veda mantra

veda mantra-s (sacred utterances) have specific udata, anudata, and swarita notations to be followed. It is often explained to us that there is no karta (doership or authorship) for these mantra-s because they were revealed to various rishi-s at different times.

**Purpose**

Regardless of whether we understand the meaning, purpose and depth of the vedic mantra-s, we still reap the benefits of chanting them repeatedly when chanted in the prescribed manners. Sounds are vibrations. Mantra is a combination of various sacred sounds. When these vibrations are revealed to the seer, they are assembled in a cohesive manner containing beejakshara (potent powerful sound form). For example, the sounds *gam ganapataye namah; shrim hrim klim ayim vam glaum* etc. are the beejakshara-s that are embedded within the mantra-s. The sounds thus produced with these are a set of very positive vibrations that produces a lot of energy when chanted correctly.

**Procedure**

It is highly recommended that the mantra-s be chanted with the synchronization of our breath when we sit on the seat of meditation or japa. Inhale a deep conscious breath and chant the mantra while exhaling. Our saadhana (practice) should not become a nuisance to others, so you can whisper if you want to avoid disturbing others around you. The mantra has to sound with the indications of the specific udata, anudata, and swarita notations to be able to unleash its positive energy.

**Meter**

It is crucial to chant the mantra-s in a particular meter as prescribed. In the ancient format of Samskritam language there were no punctuation marks such as period, comma, semi-colon etc.. The author provided the channda (meter) in which the mantra had to be chanted. Thus the reader also had to be knowledgeable enough to decipher the meter and read per the instructions provided.

The mantra-s and notations that have been provided automatically regulate one’s breath when chanted properly. The breath energizes the mantra in a very specific spiritual note. Hence it is crucial to learn them in the most authentic manner and chant it as a Vedic mantra rather than humming a tune so as to speak. There were strict stipulations prohibiting the mantra-s to be chanted in musical ragas. They were not to be repeated as a musical expression because the altered meter nullifies the entire effect and purpose of the mantra.
Focused Mind
We are easily distracted when we sit for japa and our mind wanders all over during that time. The unsynchronized distracted mind doesn’t help us focus on the japa. We come with an erroneous attitude and misunderstanding that japa will enable us to fine tune our mind and help with our focus. It doesn’t work that way. We have to bring the focused mind and apply it to our saadhana. Tattva ekagrat manaha kritva na kinchit apichintayet (Bhagwad Gita Chapter 6). Lord Krishna stipulates to first bring the mind to a focal point and then apply that focused mind to the saadhana. So the point isn’t to practice mindful living through japa, puja and other saadhana-s for peace of mind or reducing stress levels, blood pressure etc. All those are by-products of a disciplined focused mind. We reap the best benefit of the mantra when we sit with a well focused mind.

Result
The impact of the mantra will be revealed in its due course of time. That patience to stick to one mantra and repeat it such that it becomes jeerni bhutva (well amalgamated) itself is the greatest saadhana. Constant repetition of the mantra enables it to be so well digested that every nerve, every pore resounds of that vibration. There is no point rushing into it, because the sense of urgency for results doesn’t help.

One of the veda mantra-s the Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra is expounded below:

Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra

om tryambakam yajaamahe
sugandhim pushthivardhanam
urvaarukamiva bandhanaan
mrityormuksheeya maamritaat

Invocation
Vashistha rishi, the kula guru of Raghu kula (dynasty) during the time-frame of Dasharatha Maharaj and Shri Ram ji was the mantra drshtaraha (seer) who had had the revelation for this great sanctified maha mrityanjaya mantra. This revelation was much before he was Shri Ram ji’s tutor. rudra deva (Lord Shiva) is invoked through this mantra
Purpose

This mantra encompasses many benefits and is chanted for:

- Spiritual strength and energy for a speedy recovery when sick or on death bed. This mantra is also called as *mrtasanjeevani mantra*. *Mrtyun jayati* indicates the mantra with which one can win over death. Hence we chant this mantra for people’s welfare, health and speedy recovery when somebody is sick, bed ridden.
- Chanted for protection of the *jiva* in the other worlds when the soul departs
- Longevity of the hale and hearty souls invoking the following:
  - *shanti* (peace)
  - *aishwarya* (wealth)
  - *tusti* (satisfaction or contentment)
  - *pushti* (prosperity)
  - *moksha/Amritattvam* (immortalily)
- Birthday celebrations seeking blessings for worthwhile and meaningful lives
  - It is advised to chant this mantra at least 108 times on our birthdays to invoke the blessings and longevity in our lives. Swami Sivananda Maharaj also reiterates that on our birthday sincere seekers should seek this alternative for chanting the mantra at least 50,000 times to uplift our spirits. It marks a good beginning for the rest of the year ahead. The seeker also reaps the *punya* from this!

