

# Pearls of Wisdom

## Mantra Pearls



### Lakṣmī Mantra

### A Verse From the Devīsūktam (Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa)

yā devī sarvabhūteṣu lakṣmīrūpeṇasamsthitā  
namastasyai namastasyai  
namastasyai namo namaḥ

**om hrīm śrīm paramalakṣmyai namaḥ**

## Goals - 4 Purusharthas

“Human goals” is translated into Sanskrit as Purushartha.

“Purushartha” is a combination of two words; “Purusha” and “Artha”. The word “Purusha” in this context means a human being. The word “Artha” has several different meanings in Sanskrit. One meaning is “Wealth”, another is “Security”; however, in this context it refers to a “Goal”.



So Purushartha means human goals.

### The 4 human goals are:

1. Artha (Security)
2. Kama (Pleasure)
3. Dharma (Ethics)
4. Moksha (Liberation)



These 4 goals can be divided into two sets. The first set, Artha (Security) and Kama (Pleasure) is pursued by all living beings. The second set, Dharma (Ethics) and Moksha (Liberation) is peculiar to humans.

The specific purpose in saying Purusha (Human) is to convey the meaning that these 4 goals collectively are sought after only by humans, not by other living beings. Because of the availability of Purushartha, humans become different than animals and plants.



## 1. Artha – The Endless Search For Security

Artha stands for all forms of security in life:

*wealth, power, influence, and fame.*

Even animals and plants seek some form of security. Animals seek shelter, hoard food, a dog buries its bone, a bee fills a honeycomb with honey. So even animals have a sense of insecurity.

However animal behaviour is governed by a built-in program, instincts. Their sense of insecurity is contained, limited, it has an end point. They don't endlessly brood over security.

For humans, on the other hand, there is no end point. There is no end to the sense of want. The endlessness of human struggle to fulfill their wants can be seen by analyzing experiences.

If I seek money, no matter how much I accumulate, it never seems enough. The sense of inadequacy never leaves me; I never feel secure. I constantly struggle to create more wealth for myself.

If I seek security through power and influence, I spend money to gain power, the same money I so struggled to acquire. I now spend money not because I have lost value for it, but because I now attach a higher value towards power. I am now seeking security through power.

This struggle to feel secure by pursuing wealth, power, influence and fame is endless.



## 2. Kama – The Mercurial Nature Of Pleasure

Kama stands for all forms of sensual pleasure.

Food, travel, sex, music - when pursued solely for pleasure fall under Kama.

It's the next stage after Artha (Security). When a person feels reasonably secure, and if he or she has the means, they pursue pleasure (Kama) based on their likes and dislikes.

Animals also seek pleasures and comforts. However their pursuit is guided by instincts and pre-programmed behaviour. Their enjoyment is not complicated by self-judgement.

A dog or a cat eats until it is full, not concerned by health or aesthetics. Enjoyment begins, ends, and is contained in the moment. There is no prior planning, and no reminiscing afterwards.

### ***Human Pursuit Is More Complex***

Our desires are not only driven by instinct, but also by our own value systems. Our instinctual desires, given by nature, are complicated by our own innumerable and changeable personal desires.

Every person lives in his or her own subjective world, where some objects are desired, some undesired, and others considered neutral.

When I examine my likes and dislikes closely, I find that my attitude towards objects is not consistent. What I desire today, is not desired by me at all times, or at all places.



I also find that objects desired by me are not considered desirable by everyone else. They hold a special value only to me. My desires keep changing. My desires are also time and place dependent.

### ***The Garage Sale Example***

A “garage sale” is a good example of our changing desires.

In a garage sale, I sell off to others what I once considered valuable. These objects hold no value to me today, but are valuable to others. Similarly what others consider worthless, I find valuable.

Sometimes things which one has sold off as junk is now again considered valuable because circumstances or attitudes have changed.

### ***Shifting Values Keep Us Struggling***

Our values shift not only with regards to objects, but also towards people, places, situations, ideologies and ideas.

Everything in our life is subject to becoming desirable, undesirable or neutral. Old cars, old houses, old furniture, even wives and husbands, go from one status to another.

This interchange goes on all the time. Subjective values, our likes and dislikes, do not remain the same.



Likes and dislikes dictate the pleasures we seek, and what we want to avoid. Part of seeking pleasure is avoiding what causes displeasure.

Both humans and animals struggle to obtain the pleasant, and avoid the unpleasant. The difference is that the human struggle is not determined by any set pattern, but dictated by fluctuating values. These constantly changing values keep us ever-struggling.

