy-year-old Satya Sai Baba is one of India's true leaders and few nation builders. He is an indefatigable architect of human services - manifesting schools and children's cultural learning centers in dizzying numbers year after year.

At Srinigar Colony in Hyderabad, on August 29th, Sai Baba inaugurated the Satya Sai Kalyana Mandapam, a cultural hall, constructed by him at a cost of a half million dollars. He delivered speeches sending ripples of devotion across the city for three days. The Kalyana Mandapam was ceremoniously opened by Indian Prime Minister Sri P.V. Narasimha Rao. It is over fifty years since Satya Sai Baba began his mission of spreading religious discipline among Indian citizens. Construction of unique and huge edifices - schools, colleges and universities - is part of Satya Sai Baba's philanthropic activities. The Satya Sai Baba's philanthropic activities. The Satya Sai Institute of Higher Learning at Prasanthinilayam and the Satya Sai Colleges at White Field, Bangalore, are a few glowing examples of Satya Sai's admiration for education.

The Kalyana Mandapam was designed by computers to fulfill Baba's desire to fit it in with both old, traditional as well as modern comforts. This drive to modernize everything he touches is a mark of Baba's manner. Satya Sai Baba of Puttaparthi is known throughout for his interest in having unique constructions as religious symbols. Padmakshetra (shaped in lotus form) at Bombay, Sundaram at Madras and Shivam (shaped in the form of lingam) at Hyderabad are a few historic constructions of Sai Baba.

The centrally air-conditioned Kalyana Mandapam has a capacity to harbor 1500 spectators at a time without any discomfort. Besides twelve galleries, the concrete roof has 16 symmetrical curved shells resting on a concrete compression ring in the centre. The semi-circular wooden stage, measuring 54 by 32 feet, has a motif of Parvati kalyanam. The acoustic system of the mandapam has all imported components from the USA. The annex blocks containing rooms for the marriage parties can accommodate 100 people from each side. The marble-floored dining hall measures 11,000 sq. ft. with a kitchen, having all modern gadgets for hygienic preparation of food. The most attractive among all things is a dining hall with a beautiful landscape carved out of a huge rock.

Satya Sai Baba is venerated by millions of people in India as well as abroad as an incarnation of God. The septuagenarian Baba looks and sounds quite young, a living manifestation of yogic powers. He is an orator without a match in modern times, and his mellifluous voice keeps thousands in an audience in rapt silence.

Satya Sai Baba's speeches mainly dwell on universal brotherhood through the path of austerity and simple living and are often interspersed with a few impromptu songs which he sings with an adept musical skill, keeping the audience upbeat.

Dwindling Inner Values

Satya Sai Baba regretfully noted in talks during the occasion of the inauguration that despite mankind's immense progress on the material plane, the deteriorating moral values have rendered human life miserable. He said that there was no need for a person to blame someone else for one's own follies. No action of any individual would go without bearing seeds. Each seed would give rise to some sapling. Man alone is thoughtful among all creatures. Hence, human life is supreme in the world. But unfortunately greed and lust have reached unsurmountable heights today, and everyone is suffering, Baba explained.

Sai Baba drew the difference between the freedom which animals enjoy and the freedom which man should aspire to. He also explained it is not how much one knows that is important but what one practices that brings about peace of mind. He counseled people to rid themselves of ignorance by following the spiritual path of their choice and thus contribute to a new world order. Unless sacrifice is learned as

the sole agent of peace of mind, eternal happiness goes on eluding mankind, Sai Baba thundered. During his three days of discourses, he sang Hindi and Telegu songs, and induced the audience to follow in chorus.

Satya Sai Baba's visit to Hyderabad proved very purposeful at a critical time when the state has been passing through moral and political turmoil. IN his inaugural address, Prime Minister Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao made an impassioned appeal to Satya Sai Baba to bestow upon him as well as nation his grace to overcome the present socio-economic crisis as the country is now on the verge of disintegration. Sai Baba responded to the appeal of the Prime Minister at the conclusion of his address assuring him of his continued spiritual work, social services, educational support and, though invisible and unspoken, his potent blessings for greater national political stability.

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