



# Pearls of Wisdom

## Mantra Pearls

### Invocation Student-Teacher Prayer

**om saha nāvavatu  
saha naubhunaktu  
saha vīryam karavāvahai  
tejasvināvadhītamastu  
mā vidviṣāvahai  
om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ**

May both the teacher and the student be protected.  
May both the teacher and the student be nourished.  
May both of us together make an effort.  
Let it be meaningful for both of us.  
May there be no dislike or misunderstanding between us. May we have peace.

sa ha nāvavatu  
May the Lord indeed protect both of us.

sa ha nau bhunaktu  
May that Lord indeed nourish both of us.

saha vīryam karavāvahai  
May both of us together make an effort.

tejasvināvadhītamastu (tejasvi nau adhītam astu) Let it be meaningful for both of us.

mā vidviṣāvahai  
May there be no dislike or misunderstanding between us.

Om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ May we have peace.



Translation by Swami Dayandan, Arsha Vidya Gurukulam

sa ha nāvavatu

*Sah* means *Ishvara*, the meaning of the word *tat* in the statement, "You are that," *tat tvam asi*. The meaning of the word *tat* is the Lord. May that Lord definitely, indeed (*ha*) protect, bless (*avatu*) both of us (*nau*). The word *om* is also from the same root as *avatu*, the root *av*. *Av* is used in the sense of protecting, the one who protects being a source of blessing. Thus, the Lord's name is *Om*. You can also say he is the one who sustains everything. May that Lord bless both of us, teacher and student.

sa ha nau bhunaktu

May that Lord (*sah*) definitely, indeed (*ha*), nourish (*bhunaktu*) both of us (*nau*). That is also in the sense of protection. There is no meaning of eating here, for in that case, the verb would have to have different endings (*atmane-pada*). The sense here is only of nourishing. May he nourish both of us with knowledge. May the Lord indeed, or may the Lord certainly, omitting all my omissions and commissions, being blind to them, bless us and nourish us both. Both student and teacher seek *Bhagavan's* blessing.

saha vīryam karavāvai

May both of us together exert, make effort. What kind of effort? With (*saha*) *vīryam*. *Vīryam* here is the capacity required to gain knowledge. Whatever is required to gain this knowledge, may we make an effort for that. In gaining this knowledge a certain capacity, certain conditions are required. May we both cultivate those conditions. There are two types of conditions that have to be fulfilled here. As the teaching takes place the student is supposed to see the meaning. That is a capacity, and it consists of a lot of things. In giving the knowledge also, a certain capacity is necessary. Your memory should help you, and you should also be able to see the condition of the listener, and decide what exactly will drive home the idea. There are a lot of things in the *ŪĒstra*. If we tell all of them in the beginning it will be confusing. Also, you cannot make a statement which will have to be withdrawn. You have say the same thing in a form that is understood by the student at the stage that he is at. At one stage one thing is relevant, at another stage, a little more. It all depends on what you have already taught—and what the student has understood. This giving of knowledge *vidya daanam* is not easy. Especially if the *vidya* has a certain intrinsic difficulty. You have to use words where words have no access, and cannot have access. But only through words you have to communicate. Therefore, you have to make sure you negate what is to be negated and take the student to a corner from where that student cannot but see. This is what they call the analogy of [seeing] the moon [through] a branch (*Shaaka-candra-nyaaya*).

*Nyaaya* is a conclusion, a particular fact revealed through an analogy, like an adage or proverb. This *Shaaka-candra-nyaaya* is a very interesting *nyaaya*. A person wants to communicate his experience of the crescent moon, the third day moon, let us say. They say it is auspicious to see the third day moon and this person wants to share his experience of seeing it with his friend who is by his side. He says, "Look at the moon." His friend looks at the sky and is not able to see the moon. Here is a problem of communication. He can tell his friend to look up and scan the sky, but the sky is too vast to scan. So he follows a very simple method. He sees a tree and asks his friend to look at the tree, and find the branch projecting towards the left side of the trunk. The friend says, "Yes. I see it."

"Do you see the branch forking into two?"

"Yes."

"Now look through the gap."

The friend looks through the gap. "Oh!" There is an expression of enlightenment in this "Oh." He saw the moon. In the sight of moon, the branch, the trunk, the tree are not included. In this, what did his friend who wanted to show him the moon do? He made sure that by directing his sight through the forking branches, there was no way he could miss seeing the moon.



This is what teaching is. You drive a person to a corner from where he cannot but see. Whether it is elementary arithmetic, or higher mathematics, if you have to really communicate, you drive the person to a corner from where the person cannot but see. That is teaching. That is the method. We have certain evolved methods for communicating this teaching, and if we change the methods we will commit mistakes. This is very peculiar knowledge, because the subject matter, or 'object' of knowledge is not an object. Yet you have to employ words. And you also have to make sure the person understands you. To do that, you have to negate all possible mistakes. It is something like the *reductio ad absurdum* used in mathematics. You extend the logic of a given argument to create an absurd situation, point out the absurdity, and that particular fallacious conclusion falls apart. All these are *vīrya* for a teacher. His memory (*smṛti*) must be functioning properly too. At the right time the right statement must come. It is not easy. Only *Bhagavaan* can give this recollection. That is the prayer on the part of the teacher. May both of us have the blessing of *Parameshvara*, the Lord, so that you have the capacity to receive and I have the capacity to give. This is chanted before a class begins.

tejasvināvadhītamastu

Whatever Shaastra is studied (*adhītam*) by both of us—communicated by one and gained by the other—let it not be just mere words; let it be (*astu*) meaningful (*tejasvi*) for us (*nau*). *Tejas* means brilliant. Let the understanding not be vague, but brilliant like the sun not covered by the clouds. You cannot miss the sun even when the clouds are there. It is not like inference where through the silver lining you infer the existence of the sun. Here it is not a matter of inference. It is me. It has to be understood very clearly. Therefore, let what is studied be brilliantly clear, free from any vagueness, much less error.

mā vidviṣāvahai

A *dvesha* is any kind of dislike or misunderstanding. May we not be subject to this misunderstanding. Let nothing come in between us, so that this communication is complete.

Om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ

Three times we chant śāntiḥ. There are not three types of śāntiḥ. There is only one śāntiḥ, but there are three different types of problems that can deny śāntiḥ. From those problems let there be freedom, śāntiḥ. Let these problems not come – from the forces over which we have no control (*ādhidāivam*), from the beings around us (*ādhibhautikam*), or centered on ourselves (*adhyātmam*).

1. *Ādhidaivam* is any set of problems which comes from sources over which we have no control whatsoever (*ādhidāivam*), like a cyclone. We can only protect ourselves from it. Let there not be obstacles from sources over which I have no control. That is one śāntiḥ.

2. The second source of śāntiḥ is from the people around us (*ādhibhautikam*). Any kind of disturbance from the external world—political, social, domestic— are all obstructions to our pursuit. We pray for śāntiḥ from these obstacles that we don't want to have.

3. The third śāntiḥ is to take care of problems centered on oneself (*adhyātmam*). There can be physical problems, like an inability to sit comfortably for some time, physiological problems like indigestion and so on. Then the mind can be a problem, for the mind has its



own agenda. I pray that all three, physical, physiological, mental, be available for me in a conducive manner so that I can pursue this knowledge (vidyā).

From these three possible obstructions we are praying for freedom by chanting śāntiḥ three times.