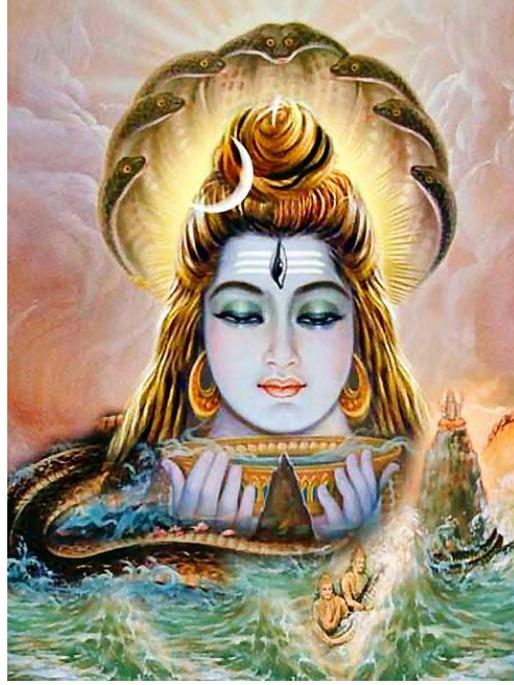


# Pearls of Wisdom

## Mantra Pearls



### Śiva Mantras

**oṃ namaḥ śivāya** - our reverential salutations to śiva he who is happy in himself, by himself without any reason

**oṃ tryambakam̐yyajāmahe sugandhim̐ puṣṭivardhanam  
urvārukamiva bandhanānmṛtyormukṣīya mā'mṛtāt**

We offer worship to the fragrant, three-eyed Lord Śiva who bestows ever-increasing prosperity. Please liberate us from the hands of death as effortlessly as a ripe urvāruka (watermelon) is severed from the vine. Please do not let us turn away from liberation.



**oṃ nīlakaṇṭhāya namaḥ** - Invocation of śiva, he who has a blue neck as he swallows all the poison, our rage, anger, the need to blame. He gives absolute validation here and now for everything that I am

## Unfoldment

### The Great Death Conquering Mantra

The Mahā Mr̥tyuñjaya Mantra - the highly revered, powerfully potent, holistically healing death averting mantra - is found in the Ṛg- and Yajur-Veda. It's traditionally chanted as part of Srī Rudram which is a hymn to Lord Śiva.

#### Brief explanation

**This mantra is used in two ways:**

As a general prayer for health, physical and spiritual wellbeing at all levels - for yourself and others; for Averting and curing any disease and generating harmony and solace, neutralizing denial and reaction, producing health in one's body & mind extending to family and all of humanity.

For the Jijñāsu (the serious, committed, informed seeker of freedom through self knowledge born of Vedanta pramāṇam) - as a prayer to let go of the notion of limitation and death. A prayer for mokṣa (freedom from suffering) and to be able to spend time with ones revered Teacher following all the given (Sādhanas) spiritual disciplines physical, verbal and mental means required for gaining complete eligibility Adhikāritvam for self enquiry.

*“This mantra contains a beautiful metaphor. The urvāruka fruit is a melon which grows on the ground attached to a vine which gives it all nourishment it needs. It takes it's time to ripen. When fully ripe, it does not have to be plucked; it detaches itself from effortlessly, remaining where it is, but free from the vine. Amṛta is total freedom from the sense of all inadequacy and limitation. An essential requirement in gaining amṛta is emotional maturity, which is gained by the process of inner growth, by living a life of values and with a prayerful attitude. This maturing of the mind is likened to the ripening of the fruit.*



*There is another important aspect of this example. Freedom being the essential nature of yourself the mature mind does not have to seek outside itself to gain this freedom. This is the gain of that which is already gained. Thus, this is a prayer of a mumukṣu, a person who desires that total freedom and who makes it her main pursuit in life.*

*It is also a mantra which is traditionally chanted by family and friends for a person who is ill or approaching death*

*This prayer should be learned and recited using the three svaras, tones that are used in Vedic chanting“*

**Om tryambakaṃ yajāmahe sugandhiṃ puṣṭi-vardhanam  
urvārukamiva bandhanānmṛtyormukṣīya mā'mṛtāt**

## **Elaborate explanation**

### **1. The surface meaning of The Mahā Mṛtyuñjaya mantra is for health:**

I can use the Mṛtyuñjaya mantra with a specific saṅkalpa (intention, desire) for example for the health and benefit of another person. It's a prayer to Īśvara, who is in the form of all the intelligent orders of the universe – please let me or the person I pray for have a healthy and happy life and recover from any illness so that they can have enough quality of life. If they cannot recover, then it can also be a prayer for anāyāsena maranam - please let them be released from this life without struggle, pain or suffering.

If the person is soon to leave his/her body, a special śloka for anāyāsena maranam can be given:

**Anāyasena maranaṃ vinā dainyena jīvitam dehi me kṛpayā śambho  
tvayi bhaktim achanchalām**

“Oh Auspicious compassionate Self born infallible Lord Śambhu, Bless me (and all Loved ones) with all of the following: effortless, painless death, free from disturbance burdening the loved ones in any way and especially Oh Lord let my heart ever be established in continuous, unswerving Bhaktiḥ, devotion to you, in and through whatever may appear in my destiny”.