### 3. Dharma – Ethics

*The Sanskrit term Dharma has multiple meanings depending upon the context. The explanation given for Dharma here is to be understood only in the context of the 4 human goals, and is not a complete definition.*

The human goal of Dharma can be thought of as an invisible form of wealth. It manifests in our life in the form of good fortune or good luck, and contributes to our well being. The benefits can be in the form of either Artha (Security) or Kama (Pleasure).

The religious ethics called Dharma are found in the Vedas. The Vedas specify various “do’s and dont’s”, the results of which are in the form of Punya (merit) and Papa (demerit).

According to the rules of Dharma, human action has an immediate tangible result and an unseen result. The unseen result accrues in subtle form to the account of the “doer” of the action. And in time, this result will manifest as either a “good” or “bad” experience in the life of the “doer”, something pleasurable or painful.



## ***Punya And Papa***

If the action had been good, in keeping with the norms of Dharma, the subtle result is Punya (merit), which manifests as a “good” or pleasurable experience in future, either in this life or a future life.

If the action had been bad, breaking the norms of Dharma, the subtle result is Papa (demerit), which manifests as a “bad” or painful experience in this life or a future one.

We pay for our Papa in the form of undesirable experiences. There’s no better encouragement to follow Dharma than to avoid the consequences of Papa.

There’s no good English word for Punya. It just means that the unseen result of “good” actions will bring a desirable experience for you in the future.

## ***Ranking Of The 4 Human Goals***

Since Dharma or good fortune or Punya is achievable by appropriate actions, it also becomes a human goal.

Dharma occupies the first place in the four categories of human goals, because the pursuit of security (Artha), and the pursuit of pleasure (Kama), needs to be governed by ethical standards (Dharma).

Artha, striving for security, comes second because the foremost concern of any living being is security. Once a person is reasonably secure, he starts seeking comfort and pleasure, so Kama (pleasure) comes third .

Moksha, the goal of liberation, comes last because one pursues Moksha only when the limitations inherent in the first three pursuits are realized.



## 4. Moksha – Liberation Or Freedom

Moksha, like Dharma, is a pursuit peculiar only to humans. Even among humans, Moksha is a pursuit followed by only a few. These few recognize that what they want is not more security or pleasure or Punya, but freedom from all “binding” desires, freedom from the sense of insecurity.

Moksha is inner freedom, freedom from slavery or attachment to Dharma, Artha, and Kama.

The pursuits of Dharma, Artha, and Kama, are based on the sense that

“I am insecure, I am unhappy, I am mortal, I must become somebody.”

As a limited person, I must fulfill my urge to become bigger and better than I now take myself to be.

How can this urge be fulfilled? By more Dharma, Artha, and Kama.

I must realize that simply adding more Dharma, Artha, and Kama will not alter my basic sense of limitation.

### ***How Does One Become A Slave To Dharma-Artha-Kama***

Any object or person can enslave us in two ways:

1) An object can agitate our mind by its very absence. When we want an object, but do not have it, its absence creates a sense of limitation, emptiness and incompleteness within us. We become obsessed with the object’s absence.

2) An object or person can enslave us by its presence also. Such objects or persons usually by their presence create stress and tension within us.

Some objects like money create problems by both their presence and absence.



## ***Moksha – The Ultimate Human Goal***

This attachment and aversion to external objects is bondage. Freedom from this sense of bondage is self-mastery. I am no longer a slave, but a master.

When things are absent, I do not feel limited. And when things are present, they do not create a strain on me. Moksha means being okay, with or without, Dharma-Artha-Kama. This inner strength, inner maturity, inner mastery is called Moksha.

The first three (Dharma-Artha-Kama) are secondary goals, while the last one (Moksha) is the primary goal of human life. In the former slavery continues, while in Moksha alone one is no longer a slave of anything.

## **Summary**

- 1.** The four human goals are Artha (Security), Kama (Pleasure), Dharma (Ethics) and Moksha (Liberation).
- 2.** Artha stands for all forms of security in life like wealth, power, influence and fame. Humans try to feel secure by pursuing wealth, power and influence.
- 3.** Kama stands for all forms of sensual pleasure like food, travel, sex and music.
- 4.** A person's desires keep changing. What I desire now, may not be desired tomorrow, or may be desired only in specific situations. These constantly changing desires keep us ever-struggling.



