

MRITYUNJAYA MANTRA

The Mantra for Realising the Deathless State

OM TRYAMBAKAM YAJAAMAHE
SUGANDHIM PUSHTI VARDHANAM
URVAARUKAMIVA BANDHANAAT
MRITYOR MUKSHEEYA MA-AMRITAAT

(Taittiriya Upanishad 2.7)

ITS MEANING (a free rendering):

“Let us worship Shiva (the three-eyed One), who is sacred (fragrant) and who nourishes all beings. Just as the ripe cucumber is automatically released from its attachment to the creeper, may we be liberated from (identification with) death (our mortal body and personality) and granted (realisation of) our immortality nature.”

WORD BY WORD MEANING:

Mritu = death.

Jaya = victory.

This mantra is so called because, when chanted sincerely with reflection on its meaning, it can convey realisation of our Essential Nature which is beyond birth and death. In this way, it gives us victory over unquestioned assumptions and ignorance.

OM = symbol of underlying Reality; mystic mantra for evoking heightened Awareness.

Tryambakam = the three-eyed, indicating Shiva (Consciousness). This third eye is the faculty of intuition and insight (in-sight; inner vision; subtle perception) which allows us to realise our Essential Nature (Shiva). Besides our two fleshy eyes, each of us has a third eye which lies dormant unless it is awakened by the practices of Yoga or any other transformative system. When it awakens we can live in the world of mundane affairs (with the two fleshy eyes) whilst remaining in contact with the Roots of our Being (with the third eye).

Yajaamahe = we venerate or worship.

Sugandhim = fragrant. When the third eye is awakened everything becomes fragrant; that is, everything is seen to be fundamentally sacred.

Pushti = nourishes. Reality nourishes (sustains or supports) everything.

Vardhanam = increases. On the Yogic path, our understanding increases day by day.

Urvaarukamiva = a creeper that bears a cucumber-like fruit. Here it symbolises each of us and our relationship to existence. Just as each cucumber ripens on the creeper and, at the right time falls off, so each of us can grow and mature (aided by Yoga) until we realise a deeper Element behind our existence and that of everything. This gradually releases us from our self-obsessions and we ripen – we start to open up to a wider dimension of existence. It is a natural process; Yoga is part of this process of maturation.

Bandhanaat = bondage.

Mrityor = death; ignorance.

Muksheeya = liberate.

Therefore *bandhanaat mrityor muksheeya* means ‘liberate us from the bondage of death or ignorance.’

Maa-amritaata = (realisation of) the immortal Reality behind everything.

Constant repetition of this ancient Sanskrit mantra purifies the heart and awakens our perception (third eye) so that we start to understand on a deeper level. Simultaneous reflection on its meaning also helps to awaken our intuitive faculties.

It may also be chanted to aid those who are suffering or ill. For this purpose, we chant this mantra in the Ashram every Tuesday evening at 8.00.