When I find myself in situations I can't change I may feel helpless, but I'm not totally helpless – I can pray for a change. In prayer I am seeking help from Īśvara who is in the form of all the infinite intelligent orders of the universe and who is therefore the one being who doesn't need any help.

A healing aspect of the mantra comes because it puts you into devotion, relaxation and trust in the way the universe is – Īśvara. I can see that I'm not in control over it, I don't own it, Īśvara is in control, I can only do what I can do but the end results are not in my hands. When I accept that, my anxiety can disappear and I can relax with the way life is. For example if a loved one is sick, it doesn't help if I get lost into agitation, worry or fear. When I worry, I cause more fear and agitation in their heart too. Instead, if I chant and pray, I can break my destructive thought patterns and my heart becomes calm and relaxed in trust and devotion. I can stay present and available to support, objectively seeing all the different options how to help solve the problem. When I am alert, calm and relaxed in devotional prayer it will be easier for the other person to relax also and I will not make the situation worse. Then naturally I become the pillar in which others can and will find trust and solace, they also will become calmer, less resistant and can therefore heal much more easily. I can pray to Īśvara to bless the person to relax and get into non-resistance so that they don't create more emotional stress on top of the physical problem. Psychosomatic problems are caused by unsettled, unprocessed, unresolved emotions. When we inculcate conscious, prayerful, non-resistance and a language of complete validation; When we totally accept facts -people or situations we cannot change, offer "Serenity prayers", we then free ourselves from being affected by the topical problems of the body and mind.

Here is a simple and profound Serenity Prayer for anyone to use:

**“Oh Īśvara, Grant me the serenity to accept gracefully all that I cannot change.  
Grant me the will and effort, the courage to change what I can change.  
Grant me the wisdom to know the difference between what I cannot change and what I can change.”**

**1008 x Amen! Tathāstu! Let it be so!**

## **2. The deeper meaning of The Mahā Mr̥tyuñjaya mantra is a prayer for mokṣa:**

This mantra can also be used by the mumukṣu, the person who seeks freedom. To be freed from the sense of bondage, which is caused by ignorance of my own true nature which happens to be already limitless, full and complete here and now. I pray to know the fact that the essence of my being is the source of everything I seek. It's a prayer to be connected to the traditional Teacher who guides and corrects our intellects, removing all our wrong conclusions, until we



have clarity without vagueness, doubt or error. Clarity about who I am gives complete benefit – Mokṣaḥ, which is total emotional and intellectual adequacy, freedom from all suffering, completing the very purpose of human embodiment.

Tri = Three

Tryambakam = Tri ambakam = 1. three-eyed Śiva or 2. three sacred mothers.

Tryambakam meaning can be seen in two ways:

1. Three-eyed-: Bakam = Akṣam = aperture, eye. The one who has three eyes. This refers to Īśvara the imminent-transcendent being who has Sūrya (the sun) as the right eye, Candra (the moon) as the left eye and Agni (fire) as the third eye. The third eye, located between the eyebrows, is the eye of wisdom of immediate limitless being transcending time and space. This eye symbolizes spiritual vision - knowledge beyond the duality of past & future, subject & object, knower & known in spite of their appearance. It is the knowledge that sees your own true nature as limitless, full and complete – here and now, in spite of one's apparent, experiential limitations. This world appears to be full of differences, but what is it that transcends and pervades it all?

2. Three Mothers: Īśvara in the form of the three “Mother of all mothers” are called Sarasvatī, Lakṣmi and Pārvatī. They are symbols or metaphors for the phenomena of creation, sustenance and destruction. The creator and the creation being one and the same limitless, intelligent being. This shows Īśvara as imminent, ie.in and through this universe of names and forms and also transcendent - transcending time and space and all qualities.

Yajāmahe = We all worship (Īśvara who is tri ambakam)

Worship here means to connect ourselves to the infinite giver who is both the creator and the creation (Īśvara) by mentally giving everything back and recognize that we don't own anything, we don't control anything or anyone, we're only the “managing trustees” of what we possess, for a period of time. Ultimately, through self-knowledge, we can understand that Īśvara is myself and who I worship is none other than my own being. This requires our hearts to have settled all accounts with the infallible Īśvara first, otherwise this knowledge will not take place.

Sugandhim = fragrant, attractive, satisfaction

The three-eyed Lord is sugandhim, fragrant. Just like the bees are attracted to the fragrant flowers because they have nectar, so too we are drawn to that which we think gives happiness. The nectar represents ānanda svarupaḥ - happiness that has no reason. Īśvara is total satisfaction because he understands the very essence of happiness, the fullness that doesn't arrive or depart, that is in and through the whole universe, that is you. It implies non-dual being, unconditional love. Through self-knowledge I understand that I am that love, that fullness, that I am the source of the happiness that I seek. That I am the meaning of the word satisfaction.



Puṣṭhi = nourishment and integration on all levels.

