

#### **4<sup>th</sup> Episode - Understanding the significance of Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra**

Following 3<sup>rd</sup> episode of “*Understanding the significance of Maha Kumbhabhisekam*”, towards Maha Kumbhabhisekam of Panching Gua Charas Jalalingeswarar Shivan temple, with good intention and thoughts for all devotees, the following write-up is prepared.

In this 4<sup>th</sup> episode, we will look into details and the significance of Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra. Mantras are powerful verses that can have specific effects if chanted as per the prescribed ways. One of the most well-known mantras is the Gayatri Mantra that can grant spiritual bliss. This mantra is present in the Vedas, the four most sacred texts of Hinduism. Likewise, Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra is also mentioned in the Vedas. The Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra is well known as conquering death and obtaining ultimate bliss.

You may wonder why both Gayatri Mantra is chanted for 108 times and then followed by Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra, usually taking place from 0000hrs till 0700hrs, yearly in Panching Gua Charas Jalalingeswarar Shivan temple, known as `Prajnanam Brahma` prayers.

The Vedas are filled with many mystic mantras. They all have special powers. One of the most potent mantras in the Vedas is the Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra. This mantra contains in the Rig Veda, Yajur Veda and Atharva Veda. The mantra addresses Lord Shiva in his fierce Rudra form, and it is called Rudra Mantra. The mantra also invokes Shiva as Tryambaka, the three-eyed god. So, it has another name- Tryambaka Mantra.

It is known that, the Maha Mrityunjaya mantra **can heal diseases, remove the fear of death, grant peace of mind, and help conquer death.**

Now let's investigate the origins of the mantra. Sage Vasishtha is the original seer of the mantra. However, it is more closely associated with sage Markandeya. This ancient Mantra has several stories associated with it.

It is seen in the Mandala VII- Hymn 59 of the Rig Veda. Sage Vasishtha is the composer of a hymn comprising of eleven stanzas that praises the wind gods or the Maruts. The Maruts are in fact considered to be the children of Lord Shiva. The last stanza of this hymn is the Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra. It specifically praises Lord Shiva as Tryambaka and asks him for release from death.

It is believed that, Rishi Markandeya was destined to live for only sixteen years on this earth. When his 16th year was approaching, Markandeya went to an isolated spot and established a Shivalinga. He then began meditating on Lord Mrityunjaya (Lord Shiva) while chanting the Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra with devotion. On the day of his death, when Yama tried to take his life, Lord Shiva himself emerged from the Shivling and kicked Yama away. Ever since, Markandeya is an immortal, or Chiranjivi, always remaining a sixteen-year-old.

Goddess Sati later learned this mantra from Rishi Markandeya to save Chandra, the moon, from the curse of her father, King Daksha. In due time, Rishi Dadhichi learned this mantra called Mrita Sanjivani (life restoring mantra) from sage Shukracharya to save King Kshuva. This is how this secret mantra from the Vedas was revealed to all.

The Verse in English:

**Tryambakam yajāmahe sugandhim puṣṭi-vardhanam |  
Urvārukam-iva bandhanātmṛtyormukṣīya māmṛtāt**

The main meaning of this mantra is:

O Lord Tryambaka (Three-Eyed Lord Shiva)

Please increase our good vasanas (aspirations)

Like the cucumber is drawn to earth, my soul is bound down, to my body

Please liberate me from the chain of death and grant me immortality

The effects of the powerful Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra are manifold. First, take a bath, sit down and relax, in a meditative pose. Then chant this mantra. Focus on the middle of your forehead, between your eyes. This is the position of the third eye, which symbolises *jnana* or highest knowledge.

This mantra is not difficult to learn. However, you can learn it from a guru so you can chant it without any pronunciation mistakes. So, it is important to chant it in a proper way. Next, begin by chanting it repeatedly for 3, 11, 21, 36, and increasing counts, gradually. You can chant the Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra early in the morning, when you're leaving the house, or before you begin eating.

Practice till the sounds and rhythms become ingrained in your mind. Then, you can begin chanting the mantra for specific effects, as follows;

1. To get rid of fear chant this mantra 11000 times.
2. You should complete 11,000 chants in order to get relief from ailments or diseases.
3. In case you want to have a child or seek success in an endeavour, then chant this mantra 150,000 times.
4. To keep off impending untimely death, chant the mantra 150,000 times.

If you complete one mala (one round of counting the rudraksha beads while chanting) in the morning and once in the evening, you can quickly complete 8000 japas in 40 days. However, as time goes on, you will be able to complete more japas each day. With time, you will experience many effects such as respite from depression, relief from health issues, increase in energy level, and improvement in your self-confidence.

Eventually, as you keep chanting the mantra regularly, your mind will rise to a higher plane. You will also discover your spiritual side. Shiva is a merciful God. He immediately answers the prayers of his ardent devotees. So, chanting the Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra sloka can grant one everything- from good health, long life, and happiness, to the ultimate release from death – Moksha or liberation.

Shiva Shambo  
Om Nama Siva Ya Om  
Help Ever Hurt Never  
Service to Society is Service to Almighty  
Master Ir. Sivabalan - Temple Trustee  
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