Meaning

*tryambakam* (three-eyed one; or also the father of the Trinity – Bramha, Vishnu, Maheswar) *yajaamahe* (I worship)

We invoke Bhagwan rudra in the cosmic primordial cause. Having recognized His *shakti* (energy) and unifying with that *Shakti* He expresses the *ananda tandava* (dance of bliss). There are two *tandava*-s of Lord Shiva, one, *ananda tandava* and the other *pralaya tandava*. In the *pralaya tandava* He generates so much energy that He consumes everything back in it’s nascent form of existence. In the *ananda tandava*, from that primordial cause it generated the Trinity. The primordial cause here refers to the different forms of worship within the Hindu religion. The *panchayatana* (five forms) worship includes worshipping different form of deities - Shiva, Vishnu, Devi, Surya and Ganesh Bhagawans. Shri Adi Shankarachyra merged all these five and encouraged people to place their main deity in the center and the
rest of them around it. He thus encompassed all sectors of Hindu worship and unified the five main sectors listed below:

- shaiva – worshippers of Lord Shiva
- vaishnva - worshippers of Lord Vishnu
- shakta - worshippers of Devi
- saurya - worshippers of Lord Surya
- ganpatya - worshippers of Lord Ganesha

_ambaka_ also refers to the three-eyed, _soma_ (moon), _surya_ (sun) and _agni_ (fire). Lord Shiva rarely opens the third eye _agni_. Kama deva was annihilated the moment Lord Shiva opened the third eye and Kama deva was reduced to _bhasma_ (ashes). Lord Shiva adorns our desires that are roasted and completely gotten into the _bhasma_ form. Whatever we perceive is seen in the presence of these three lights. It serves us a reminder that this light of consciousness in whose presence I am able to perceive and interact is my Lord Shiva.

_sugandhim_

He is _divya gandhadaha_ (divine fragrance). In Yoga _shastra_ (science of Yoga) it is said that seekers who have meditated for long periods of time carry a special fragrance wherever they sit or walk. Their _naadi_-s (nerves) have flushed out all the _malah_ (pollutants) or _aamah_ (toxins). The system thus becomes so pure that even their sweat has a very divine fragrance. Lord Shiva who is in constant meditation has this natural fragrance unveiled.

_pushthi vardhanam_

In India, Parvati devi is worshipped in form of _pushthi vardhini devi_ in Jageshwara temple near Nainital. This is a _swayambhu jyotir linga_ temple that has a beautiful _pratima_ of Parvati devi. She isn’t depicted as the usual 16-year old but is seen in a striking motherly form. Lord Shiva gets the ability to be the nourisher because of His consort, pushthi vardhini devi. Through Her presence and _Shakti_, He expresses as the nourisher for all devotees.

At one level He nourishes by taking care of the _vyadhi_ (obstacles) at the physical level. We also have a lot of mismatch at the emotional and intellectual levels due to failure to fine tune. Our lack of clarity, absence of any direction, dearth of conviction and pressure due to various conditionings creates a lot of this internal imbalance. As _pushthi vardhanam_ He provides us nourishment at both physical and subtle levels.
He also uproots at the causal level removing the ignorance by constantly nourishing the seeker to find the upward movement.

If you sincerely seek the Lord’s grace even just appealing to Him once, He offers genuine support and cradles us in His arms. We have to make ourselves available to experience this grace. But more often than not we take a rain check and go muddle in the samsara again! However, once we seek the Lord’s support, He ensures that we don’t get lost. We have to sincerely invoke the Lord in form of pushthi vardhanam seeking His blessings to nourish us in the right direction until we reach the goal. Lord Shiva nourishes us at a physical, emotional and subtler level. He blesses us with ease-ness removing all discomfort and diseases.

**mrityor**

All kinds of conditionings are called *mrityu* (death). We don’t realize the patterns in which we get entrapped. When fear and apprehension envelops us, it hinders us from discarding all these conditionings. These limitations are referred to as *mrityu* in every step of our life.

The scriptures have always sanctioned only three of these conditionings until we reach the final destination – God, Guru and Scriptures. Once we reach our goal the same scriptures have also proclaimed *tatra veda aveda bhavanti* – these individuals don’t need to follow their lives according to the dictum of the veda-s (scriptures). Rather, these individuals are now a testimony to the veda-s. Until then all the other conditionings including family, friends, nationality, gender, all of them have to be one-by-one peeled away.

There is nothing wrong in exploring the external world if we do it with a conscious alert mind not to get trapped into the world. In fact the Upanishads say *pariksha lokaan karma chitaan nirveda mayaan nasti akritena kritena. pariksha lokaan* – experiment with all that which is currently tickling you. But you should have enough tenacity and depth of personality not to get enslaved to those conditionings. Very few people have that courage. Hence it is said that until you gain confidence draw certain boundaries. Anything outside those boundaries are *varchita* (prohibited) and anything inside those boundaries are *shashita* (ordained). Follow the ordained duties selflessly and as a dedication to the Higher altar. Experiment to your heart’s content without losing focus on that which we are truly seeking and aspiring for. At some point we all realize that the experimental world around us cannot provide us what we seek. Hence the
conditionings have to be broken. The seeker either has to have the courage to experiment and break all those conditionings; or have the trust and faith to surrender to an experienced master whose word points us to the right direction for the seeker to follow implicitly.

