*Om Saha na vavatu| Saha nau bhunaktu| Saha veeryam karavaavahe|*

*Tejasvi na vadheeta mastu| Maa vidvisha vahai”| Om Shanti Shanti Shantih:*

May HE protect us both. May HE bless us both. With the bliss of knowledge let us put forth our efforts together. May our knowledge become bright and brilliant. May we not hate or quarrel with each other.

This shloka is an invocation shloka and is normally said at the beginning of a class.

Learning is about giving and accepting knowledge. The success of education depends on the student AND the teacher. Both get elevated in the process.

Saha nav avatu – we ask for the protection of the lord. We ask for the well being of the teacher and the student so that they can successfully dialogue and learn.

Saha nau bhunaktu – Both the teacher and the student should enjoy themselves and their role because only when the teacher enjoys teaching and the student enjoys learning will there be any good results and their efforts will bear fruit. If not, the student gets distracted and the teacher gets annoyed and loses patience.

Saha viryam karavaavahe – The student must feel devoted and eager to learn and only then the teacher feels inspired to teach. More the devotion to learning, more the inspiration from the teacher and this reinforces both of them and rejuvenates them to seek the truth, the light.

Tejasvi nav adhitam astu – Whatever we learn should bring a positive change in us. We should use our learnings in our life and it should help us know what is right and what is wrong. The teachings should help drive clarity and improve discriminative faculty to such an extent that we feel we should practice what we learn. Whatever we learn should help us.

Maa vidvisha vahai – There should be no fights or arguments between the teacher and the student. The student should always respect the teacher and not feel angry or jealous when the teacher points out the faults in the students. The teacher should also understand the level of the student and help him as much as possible. Questions should be asked to reinforce understanding and taking the topic forward and clarify doubts, and not just for the sake of asking. Questioning thus requires rapt attention (Arjuna in Gita, Nachiketa in Kathopanishad are examples) and forces the teacher to think. Heat versus light.

Om shanti shanti shantihi!

May peace be within us – We should be careful not to be lazy or bored or distracted. So when we are studying or reading or playing, we should concentrate intently and focus on that. We shouldn’t let anything else within our mind distract us. We should be focused on that activity at that moment with full internal peace.

May peace be around us – We pray that nothing around us should interfere or disturb us. For example, when we are studying we pray that no fireworks disturb us with the loud noise.

May peace be above us – This refers to the natural occurrences such as rain, earthquakes, floods etc. We pray that our school won’t close down because of heavy rainfall or snow.

Thank you

*Guruh Brahma Guruh Vishnu Guruh: devo Maheshwaraha:*

*Guru: saakshaat parah brahma, tasmay shree gurave namaha*

Oh, dear Guru! , i bow to you, my namaskarams to you.

You are Brahma, you are Vishnu, you are Maheshwarah.

You are indeed the Almighty Para Brahma, i bow to you again and again.

Like Brahma the Divine Creator - you, my dear Guru, create positive thoughts in me and let my thinking and creative energies come out in a positive and fulfilling way.

Like Vishnu, the Divine Preserver - you guide me to keep all noble thoughts and sattvic actions and help keep my good habits. I can retain all the good things i learnt by your grace.

Like Shiva in his Divine destroyer aspect - you, my dear guru, destroy all the tamoguna in me. You destroy all my ugly tendencies, and keep me moving forward in the right path.

Indeed, you are the very almighty for me.

The Guru understands us better than we do ourselves. He comes down to our level, teaches us, guides us and elevates us. He opens the doors of the universe to us.

For us to benefit most from the Guru, we should have full faith in the guru. Faith in him is absolutely important. Then every experience with him - be it one of discipline, or of love, will be a Divine one.

I seek my guru's blessings always.

Guru brahma, guru vishnu...

*Om asato mā sadgamaya*

*tamasomā jyotir gamaya*

*mrityormā amritam gamaya*

*Oṁ śhānti śhānti śhāntiḥ*

Lead me by giving knowledge form the unreal to the real; from darkness of ignorance to the light of knowledge; from death and the sense of limitation to immortality and limitless liberation.

This Shloka is an Upanishadic prayer and is normally said near the end of each class. In its essence this Shloka is a prayer to the lord to help us free ourselves from our misgivings and ignorance regarding ourselves, our universe and our lord, bless us with ‘true’ knowledge.

**Asato mā sad gamaya** - “Lead me from the asat to the sat”

We often speak of religion or philosophy as a search for Truth. In TOK, a subject we learn in the IB, there are 3 requirements for something to be considered true; it must be INDEPENDENT, PUBLIC and ETERNAL, that means that the truth must also be ‘always’ considered the truth for all situations, for all people and regardless of the past, present and future. Truth, existence, and reality are one and the same. That reality is what we call God or the Divine.

Accordingly as everything in the universe is changing: the planets in motion, seasons changing, our bodies being born, growing, and eventually dying. This is true for everything in creation. Our intelligence, thoughts and emotions constantly moving between superficial problems and solutions never finding contentment, constantly moving back and forth between happiness, sorrow and anger. All of these feelings seem real and the truth but still they are fluctuating and changing, so we cannot say for certain that this world is real or true.

But the lord reveals to us that this world is not real, it is not true, and ultimately it does not even exist. It seems real, but it is not. Such a thing is called *asat*. We pray to the lord to lead us away from this *asat* and teach us to stop depending on materialistic thing that are not real and to focus on him as **he** is the truth, he has always been in existence and will continue to do so.

**Tamaso ma jyotir gamaya**- "Lead me from darkness to light."

Here darkness is ignorance, and ignorance like darkness hides true understanding. Throughout the Gita the Lord outlines several methods to cleanse out the layers of ignorance covering our *atman* through the cultivation of daily yoga practice. The Lord tells us that the only way for us to find that light is to constantly think of him.

**Mrtyor ma amrtam gamaya** - "Lead me from death to immortality."

This is not a wish of long life, but rather an attempt to realize that ones true self (atman) was never born and can never die. We pray to the Lord to lead us to the understanding that we are not limited to our body, mind and intellect, but are eternal parts of the Lord himself.

With this knowledge toward the truth and the untruth, ignorance and knowledge, and death and immortality, we will gain detachment. As we become more and more detached, our desires for the materialistic and temporary will naturally decrease, as we know these cannot bring lasting happiness. And as these desires decrease, our minds will become less and less agitated and obtain peace and the Lord.