

From Fear To Faith

~ Saheli Sheth (Peoria, USA)

“Wow! You look really nervous.” My driving teacher glanced at my sweaty palms as my hands touched the steering wheel. I was 15, and while most other kids of my age were overjoyed to start driving, I had been dreading this day. I didn't trust myself to drive.

Fast forward seven years, and I was still just as fearful of driving. At this time, I had two job offers. As I had done at any crossroads in life, I presented my two options to my guru, Sadguru Sant Param Pujya Shantidada. To me, the choice seemed simple: one of the offers was just a two-minute drive away — a safe, paid office job; the other was unpaid, and it was a longer, daunting drive to work in high-crime neighborhoods.

When I asked Shantidada for his guidance, he lovingly laughed and said, paraphrased in English, “If you took the position that's two minutes away, then by the time you reach, God would be saying from the seat next to you, ‘*That's it? We've already reached?*’ **Take the other offer so you can show God the city as He rides with you.**” I was in complete disbelief. *Why would Shantidada lead me to choose the more difficult, painful position?* But he has never led me the wrong way, so, though hesitantly, I obeyed.

During the first week of work, I pulled out Google to type in a client's home address, as the job required home visits. The very first search result popped up with the word “shooting” — the neighborhood was high in gun violence. *Seriously?!* As my car accelerated toward the house, my heartbeat raced in sync.

After leaving that first visit, I quickly scanned my surroundings, aware I was in an unsafe area. I rushed

back into my car, locking the doors and gripping the steering wheel tightly. Once I was inside, I thought, *Haash...I'm safe*. Relief swept over me. I drove away peacefully, knowing I was secure in my car.

And that's when I realized a significant shift had occurred. A car — once a symbol of **fear** and **panic** — had transformed into a symbol of **safety** and **comfort**, a refuge where I could breathe. From that day forward, I was no longer scared of driving.

Behind Shantidada's plans lies a deeper purpose. He teaches us not to be scared, for he is with us. I think back to when Shantidada guided me, “Show God the city as **He rides with you.**” Through that message, he was reassuring me that *God was right next to me*. What a meaningful message in so many ways! I didn't need to be afraid while driving; *God was right next to me*. I didn't need to be afraid in high-risk neighborhoods; *God was beside me*. None of us needs to be afraid — anytime, anywhere — **God is with us.**

Why would Shantidada lead me to choose the harder position? Why would Shantidada lead any of us to what we don't want? The power of guru *aagna* is that he may not always give us what we want, but what we need. What he gave me was far more profound than a mundane directive. Shantidada gave me reassurance, protection, and above all, awareness that God is always with us. We may not know the reason behind the *aagna*, but trusting our guru by following the *aagna* will eventually be best for us.

I didn't need to trust myself after all; **trusting my guru was more than enough.** ♦