In fact, through rigorous saadhana (practice) when a prepped saadhak (seeker) reaches a certain stage to leave the body and merge with the Paramatma once and for all, it is like a fully ripened fruit that falls off effortlessly with just a slight pressure. You can consciously see each layer falling and you simply move on without any fear, pain or ambiguity. The seeker experiences a similar experience on the seat of meditation when that final blow to the ahamkara (ego) wherein it now merges with the totality to become a nobody.

\[ muksheeya \]

\[ mukto bhavetum ichati \] - to be released or liberation from all the conditionings. Those who do not have the courage to live their lives and experiment cannot have the courage to seek moksha. We yearn to be released from this jail (body) - that which we cannot feel, see, touch, smell or hear. May we be released from these conditionings, and not from ma amritaat (immortality.) Great masters give up the world and catch on to the Lord while ordinary people give up the Lord and hold on to the world!

Here the seeker requests for the clarity that O Lord may I hold on to the immortality and may that not be snatched away from me. Rather, may I be released from all bondages and various conditionings that I primarily presume to be necessary for my existence. Regardless of whether the bondages are the physical, emotional or intellectual aspect, please release me from all of them. Hence we start the simple saadhana at a physical level. Wherever there is a physical comfort it can become a distraction. For example, in the realm of food, Shri Adi Shankaracharya recommends the greatest tapas (austerity) is to accept whatever food served at the table. Food intake should be a medicine for the disease called hunger rather than eating to satisfy cravings or liking for certain foods. Other seekers who have specific issues to sleep only on certain beds or use particular pillows are advised to break the conditioning by sleeping on a hard floor. Their saadhana is to shy away from all these comforts. These precise methods are not generic recommendations like fashion statements for everyone to follow; rather, they are prescribed for people with certain specific conditionings. Once you have crossed it, focus on the next step.
By identifying and ironing out the physical aspects individual likes and dislikes, the seeker is acutely aware of the things that entrap them. We all have a natural affinity towards the things we like, and disgust or disenchantment to other things which we dislike. Both these (likes and dislikes) have to be balanced out and handled carefully. Then move to the next subtle layers, which are tricky. It is very time consuming and an arduous task to even identify the layers of conditioning that bind us. Identify those patterns and layers of conditioning and rip them apart one by one. The pain and discomfort is unavoidable, but just like removing a bandaid - you can choose either to rip it off or slowly peel off the bandaid little by little.

Remove these conditionings with proper understanding and once they are removed, there is no more moha (disillusion) and you can easily trash it because you realize there is no utilitarian value in those binding patterns or habits. When it no longer serves a purpose, the habits seem so ridiculous. Those conditionings have to be understood in perspective of how they needlessly enslave us. Recognize the existing patterns that bind us, observe them thoroughly and understand how they control us. Figure out how to grow independent of them and then peel them off to discard them permanently. Don’t brood over them or even ponder upon those habits. Even mental indulgence on these patterns that condition us prevents us from meditating upon the Lord. Pray to the Lord that we find the clarity to be able to independently exist without the conditionings. Seek strength and courage to drop them as soon as you deem them to be unnecessary.

Using a crutch to find stability is needed. But you have to let go the crutches after finding that stability. Otherwise that in itself becomes a weak point in our growth.
Summary

The primary purpose of our life is to find that \textit{moksha} (release or liberation) from various bondages. The seeker sincerely prays that may I never ever lose sight of this goal, and may that vision never be snatched away from me. It is a potent mantra that serves entire mankind:

- For the population that is healthy, the saints advise hale and hearty seekers to chant this mantra are for having \textit{moksha} as the \textit{phala} (result). Let the body gain longevity so that through this body we get an opportunity to understand and grasp the necessity of this path.
- For the people afflicted with diseases this mantra relieves the sick people from \textit{adi} and \textit{vyadhi} (physical and subtle obstacles).
- For the deceased, this mantra and it’s vibrations can protect the departed souls who have left the body and are continuing the next part of their journey.

Thus it is a very powerful mantra to be learned by every Hindu. Every \textit{saadhak} (seeker) should chant this. We sincerely pray for grace and guidance from Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda to remain steadfast on our spiritual path so that we don’t miss the chance and achieve the goal within this lifetime right here right now.

Om Tat Sat

Ref: \textit{Sri Rudram discourses} by Pujya Swami Sarveshananda at Chinmaya Mission, Dallas USA. (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZiicSJoE70)