

Om Shanti, Shanti, Shantih!

What does Shanti mean? Shanti is the sanskrit word for *Peace*. It is used to send out a showering of peace. We bless our food with peace; either as you sit to eat the nourishing meal before you or as you are preparing the meal. We bless our minds with peace; offer yourself peace instead of judgment (ahimsa). We bless each other with peace; peace to you my friend! Shanti! And maybe the most difficult thing to do but most important for becoming accepting and content is to bless those who make us angry with peace. My teacher, Goswami Kriyananda says that the surest way to soften karma is to bless your enemies with peace. What? Yes, bless your enemies with peace! This may not seem a simple task but as you move through the teachings of Santosha Recovery, my hope is that you will understand the importance of this to not only soften your own karma but to ease the fear and anger in your being. People are just here to soften their own karma. Your healing may involve healing from addiction. Others may be healing from anger or wrong doing as they were wronged at some point. And please don't ever assume you know what past another is healing from. Healing from the past goes far beyond this lifetime. And just as you wish for others to try to understand you, you can do a great deal of helping the evolution of souls on this earth plane by sending them Peace instead of judgment. Om Shanti!

One of my most revered preceptor, Ram Dass, states that '*people have good action and wrong action but people just are. Sometimes a person acts from some very dark karma that makes them behave in the world with some immense suffering. But there is a point in your being where you feel this incredible compassion for the horror of that predicament of that being. The minute you identify them with the acts of that suffering, you lock them in to continuing to be who they are, with your mind.*' See actions as inharmonious or see actions as Karma, but see people as spiritual beings here on this planet to heal, evolve and mature.

How do we use the mantra *Om Shanti, Shanti, Shantih*?

- As you are preparing food, planting a garden, or even picking out food at the store, mentally or out loud say: *Om shanti, shanti, shanti*. This will energize your food with peace and santosha.
- When you become aware that you are judging or should-ing yourself, stop that momentum and chant *Om shanti, shanti, shanti*. You can just say it once or chant it as many times as you need to, to stop the groove in your mind that you are creating by negative and inharmonious thinking.
- When you feel yourself judging others or getting angry at others, mentally or out loud chant *Om shanti, shanti, shanti*. In sending someone peace, it allows them the space to change their attitude and to soften their own karma. This may not happen in the moment or even in this lifetime, but it will happen. Sending peace to others says: I believe in you and I believe in the very act of healing and maturing that I am also engaging in at this time. And just as I wish to be seen, heard and given the opportunity to change and free myself from the predicaments that I experience, I wish that blessing upon you. May we all be free from the karma of our past, from our samskaras and from the illusion of separateness.

How does sending blessings to others help us live a life of Santosha?

- Chanting *Om Shanti* towards your food and water not only infuses prana (divine nourishment) into the food but it also brings us into the present moment enough to appreciate what we have. Appreciating what we have is very important in living a life of Santosha. Being in the present moment is essential for living a life of Santosha!!
- When we begin to see actions as actions and ourselves and others as beings that exists inside the heart where everyone wants to love and be loved, we find compassion and acceptance for the predicament that we are all in at this time. Acceptance does not mean placidity, it means that we can see clearly what the karma is and then we can see clearly on what and how we can heal. We heal in a place of the present moment and in a place of acceptance. We do not heal in a place of the past and in a place of anger and resentment.
- Sending out the peace mantra when we feel harshness or judgment towards ourselves and another, frees ourselves from negative thinking. Karma is produced by our attitude. Put simply negative attitudes produce inharmonious karma and positive attitude produces harmonious karma. Free yourself from negative thinking so that you do not pass that negativity onto others. Free yourself, and free them. Free them and free yourself. Send peace blessings instead. Open the energy pathway to harmonious karma and spiritual maturity!

I invite you, as your homework :) to chant *Om shanti, shanti, shanti* as a way to bring yourself into the present moment, and to bring yourself to a place of gratitude and contentment. But also to use the mantra to soften our samskaras, tendencies and grooves of the mind, and instead start a pathway of goodness and harmonious thoughts to occupy your mind space.

Free them, Free me,
Let the hurt be healed,
Let the karma be dissolved.

Free me, Free them,
Let the hurt be healed,
Let the karma be dissolved.

(Inhale)
Om Shanti, Shanti, Shantih
(Inhale)
Om Shanti, Shanti, Shantih
(Inhale)
Om Shanti, Shanti, Shantih, Shantih, Shantih