

## Three Minutes - 24 Teacher Student Relation

Om

saha nAvavatu, saha nau  
bhunaktu  
saha vIryaM kara vAvahai  
tejasvinAvadhItamastu  
mA vidvisShAvahai

om shanti: shanti: shanti:

*(peace mantra from upaniShad under  
KR^iShNa [black] Yajur vedas)*

*saha nA = (May we) both (of) us  
avatu = be protected  
saha nau = (May we) both (of) us  
bhunaktu = be nourished  
karavAvahai = (May we) acquire  
vIryam = capacity or energy  
astu = let it be  
tejasvi = be brilliant  
nau = for us  
adhitam = what is studied  
ma vidviShAvahai = (we) not argue with  
each other  
shAnti : = peace*

The practice of meditation, a state of concentrated attention (dhyAna), has occurred worldwide for personal improvement or to focus on God, since ancient times. A Mantra emphasizes sound vibration and thus, the correct pronunciation is essential. That is why vedic chanting (scripture verse repeating) was passed on as a vocal tradition for centuries.

Reciting (japa) those sacred mantras creates a spiritual ambience and aids in spreading the eternal message of love, harmony, and

peace. The incantation of these mantra-s improve medical stimulation, breathing, other health situations, and an overall enrichment of daily life.

shAnti mantra, a benedictory or invocation verse, is usually chanted before initiating a study of any upaniShad. This particular mantra for KaTha UpaniShad says –

"May both of us, the teacher and student (AcArya and shiShya), be protected. May both of us grow, shine, and become strengthened. May this knowledge make us both together strong and courageous. May our quest of study be fruitful. May we never know discord. May there be peace, peace, and peace".

Both the teacher and the student recite this verse together to calibrate themselves before sharing of the knowledge commences. They pray to the Lord and seek His blessings for a pious, peaceful, and productive study as well as for the elimination of hurdles. The obstacles, as defined by great sage Pata~njali, include sickness, dullness, doubts, carelessness, laziness, loss of memory, difficulty to focus, etc; most importantly, they request blessings for a conducive relation to enhance the communication between them, without which, the transfer of knowledge will not be smooth.

So, this prayer is as important to the teacher as it is to the student. It is also believed that deva-s (angels) cause these hurdles so that ordinary

human beings will not master the brahmaidya (Learning about the ultimate Lord), forcing humans not to compete with them.

The courage and strength mentioned here need not refer to physical strength, aggressiveness, or motivation to fight. But rather it is inner strength that arises from gaining the right knowledge and progress towards true wisdom. The ultimate product of learning and eventual wisdom is knowing the right stuff.

Life's purpose is knowledge. Amazingly, people from vedic periods recognize that the destination, as well as the journey, should be enjoyable. During this learning time frame, disparagement of one another is discouraged. That is, avoiding two poison pills during learning: hatred and misunderstanding.

Knowledge imparting has to satisfy two requirements.

1. At the intellectual level it should be about the right stuff.
2. At the practical, humane level, it should have an amicable environment for the pursuit of knowledge, that is, to learn in peace.

So moving from darkness to light, brilliant and effective efforts, all those statements apply to both acquiring knowledge and to the environment under which it is done.

What we learn from here -

1. **Target the right knowledge.**
2. **The journey is as important as the destination.** Though objective is stressed, access should be pleasant.
3. **Student and the teacher need to work towards the goal.** Interpersonal relations are critical to establish an effective communication.
4. **Service to the humanity** is the real purpose of learning and acquiring wisdom.

**"A mind is a fire to be kindled and not a vessel to be filled"**  
- *Plutarch*