

Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra

Om Tryambakam Yajamahe Sugandhim Pushti-Vardhanam |

Urvarukam-iva Bandhanan Mrityor Mukshiya Ma-amritat ||

You have provided the Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra, one of the most powerful and ancient mantras dedicated to Lord Shiva. It is a mantra chanted for health, longevity, prosperity, and ultimately, salvation (Moksha).

Meaning

The extensive meaning of this mantra:

- **Om:** The Pranava form of Parabrahma, which is beyond creation, sustenance, and dissolution, and is inherent in the universe. It is a symbol of the ultimate truth.
- **Tryambakam:** 'The Three-Eyed One' — referring to Lord Shiva. Shiva is beyond space and time, the master of the past, future, and present. His vision of wisdom can perceive all three periods of time.
- **Yajamahe:** We worship / We adore.
- **Sugandhim:** 'Sugandham' means fragrance. Here, it refers to Shiva's omnipresence, his divine presence, and his grace that fills everything. Just as fragrance spreads in all directions, Shiva's power is spread throughout the universe.
- **Pushti Vardhanam:** 'Pushti' means nourishment, prosperity, and fullness. 'Vardhanam' means one who nourishes or increases. That is, Shiva grants nourishment, complete health, and prosperity to all beings.
- **Urvarukam-iva:** Like a cucumber (or melon). This is a very significant comparison.
- **Bandhanan:** From bondages (worldly attachments, diseases, karmic bonds, and the cycle of birth and death).
- **Mrityor:** From death.
- **Mukshiya:** May we be liberated / May he release us.
- **Ma-amritat:** Not from death / Not from Moksha / May we attain immortality. (This word has slight variations in interpretation. Generally, it is understood as 'May we be liberated from death and attain immortality.')

Essence of Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra

"We worship the three-eyed Lord Shiva, who is filled with fragrance and who nourishes all living beings. Just as a ripe cucumber easily detaches from its stalk, may we be liberated from the bondages of death and attain immortality (Moksha)."

Supreme Meaning (Paramartha)

This mantra is not just for protection from physical death; it is a prayer for liberation (Moksha) from the repetitive cycle of birth and death, and for the journey from the death of ignorance toward the immortality of knowledge.

- **Tryambakam:** Addressing Shiva as 'Tryambakam' (the three-eyed one) is a plea to remove the three-fold ignorances within us (Adhyatmika, Adhibhautika, Adhidaivika) and grant us the vision of wisdom.
- **Sugandhim:** Wishing for the fragrance of virtues resulting from Self-knowledge to spread everywhere.
- **Pushti Vardhanam:** Seeking not just physical health, but spiritual growth and mental strength.
- **Urvarukam-iva Bandhanan Mrityor Mukshiya Ma-amritat:**
 - **'Like a Cucumber':** When a cucumber ripens, it detaches from the stalk easily and naturally. Similarly, when a being attains the maturity of knowledge, they are liberated freely and naturally from the bondages of the body, karmic bonds, and the death of ignorance.
 - **'Mrityor Mukshiya':** Along with physical death, seeking liberation from the 'Samsara' death (cycle of birth and death) caused by ignorance, ego, and desires.
 - **'Ma-amritat':** This can be understood as 'Ma' (me) 'Amritat' (towards immortality). It is the ultimate prayer to be liberated from death and attain Moksha and eternal bliss.

Chanting this mantra is not just remembering Shiva; it is internally meditating that **"I am the form of Shiva, I am immortal, and I am beyond all bondages."**

Explain the Three-Fold Ignorance (Adhyatmika, Adhibhautika, Adhidaivika)

The three types of ignorance (often referred to as **Trividha Tapas** or the triple sufferings) that you asked about are considered the primary reasons for human suffering in Advaita Vedanta. While they are sometimes categorized differently, their root is the same: Ignorance.

Let's look at these three types of ignorance/sufferings in detail:

1. Adhyatmika Ignorance (Internal/Self-centered)

- **Nature:** This is suffering caused primarily by our own internal ignorance. It is the failure to know who we truly are and our real nature. The root is **Ego-identification**—identifying as "I am this body," "I am this mind," or "I am this specific person"—and the lack of discrimination between the Self (**Atma**) and non-Self (**Anatma**).
- **How it manifests:**

- **Physical Sufferings:** Fever, diseases, hunger, thirst, old age, and death. Because we identify the body as 'Self', we perceive the body's pain as our own.
- **Mental Sufferings:** Desires, anger, fear, grief, worry, attachment, jealousy, ego, despair, and sadness. Identifying with the thoughts and emotions of the mind leads to these sufferings.
- **The Root of Ignorance:** Failing to realize that one's true nature (Atman/Brahman) is bodiless, attribute-less, unattached, and the form of **Sat-Chit-Ananda** (Existence-Knowledge-Bliss).
- **Examples:** "I have a fever, I am suffering," "I failed the exam, I am depressed," "I get very angry."