5. According to the rules of Dharma every human action has a tangible immediate result and an unseen subtle result. If an action follows the norms of Dharma, the subtle result is Punya or merit. And if the action is not in keeping with Dharma, the subtle result is Papa or demerit.
6. This unseen result, Punya, will manifest in the future as a positive or favourable experience. And Papa will manifest as a negative or painful experience.
7. Since Punya is achievable by action, it also becomes a human goal. So Dharma is also a human goal. The pursuit of Artha and Kama are governed by Dharma.
8. The 4th and highest human goal is Moksha. Moksha is liberation or freedom from attachment to Dharma, Artha and Kama.



## KARMA YOGA

**Karma Yoga** consists of two words. Karma and Yogaha. The word Karma in this context refers to proper action or appropriate action. The word Yoga means proper attitude or appropriate attitude – in Sanskrit Bhāvanā. In simple language, **Karma Yoga is nothing but proper action with a proper attitude.**

### ***Right Attitude***

So what is a “proper attitude” while doing any action?

The moment you do an action, it leaves your hand – metaphorically speaking – and becomes part of the universe.

And once Karma becomes part of the Universe, all the Universal laws will act upon the Karma. This is because everything in creation is acted upon by the laws of the Universe.

So the moment I do an action, the Universal laws act upon the Karma, and this processed Karma is called Phalam, the fruits (results) of my action.

Thus every Karma is processed by Universal laws, becomes Phalam (result of action), and is handed back to me.

The scriptures say all Universal laws are tools in the hands of Isvara (or God) to maintain the harmony of creation. And therefore when we say the laws process Karma, it essentially means Isvara is processing the Karma.

Therefore Karmas are going to Isvara for processing, and the results are coming from Isvara as Phalam.

### ***Offerings To Isvara***

If you remember the fact that all actions are going to Isvara, then any action you do becomes an offering to Isvara or God.



For an enlightened Karma Yogi every action is an offering to Isvara, born out of this knowledge. In Sanskrit this attitude is called Isvara Arpana Bhavana; "Arpana" meaning "offering" and "Bhavana" meaning "attitude".

So while acting in Karma Yoga spirit, every action is consecrated to Isvara.

## ***An Attitude Of Gratitude***

In Hindu temples devotees offer food items to the deity while doing Puja (a ritual). After the priest performs the Puja, these food items are considered to have the deity's blessings residing in it. These blessed food items are called Prasad, and the devotees consume the Prasad to receive the blessings themselves.

Similarly, when I perform an action with an "attitude of offering" to Isvara, and when I receive the result, the result becomes Prasad from Isvara to me. Isvara is giving me the Prasad in return for my offering.

Because the Prasad comes from God, it is sacred and therefore cannot be rejected or criticized, but received with gratitude.

So every result of my action, I accept with an "attitude of gratitude". In Sanskrit this attitude is called Isvara Prasada Bhavana.

So in short Karma Yoga is doing actions with an "attitude of offering" to Isvara, and receiving the results with an "attitude of gratitude".

And when I understand this, I enjoy an equanimous mind, Samatvam because I am enthusiastic in every action. There is no dullness or boredom because every action is offered to the Lord. Hence I love everything that I do and accept all experiences in life because they are Īshvara Prasādhaha which will lead to Samatvam.

Samatva Bhāvanā is the result of Īshvara Arpana Prasāda Bhāvanā. These two put together will lead to very fast spiritual growth. This is called Chitta Shuddhihi. When I can understand that all my problems in life are not



caused by the world, but are caused by my wrong handling of the world because of my ignorance. So being ignorant I handle the world wrongly, and hence I suffer. If I become the wise I, I know how to handle the world. So ignorant-I is the problem and wise-I is the solution – this diagnosis is the result of Karma Yoga which is otherwise called Chitta Shuddhihi or Antah Karana Shuddhihi.

## The Pancha Mahā Yajñāhas

1. **Deva Yajna – Remembrance of Divine:** Worship and Prayer to God. This is the first and foremost Para Upakāra Karma. And in this Deva Yajna – worship and prayer of God, what am I supposed to do? I just stand in front of the Lord, and with my full and total heart utter a prayer. The prayer is the noblest one known in the scriptures –

### Swasti Mantra (short version)

Svasti Prajābhya Paripālayantām,  
Nyāyena Mārgena Mahīm Mahīshāhā  
Gobrahmmanebhya Shubhamastu Nityam  
Lokāha Samastāha Sukhino Bhavantu

May all humankind be happy and well. May the great noble lords protect the earth in every way by the path of just virtue. May there be perpetual joy for those who know the real nature of things. May all the worlds be happy and free.

