

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti

"Om śāntih śāntih śāntih" is a Sanskrit mantra that is used after mantras, prayers, meditation or yoga. It comes from the root verb 'Sham' meaning 'to be at peace'.

Shanti means calm, tranquillity, peace, permanent satisfaction, fulfilment, contentment or stillness. Shanti is repeated three times to bring peace to the three realms of existence. These are the physical realm, the astral realm and the causal realm of existence.

Om is the most sacred symbol in Indian spirituality. OM is the sound of the infinite, the primordial sound. OM is actually composed of three Sanskrit letters A, U and M. "A" stands for Creation, "U" stands for Preservation and "M" stands for Destruction or Dissolution.

The first syllable "A", stands for Akara, the second letter "U" stands for Ukara, the third letter stands "M" for Makara. "Kara" means "happening" or "state". Akara represents the "Causal" body, Ukara represents the "Astral" body and Makara represents the "Physical" body, the state where there is physical form.

The Mandukya Upanishad refers to there being four states of consciousness. These are: waking, dreaming, dreamless sleep, and the transcendent (Turiya).

In the waking state there is identification with the gross body (vishva). When body consciousness is absent there is identification with the subtle body (taijasa). When identification with the body and mind is absent there is identification with the causal body (prajna). Identification with the body ceases spontaneously during dreaming and deep sleep.

The causal body is associated with dreamless sleep and the 'Anandamaya kosha' the "sheath" (kosha) of bliss.

The physical body is the body we experience through the five senses. The astral body is the body of our emotions, desires and thoughts. The causal body is the inner most body. It is the cause of the other two bodies.

Sri Yukteswar says - "God encased the human soul successively in three bodies - the idea or causal body; the subtle astral body which is the seat of man's mental and emotional nature and the gross physical body. On earth a man is equipped with his physical senses. An astral being works with his consciousness and feelings and a body made of 'lifetrans'. A causal bodied being remains in the blissful realm of ideas."

When a person dies, they shed their physical body and reside in the astral plane. So long as there are unresolved emotions and desires, that personality will re-incarnate so that their karma can be worked through.

When repeating "Om Shanti, Shanti, Shanti" we surrender the small self to the greater Self.

"The goal which all the Vedas declare, which all austerities aim at, and which men desire when they lead the life of continence is OM. This syllable OM is indeed Brahman, (the one supreme, universal Spirit). Whosoever knows this syllable obtains all that he desires. This is the best support; this is the highest support. Whosoever knows this support is adored in the world of Brahma." ~ Katha Upanishad I

The ancient sages described the deepest of meaning of Shanti in the following verse -

"First there should be peace in the universe, then on mother earth, then within the plant kingdom, the medicines that we take should be at peace, the Gods around, and Lord Brahma

should be at peace. We should be at peace like all of them. There should be Shanti all around.”

Only when there is Shanti all around, can we be at peace. This is the knowledge given to us by the ancient sages. This seemingly simple concept is the key to good health, success and wealth.

Another Explanation

Another explanation of the why we use this mantra comes from Ammaji. According to the scriptures the sources of our troubles lie in the three realms. These are called "Tapa-Traya" or three classes of troubles. When Shanti mantras are recited, obstacles from these realms are removed.

Adhi-daivikam means "mental disturbances that come from God". These are things that are beyond our control: hurricanes, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, floods, tsunamis, etc. We have no control over these types of disturbances. So when we say the first Shanti, we are praying, "O God, may we be protected from natural events that are beyond our control."

Adhi-bhautikam means "disturbances that come from the world." That means anything stemming from the world around us. This may include mosquitoes, noisy neighbours, barking dogs, the phone ringing, family arguments. As opposed to the first category, we have some control over this second category of disturbances. So this Shanti means, "O God, may we be protected from people and our surroundings."

Adhyatmikam means "disturbances stemming from the self." The third type of disturbance is the most powerful and, at the same time, the only one over which we have total control.

If we are identified with the ego,, experiences we have will stimulate one of two reactions in the mind, either attachment or aversion. We may see our enemy as we walk down the street or remember them during meditation, the mental turbulence that results is the same. Lust, jealousy, anger, sorrow, hatred all destroy our peace.

The ego is the real obstacle to mental peace. This third Shanti is therefore the most important one, because even if we are free from outside disturbances, if the inner realm is not calm we will never know peace. Conversely, once we have found inner peace, no external force can ever disturb us. So chanting this third Shanti is akin to praying, "O God, please remove all inner obstacles to peace."

There is one more element to the three-fold chanting of "Shanti," and that is the silence that follows each repetition. This silence is representative of true peace. For the spiritual seeker, peace is the goal. From - <http://archives.amritapuri.org/bharat/mantra/shanti.php>

Correct Pronunciation

OM – the ‘M’ is nasalised

Shanti – the ‘a’ is a long ah sound, the ‘ti’ is aspirated is in ‘tihi’.

For a demonstration please go to Mantra 3 - Poornamadam Poornamidam on this web site - <http://www.astrojyoti.com/shantimantras.htm>

The Three Planes of Existence

For more information on the three planes of existence please go to – <http://www.crystalclarity.com/yogananda/chap43.html>