2. Adhibhautika Ignorance (External/Material)

- **Nature:** This is ignorance or suffering caused by other living beings or external physical objects. These are often beyond our direct control and come from visible or unexpected sources.
- **How it manifests:**
 - **Humans:** Suffering caused by others—enmity, cheating, insults, quarrels, attacks, and misunderstandings.
 - **Animals:** Pain from animals—snake bites, dog bites, diseases from insects, or danger from wild animals.
 - **Objects:** Accidents, loss of property, or theft.
- **The Root of Ignorance:** Failing to recognize that everything in creation is a manifestation of the same Atman within oneself. Seeing the external world as separate from "Me" and suffering because of that perceived duality.
- **Examples:** "My neighbors are bothering me," "Thieves stole my property," "A snake bit me."

3. Adhidaivika Ignorance (Divine/Supernatural)

- **Nature:** This is ignorance or suffering caused by divine forces or natural calamities. These are beyond human control and are often attributed to the influence of deities or the powers of nature.
- **How it manifests:**
 - **Natural Disasters:** Earthquakes, floods, tsunamis, cyclones, forest fires, droughts, excessive rain, or lack of rain.
 - **Planetary Influences:** Adverse effects of planets as per Astrology.

- **Unseen Forces:** Sufferings attributed to spirits or supernatural entities (based on beliefs).
- **The Root of Ignorance:** Not realizing that one is the Atman, which is beyond nature, time, and divine powers. Failing to see this entire creation as the **Leela** (divine play) of Brahman.
- **Examples:** "The cyclone destroyed my house," "The flood ruined my crops," "There is no rain this year."

The Ultimate Essence:

The root of all these three types of ignorance is a single **Avidya** (Primal Ignorance). That is the failure to realize the truth: "I am the infinite Brahman." Due to this primal ignorance, a limited ego ("I") is formed, which identifies itself with the body, mind, and the external world. This identification is what causes the three types of sufferings mentioned above.

By praying '**Mrityor Mukshiya Ma-amritat**' in the Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra, we seek liberation from the worldly bonds caused by these three types of ignorance and aim to experience the immortal nature of the Atman. When these ignorances are removed through Knowledge (**Jnana**), the individual transcends these triple sufferings and attains eternal peace and bliss.

Is Merely Chanting the Mantra Enough?

No, merely chanting the mantra is not enough. Although the **Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra** is extremely powerful, it is only a tool (Sadhana) and not the ultimate goal.

The Role of Mantra Japa:

Mantra Japa, especially the Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra, is highly beneficial in the following ways:

- **Mental Peace:** Constant chanting stabilizes the mind, increases concentration, and reduces stress.
- **Positive Vibrations:** The sounds of the mantra have a specific frequency that creates a positive energy field around the practitioner.
- **Self-Confidence:** During difficult times, chanting acts as a support system, reducing fear and boosting self-confidence.
- **Unseen Protection:** It is believed to provide protection from invisible negative forces.

Why Merely Chanting is Not Enough:

As discussed, the supreme purpose of the Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra is not just protection from physical death. It is about attaining the immortality of Knowledge and liberation from the bonds

of the **Triple Ignorance** (Adhyatmika, Adhibhautika, Adhidaivika). To reach this profound goal, chanting alone is insufficient because:

1. **No Benefit Without Understanding:** If one repeats the sound without knowing the meaning and the philosophy behind it, the full benefit remains unattained. The visualization—“*Just as a cucumber effortlessly detaches from its stalk, may we be liberated from the bonds of death and attain immortality*”—must be done with conviction and meditative focus.
2. **Necessity of Self-Connection:** The mantra asks to unite us with Shiva. Here, Shiva is not just an external deity but the internal consciousness within us. Connecting with this consciousness requires meditation, self-inquiry (**Atma-Vichara**), and the practice of Advaita knowledge alongside Japa.
3. **Regulation of Karma:** A mantra does not provide total liberation from *Prarabdha Karma* (past actions currently bearing fruit), but it grants the strength to reduce their impact and transcend them. However, to stop accumulating new karma and to let go of the desire for fruits of action, **Vairagya** (dispassion) and **Nishkama Karma** (selfless action) are necessary.
4. **Removal of Triple Ignorance:** As discussed in the Gayatri Mantra explanation, true liberation from the triple ignorance is possible only through Knowledge (**Jnana**). Japa can pave the way for this knowledge, but it cannot grant the knowledge itself.

What Should Be Done Along with Japa?

- **Artha Dhyana:** Understand the meaning of the mantra and meditate upon it while chanting.
- **Atma-Vichara:** Constantly question yourself: “*Who am I?*”, “*What is my true nature?*”
- **Meditation:** Focus the mind to experience internal peace and Self-consciousness.
- **Shravana, Manana, Nididhyasana:** Listening to wisdom from masters (**Shravana**), thinking deeply about it (**Manana**), and getting established in that knowledge (**Nididhyasana**).
- **Satsang:** Being in the company of those with spiritual thoughts.
- **Vairagya:** Practicing non-attachment without over-relying on worldly matters.

Conclusion:

Mantra Japa is a wonderful starting point and a constant companion. However, it is only the vehicle to lead you toward the goal. Only when you drive that vehicle in the right direction, on the path of true knowledge, can you reach the ultimate destination of **Moksha**.

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