A sincere heartfelt deep prayer is the most powerful contribution which will help not only the entire humanity, animals and plants but it goes beyond the terrestrial plane to Lokāhā:

Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinaha,  
Sarve Santu Nirāmayāhā,



**Sarve Bhadrani Pashyantu,  
Mā Kaschid Dukhabhāg Bhavet.**

May everybody be happy, May everybody be free from disease, May everybody have good luck and May none fall on evil days.

So when I utter these prayers in front of the Lord, in any language, I am doing the greatest contribution to the creation.

In any other service, I can confine to only a particular geographical area. No human being or no institution can reach all areas of creation, but this one prayer is the most extensive prayer which will benefit the whole creation. So this is the most extensive and least expensive Para Upakāra Karma. The expenditure is a few minutes and few words and the sincere most heart.

And along with this prayer if you offer something to the Lord, whatever you offer will also be distributed to the entire creation. Because God does not depend upon your contribution. God has a trust called Universal trust. Whatever is offered in any Pūja, will be taken by the Lord and distributed through the Universal Trust of God to every human being, every living being including plants and microorganisms. Therefore the **Sevā** or service offered to the Lord, will ultimately go to all sentient beings. And this is to be done daily.

2. **Pitr Yajnahā – Remembrance of ancestors** : This is the second Yajnahā. In each one of them, there is an expression of gratitude. Gratitude + Upakāra = Yajnahā. I express my gratitude to my Lord for what the Lord has given to me and then I contribute to the creation. In this Yajnahā, I express my gratitude to all my forefathers because of whom I am here. So my parents have contributed by giving birth to me, having brought me up without knowing whether I will do anything in return. The greatest service is parental service. And if my parents are able to do that, it is because of their parents and so on. In Pitru Yajnahā, I contribute to the well being of and express my gratitude to all the ancestors.



3. **Brahma Yajna – Remembrance of Rishis** : The third Yajna is called Brahma Yajna. This is expressing my gratitude to all the Rishis who have given the Vedas and other secondary scriptures. Brahma Yajna means Veda Yajna in which I worship both the scriptures and the authors of the scriptures, the discoverers of the scriptures – the Rishis. It is because of them alone, that I am enjoying this wonderful holistic culture. They have given out the wonderful scriptures and hold the preservation and propagation of this wonderful teaching. Whatever I do to preserve and propagate the scriptures is a very great service. This is because scriptures help humanity. This is in two ways:

**Firstly**, the very sound of the scriptures help humanity in creating peace. That is why we value Pārāyanam as a great Sādhanā. When I chant the scriptures aloud, it purifies the creation. Therefore Pārāyanam becomes Brahma Yajna.

**Secondly** learning and teaching of the scriptural content is beneficial. This propagation of the teaching is called Adhyāpanam . Scriptural teaching is considered to be the best form of Brahma Yajna. There is a very big difference between teaching and preaching. Preaching is giving a set of stray discourses on unconnected topics. It is some form of a Satsanga, where somebody shares some thoughts or advice or stories spending some time uttering nice words. This is certainly useful but there is a big difference between such preaching and systematic teaching in the form of classes. In teaching there is a development, a connection between every topic and all the ideas are supported through scriptures, logic, and experience. Teaching is not only giving ideas but arranging the ideas in a systematically developed manner so that you have a beautiful vision in which you will get security, peace and happiness. And therefore Brahma Yajna is a very important one.

4. **Manushya Yajna – Remembrance of humanity** : The fourth Yajna is Manushya Yajna. All forms of social service will come under this. Running orphanages, helping old people who cannot have any help, building schools, hospitals etc. Any service to humanity or to life itself can bring this fourth Yajna.

## 5. **Bhūta Yajna – Remembrance of non-human living**

**beings** This is the fifth Yajna - Bhūta Yajna. All forms of contribution to all living beings – non-human living beings. I should remember that all the other living beings are also contributing to my happy life. This has been proved by the study of ecology. Therefore I should remember that animals, plants and all beings are helping me for survival, so I should also contribute.

**Vaidika means universal citizen.** This is because he is aware of this world, he remembers the stars and planets. In the daily Sandhyāvandanam, all the planets are invoked – Ādityam Tarpayāmi, Somam Tarpayāmi, Angārakam Tarpayāmi. He remembers all the planets and the entire solar system. **This grand awareness I should have and I should contribute and this is called Pancha Mahā Yajñāha.** This is called Nishkāma Karmāni, Sāttvika Karmāni, Uttama Karmāni, Para Upakāra Karmāni – they will contribute to spiritual growth primarily.

