



# GURU SEVA, INC.

## Shri. Jay Misra

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### Meeting Amma

It was close to one a.m., and my token number still wasn't even close. I had heard that Indian events always start late. So, I showed up 15 minutes after Amma. The hall was packed, and all the chairs were taken. Somehow, a spot on the floor close to Amma opened up, and I sat there for hours, staring at Her in awe, feeling peace. There was no pain in my knees. Once in a while, I got hungry and went to eat. I remember thinking, "Even the *samosas* taste better here! What is this place? Is She really going to hug everyone? I wouldn't!"

Finally, it was my turn to have Amma's *darshan*. It seemed to last a couple of seconds. But after that I didn't leave. I mentally said to Amma, "Come on Amma. I really need a full minute." She somehow heard this and roared in laughter and gave me what seemed like another two-second *darshan*. Later, I was to find out that She had actually given me a very long embrace, both times.

Before I met Amma, I had a life that many would call the American Dream. I found it pretty empty. So, I left all the comforts, began unlearning and started volunteering in charities. A huge organization got built around that. Even then, something was lacking. It was as if the foundation wasn't laid and a house was being built.

I also had stopped leaving home in the evening and, instead, kept on staring at a giant picture of Ramana Maharshi and his beautiful eyes. I wanted

to meet a saint as pure as him, who walked his talk. My dear Amma was That and more, in a cuddly teddy-bear form.

Shortly after meeting Amma, I was selling/donating my belongings and moving into Her San Ramon, California ashram, beginning a life of trying to do Guru *seva* [selfless service]. And I was starting to think about Amma a lot and staring at Her pictures.

### Honeymoon

In the beginning, Guru *seva* didn't really require me to change. I was helping with organisation in the U.S, and everything seemed to work out well. When Amma came to San Ramon a few months later, I got to spend plenty of time sitting next to Her chair, where She held my hands with so much tenderness. She also patted my head a lot. I remember thinking, "If this is spiritual growth, I like it!" I was also thinking more and more about Amma and told myself that I would not let go of Her—no matter what.

### Directions—Guru's Grace

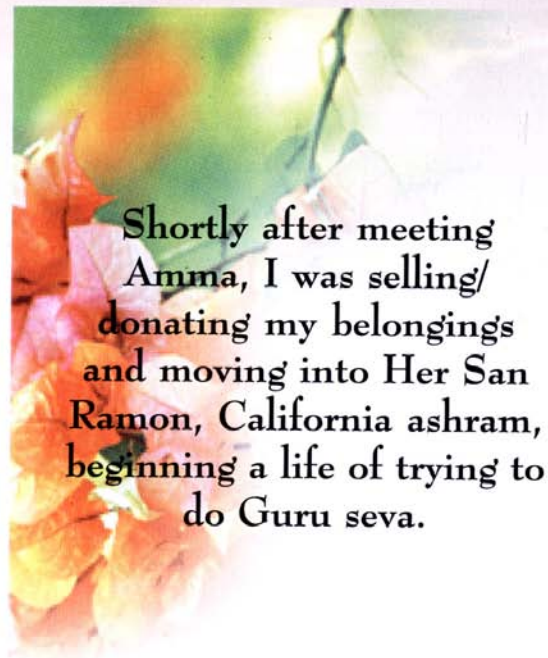
Soon afterward, Amma gave me my first personal direction: go do *panchakarma* at Amritapuri. Having been cured of high blood pressure from *ayurvedic* healing previously, I thanked Amma for this chance.

It was an emotionally painful process, as many of my submerged fears came out. However, Amma was always there, telling me to sit close by Her side. When I finished the 10-week treatment, Amma rubbed my back and I felt the insides of my body being rearranged. Ever since, the constant chatter in my head has dramatically lessened, allowing me to sit peacefully by Amma's side for much longer periods of time. Thank you, Amma.

Soon after, Amma began directing me in a different way—a combination of rebukes, parables and seemingly contradictory statements, mixed with many tender and loving words. It seemed my *seva* didn't make Her happy, and I had to redo many

things. Amma also would advise others to not follow my suggestions. She also "mistakenly" held me responsible for an error I actually hadn't made. I gritted my teeth, wanting to tell Her it wasn't my fault. Fortunately, some swamis helped me understand that accepting whatever Amma says is wise.

Still, knowing that I was disappointing Amma made me confused and very sad. At the same time, I could see Her watchful, compassionate glance from the corner of my eye. These days, my heart holds a mix of pain, sorrow and the bliss of knowing the depth of Amma's compassion for me. But I know the pain is good for me. As Swamiji tells me, "Make this life your last." I hope that Amma continues helping me towards this goal, even if I cry "Uncle."



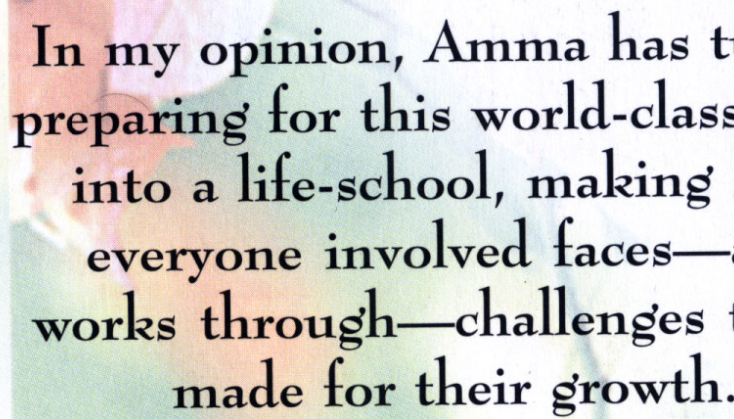
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### Celebration of Life

As I write this, I am helping in the planning of *Amritavarsham50*. From my own experience, I know events of this magnitude take at least a year of meticulous work and 10 times as many "qualified" people as we have right now.

When I first came onboard, my initial thoughts on how to make this event world-class were to get the “right” people and then give them the freedom to act on their own. That, I have learned, is not Amma’s way. In my opinion, She has turned preparing for this world-class event into a life-school, making sure everyone involved faces—and works through—challenges tailor-made for their growth. Putting forth our efforts to do the best job possible is critical. Due to Amma’s grace, the stadium, surroundings, logistics and everything else is coming together rapidly—and at the right time.

The Amma I see is turning 50 years old, having done more for humanity than anyone ever has. She is now bringing all the “little Ammas” inside each



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of us together for this celebration of Her and of each other. On Amma’s 108<sup>th</sup> birthday, I hope to look back at this event while relishing the reestablishment of *dharma* in this world.

Amma, my humble prostrations at Your feet.