

महामृत्यञ्जय मन्त्रः

ॐ त्र्यम्बकं यजामहे सुगन्धिं पुष्टिवर्धनम् ।

उर्वारुकमिव बन्धनात् मृत्योर्मुक्षीय माऽमृतात् ॥

*Om tryambakam yajāmabe sugandhim puṣṭivardhanam
urvārukamiva bandhanāt mṛtyormukṣīya mā’amṛtāt*

Om! We worship the Three-eyed One, the fragrant (the limitless), the giver of wellbeing: “Just as the ripe melon (frees itself) from bondage (to the vine), please (make me mature — bless me with Knowledge — and thereby) free me from mortality (from saṃsāra), not from immortality!”

Om - the symbol of the Self, of Brahman; the living power of any *mantra*

Tryambakam - three-eyed one (*tri* - three; *ambaka* - eye): the one endowed with the three ‘eyes’ (sources of light) of sun, moon and fire

Yajāmabe - we worship (all of us, by our every action, worship the limitless, whether we realise it or not, for we seek it in every action)

Sugandhim - beautiful fragrance (*su* - superior, virtuous, beautiful; *gandhim* - fragrance); *sugandha* implies happiness — just as fragrance attracts the mind towards itself, so does happiness; hence *sugandhi* implies one who is of the nature of happiness (limitlessness).

Puṣṭi - welfare, prosperity, health, wellbeing

Vardhanam - giving increase, enhancing, strengthening, bestowing

Urvārukam - ripe melon (a ripe melon naturally detaches its own stalk from the vine: its very ripeness/maturity gives it its ‘liberation’ from the vine)

Iva - just as

Bandhanāt - from bondage (to the vine)

Mṛtyoḥ - from death (and, by implication, ‘from life’ too, i.e. ‘from saṃsāra, the eternal round of birth, death and rebirth by giving me that knowledge that is mokṣa’ is what is meant here)

Mukṣīya - please free (me) (a precatory, not supplicatory, usage in *Rig Veda*; from *Dhātu* ‘*muc*’ MW 820.3 ‘to loose, free, let go, liberate’)

Mā - not

Amṛtāt - from immortality (used here to emphasise the desire for liberation: “Free me from death and rebirth! — don’t ‘free’ me from immortality!”)