

# A Journey Through Guru Aagnas

~ Saheli Sheth (Peoria, USA)

I postponed writing this article for a while. Sadguru Sant PP Manojdasji had suggested writing on the topic of “the impact of *guru aagna* in my life,” but there are not enough words in any dictionary in this universe to fully grasp the glory of *guru aagna*.

Reflecting upon my journey with *aagnas*, I realize that through them, my gurus have been showering me with a hidden blessing: healthy habits.

The first *aagna* from Sadguru Sant PP Shantidada: no fried food for a year. This taught me the importance of treating my body, the vessel for my soul, as a temple. Four other *satsangis* from Peoria Mandal voluntarily took the same *aagna* themselves when my sister and I did, teaching me the power of community.

My second *aagna*: a maximum of 1 hour of TV per day for a year. Over time, this integrated positive values into our family as we spent less time watching TV and more time connecting.

Next: Shantidada guided me to stay in touch with certain *satsangis*, teaching me that friendship is a stepping stone to my well-being.

Then: Write 15 minutes of *Bhagwan ni vaato* per day. Thus, I cultivated my habit of journaling and writing daily letters to God. Because Shantidada specified writing “*Bhagwan ni vaato*,” and Bhagwan lovingly guides us to train our minds to see the positive, these became letters of gratitude to God.

After that *aagna*, Sant Bhagwant Sahebji encouraged me to take dance classes. Dance became a healthy habit that I relied upon as a firm foundation to deal with stress.

At this point, my support system was strong. I had a powerful toolkit of coping skills to deal with the stress of life: community, family connection, friendship, positive thinking, journaling, and dance.

And then Shantidada threw a curveball. He guided me to accept a full-time position as a trauma therapist for kids and teenagers. Of course, he had been preparing me for this divine assignment for years - all of his *aagnas* had

given me a firm foundation of ways to take care of myself. Tears stream down my face now as I imagine how he handwrote my life with so much care, how he poured so much thoughtfulness and intention into the life of every devotee.

Though Shantidada and Sahebji had given me all these ways to relieve stress, it still felt like the stress of the job outweighed the resources that I had. But while we may encounter struggles, our gurus never, ever, ever abandon us. Manojdasji supported me with additional *aagnas*: He guided me to write monthly Brahmanirzar articles and suggested that I ask God to work through me daily. Through this, he taught me to continue writing and daily conversation with God as stress relief skills.

Now, as Manojdasji has led me to my next therapist role, I feel prepared because of a general *aagna* that we all are given: 30 minutes of *dhun*. I find that the best way to hold myself accountable for doing *dhun* is pairing it with walking outside for 30 minutes. This week, I reflect upon my state of bliss as I walked outside in the brisk mornings or sunset evenings, chanting God's name and thanking Him for His mesmerizing creation: the golden sun caressing my face, the geese freely gliding through the air, the nearby pond's water dancing and swaying with ripples, the sweet smell of flowers as I walk past homes, the dew shimmering on the grass after a night of rain, and the fresh scent of spring and new beginnings. In this simple *aagna* of doing *dhun*, an entirely new skill was unlocked for me: walking and connecting to nature.

This is the power of *aagnas*. It's not that our guru is trying to make life difficult for us. It is exactly the opposite. **I think our guru recognizes that life can be inherently difficult and painful, so these *aagnas* unlock the door to living life with peace and sanity.** When I look back on my spiritual journey, I see these *aagnas* were the life vests thrown my way to keep me afloat.

If we are brought face-to-face with a challenge, our guru's *aagna* can give us a helping hand through it. ***Aagnas* are proof of our guru's love for us.** ♦