Puṣṭhi is that which nourishes, not only in terms of food, but what brings balance to our body and mind and gives integration of personality, emotional being and sense organs, at all levels. We get nourished and balanced so that we can first manage, and then master, our body-mind-complex. The nourishment also implies the disciplines of aṣṭāṅga yoga (which are yama-niyama-āsana-prānāyāma-pratyāhara-dhāraṇa-dhyāna-samādhi) which are important practices used to master the body and mind, integrate all the levels of the personality and to gain the qualifications needed for mokṣa.

Vardhanam = increase

Puṣṭhivardhanam = the one who increases our nourishment.

This can be seen in two ways:

1. May all the nourishment come to my loved ones at all levels – food, clothing shelter, infrastructure for a healthy living etc. And may they all become integrated and happily relaxed in devotion and trust that all is in order and exactly how it's meant to be.
2. Selfknowledge is the ultimate nourishment that nourishes me to such a place inside that my heart is in dhanyoham bhāvaḥ (profound gratitude) constantly and I am happy in myself, by myself without any reason. I have the sense that all desires are fulfilled completely, there's no more sense of inadequacy - intellectually or emotionally. This absolute nourishment that selfknowledge gives is called mokṣaḥ. It means that I understand that my true nature is ānanda svarūpa, absolute-cognitive-wholeness in and of itself as my essential nature.

The relative nourishment is all the preparations - the increasing of adhikāritvam (fitness to be able to understand myself as already free), sādhanā catuṣṭhaya sampattiḥ (the qualifications needed to be able to understand and assimilate the self knowledge) and all the Value of Values assimilated to a very high degree.



Fitness is gained through:

- Living according to dharma – following universal values
- Living with a karma yoga attitude - I devote my every action to Īśvara, the whole, and receive all that comes to me as prasādam, a gift from Īśvara
- Using the disciplines of the Aṣṭāṅga yoga system to manage and master my body and mind complex, guided by a competent teacher.
  
- Viveka (ability to discriminate what is time bound and what is free from time)
- Vairāgya (ability to see the limitations of what worldly accomplishments can give me)
  
- Upāsana (meditation)
  
- Knowing that the last three healthy attachments of a human being pursuing spiritual wealth are Īśvara, Guru and Śāstra. We need to make use of these three with passion for self discipline and devotion by thought, word and action until we have gained self knowledge.

Through these practices we nourish ourselves until we have a great self image of healthy self-esteem with devotion and gratitude, free from arrogance, then we can see clearly that all worldly pursuits have limitations. These limitations are duḥkhamisritatvam (mixed with pain), atṛptikaratvam (they never give total and lasting satisfaction) and bandhakatvam (cause more and more dependence). Instead we are ready to ask “is there anything that gives total and lasting satisfaction, that is not mixed with pain and that gives complete wholeness, freedom from all sense of limitation? Help me know that which everything else is as well known, where I don't have the sense of ignorance anymore. Help me gain that by gaining (through self knowledge), everything else is as well gained. I'm not interested in relative happiness or security because I have grown out of it, not because I have run away from it.



We grow into maturity and we become like the example in this mantra – the ripe melon which grows on a vine on the ground; when the melon has grown into complete maturity and no longer needs the nourishment from the vine it effortlessly, without any outer influence, detaches itself and it becomes absolutely independent and free. In the same way, when our nourishment and disciplines for growth have fulfilled themselves we can let go of those and we have no more sense of bondage, limitation or suffering. Instead we see that we're limitless right now despite of all apparent limitations which can no more cause us the slightest suffering, instead they are just amusements. We can live a happy life and out of fullness reach out to help all other beings in many and varied ways.

Urvārukam = melon

Iva = just like

Bandhanān – from bondage (of ignorance and untruth)

Mṛtyoḥ – from death. The “becoming disease”, born of self ignorance.

Mukṣīya – please free me, liberate me

Mā = not

Amṛtāt = from deathlessness born of self knowledge. Freedom from the notion of death and birth.

Note : Mā plus Amṛtāt are put together phonetically and form Māmṛtāt in the mantra. ā + a = ā (one long vowel).

Please liberate me from the ignorance which gives the sense of death, and don't liberate me (mā mukṣīya) from amṛtatvam – from deathlessness. Deathlessness means knowledge of myself as deathless, where I've swallowed time and death and I'm not afraid of death anymore. What does it mean to not be liberated from deathlessness? It means keep me on the right track with the sādhanas that help me until I have mokṣa. Keep me with my revered Guruḥ until I have his/her clarity and all the benefits of selfknowledge manifest in and as my immediate heart.

### **How to chant The Mahā Mṛtyuñjaya**

This is a prayer that has svara and phonetics - it's meant to be chanted with a certain intonation and pronunciation. The more correctly you chant it the more punyaṃ, grace, unseen positive results it will cause. This mantra creates punya for those who chant it and one's saṅkalpa or motive determines how you spend the punya. Be very careful what you desire!

Mantra is chanted with śabda prasdhānatvam (sound predominance), we let ourselves resolve in the sound. It means that when chanting a mantra in Japa we focus on the sound, not the meaning or any visualization. Just focus on the correct sound and then the silence in between, then the mantra again.

Summarised from Satsang with Swami Vagishananda Saraswati