

# From Ordinary to Divine: A Family's Journey with Shantidada

~ Saheli Sheth (Peoria, USA)

**Sant** Bhagwant Sahebji lovingly shared with me, “Write your next article on this: **how life is transformed after connecting with a God-realized Sant**, and how the best example of that is your Pappa-Pujya Bimal Sheth.”

Tears welled in my eyes as I imagined how different life would be if Sadguru Sant Param Pujya Shantidada hadn't entered. Shantidada taught my dad how to **use faith to manage his emotions**.

After a strong connection with Shantidada, my dad has become the calm anchor I turn to when I need stability in my life. Satsang taught him, “*If you feel **angry**, don't reply immediately. Say 'Swaminarayan' 11 times in your mind, and automatically, the anger will lessen by the time you're done.*”

During our college years, my dad would frequently check our locations to ensure we were safe and sound in our campus apartments at night, two hours away from him. Now, to manage his **worry**, he prays and leaves it in God's hands, knowing that logically, even if something happened, he wouldn't be able to drive two hours to get there right away. Instead, he keeps faith and trusts that God will send someone. This is the power of Shantidada's blessing, “*Stay nischint. Your daughters are my responsibility now.*”

I recalled my dad's **stress** as a financial advisor during the 2008 US recession. Equanimity personified, Shantidada taught my dad how to be stable in any situation. Now, when the stock market goes up, my dad exclaims a humble “*Maharaj ni ichchha!*” [It is God's wish!] And when the stock

market drops, he bows to the God above - “*Maharaj ni ichchha.*” **Whether positive or negative, God is the all-doer.** This ultimate truth has revolutionized his relationship with his career and his entire well-being.

Shantidada's teachings also shifted family relationships. My dad listens to us daughters as if God is speaking through us. Rather than just seeing us as children, he sees the God within us and openly accepts our suggestions, as if they came from God Himself.

Shantidada teaches us humility and respect. If my dad sees any leftovers on my mom's plate, he will pick them up and take them so she can enjoy the fresh food. He waits for my mom to join him at the table, calling her twice for her to join, and doesn't start a bite until she's there next to him. Why? Because Shantidada teaches us to eat together with harmony as a family.

The gift my dad gave me through his connection with Shantidada wasn't just **faith**. He gave me one of the most important things a parent can give a child: emotional **stability**. I believe in the power of God and guru, not because of any changes I see in myself, but because of the changes I see in my dad. Before, I was raised by normal human parents. Now, with my parents calling on the strength and love of God daily, **I feel like I am raised by God Himself**. The most precious gift we can give our loved ones is our own connection with a God-realized Sant. Keep the company of a God-realized Sant, and watch this mundane life transform into a colorful, divine life. ◆