

## **Chandi Path, Atha Sri Devyatharvashirsham - The Highest Meaning of the Goddess (pps 98 to 111)**

*Broadcast live from the Devi Mandir by Swami Satyananda Saraswati*

*Class Duration, 60 mins*

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### **Discourse**

Om Sam Saraswatyai Namah. Namaste.

Atha Sri Devyatharvasirsam - The Highest Meaning of the Goddess

*Swamiji recites pages 94 to 106 in Sanskrit.*

Let's turn to page 94. The Highest Meaning of the Goddess

This is also called the Devi Upanishad. This Upanishad is the philosophy of the Goddess. It combines the Rgvedoktam Devi Suktam with the Tantroktam Devi Suktam. It takes all the unity of the Goddess and explains the Navarna mantra and the Kali Vidya of the Sri Vidya mantra (15 letter mantra *kaeila hrim hasakahala hrim sakala hrim*). It also explains the meaning of hrim. Let's look inside.

Verse 1

Verse 2

Verse 3

And I am going to add "whether true or untrue." Whether it is as you imagine it to be or as it actually is, it doesn't make any difference. It is all Her form.

Verse 4

Verse 5

Verse 6

Verse 7

Those are the press stones with which we purify the somras, the nectar of devotion that comes from the pressing out of the offering of devotion with attention.

Knowledge is the wealth of the Goddess. She is all of this. She is everything that is Divine. She is everything that is not so Divine too. And She is the maya of delusion which makes me forget about God and She is the Goddess that we worship. And for such a one who knows this, the wealth of the Goddess increases.

Verse 8

With all actions we bow to You. There is not one thing that one of us can do that does not indicate that we bow to You. Every thought, every deed is a demonstration of our devotion to the Goddess, either with plus devotion or minus devotion, but we are devoted. Just like ice is not devoid of temperature. It just has minus temperature. So often, our actions have minus devotion, not devoid of devotion, just lacking in the focus.

The true bowing is the creative discipline of our sadhana. It is not about falling on our faces and touching toes. It is not about physical exercise. It is about the discipline by which we bow down. We are regularly bowing down because look at the quality of our lives, look at our values, look at our sadhana, with discipline we have bowed down.

Verse 9

Remember *durgam* means difficulties, obstacles, barriers. Durga takes away the *durgam*.

Verse 10

Just look at the loving vibrations we are offering to You right now. Here, we Gods and Goddesses have congregated just to celebrate of your Divinity.

She is Kamadhenu. She grants fulfillment of every single desire we could have. She is all vibrations, all sound. And Mom, we are doing the best we can, so please give us increase in capacity or come here and grant our wish. We will leave the decision to You. If our capacity is lacking, then increase it. We are trying to the best of our ability. Please come here and pay attention to us. We are paying attention to you. Shouldn't it be mutual and reciprocal as it is said in Lalita Trishati? So please come before us.

Verse 11

We bow to every form of goodness which You demonstrate.

Verse 12

The great goal of manifested existence, the great wealth of manifested existence, the great definition of manifested existence or the definition of the great manifested existence.

*Prach udaya* may that light and wisdom continually rise, just like the sun rises. The sun rises in the dawn and rises and rises and continually rises (*prach udaya* continually rising). May that light of wisdom continually rise within us.

Verse 13

Your daughter is the Mother of Enlightenment, She is Aditi, She one without a second, She is the Mother of the Gods, She is the mother of all the purest aspects of the consciousness and also the excellent Gods of the Eternal Bliss, they take birth along with her.

Verse 14

This presents a very interesting code. [*Refer to Swamiji's translation in the book for a detailed explanation*].

Verse 15

The knowledge of the Sri, the highest respect, shanti in your mind and in your heart. When you can listen with perfect peace in your mind and your heart, you are showing respect. When you are dreaming and day dreaming, thinking about what you are going to say and rebuttal, you are not listening. Sri Vidya, the knowledge of the highest respect.

If you perceive with perfect peace, you grok. Consciousness is filled and you know instantly the truth of what you perceive, what you heard, what you saw and if it is true, then there is immediate change in you behavior because of absorbing the truth.

You know how to learn. Once you know how to learn, you can just choose what you need to learn next. What is the next lesson I need to learn? I will pay attention in the same way and I will perceive with perfect equanimity.

Verse 16

Please protect us. We need it so badly, Mom. We could get in trouble at a moments notice and could blow it at any time. It is so easy to make a mistake and it is so hard to rectify that mistake. Please protect us.

Verse 17

Verse 18

Verse 19

Ha plus ra plus ī plus anusvar = Hrim. Ha is all that would be perceived through senses - empirical knowledge. Ra is all that can be conceived in the mind, all concepts and dreams. Ī is all that can be known through meditation or intuition and anusvar, She is beyond. Everything that

we know through the senses, thought of in the mind, or known through meditation and intuition and beyond, all perception is Hrim.

Verse 20

This verse spells the Navarna mantra. And if you meditate upon this verse, you will understand the beej mantras of each word, put them together with all your knowledge, and come up with the Navarna mantra. So we have had the Kali mantra (*kaeila hrim hasakahala hrim sakala hrim*). We had the Hrim mantra and now we know the Navarna mantra, all spelled out in code. Whoever will meditate upon these mantras will find intrinsic bhava, the intrinsic understanding of the intuitive contemplation of those mantras.

Verse 21

Verse 22

Verse 23

This is one of the great verses of all Sanskrit.

Verse 24

In that ultimate silence beyond which no greater silence exists, that is darshan of Durga, that is where we know Durga.

Verse 25

Verse 26

It is better to know what you are doing than just keep doing it by rote memory. You want to know what you are doing, what you are trying to achieve, what the goal is, what your objective is. Then you take the sankalpa and establish a deity. And if you establish a deity without knowledge and without understanding, you can recite millions of mantras but one day, you are going to have to try to understand what it is that you are doing. You are going to want to understand.

Four times of worship are recommended for Sri Vidya meditators. That is the four sandhyas - the junctions. The junction between night and day is called dawn; the junction between the morning and afternoon is called midday; the junction between the day and night is called evening; and the junction between night and day is called midnight. Those are the four sandhyas – the four times of prayer observed by Sri Vidya meditators. In fact, you will be so tired in the morning that you won't be able to commit any sin!

Understanding this avoids the Great Death. And the Great Death is forgetting our spiritual selves. Dwelling consistently and exclusively with our material world, we die a thousand deaths. That is the Great Death, a lifetime of material attachment. Om

## Question & Answer Session

### ***Why is there a code? Is it better to recite the code than just recite the mantra itself?***

Swamiji: First of all, why is there a code? There is a code because many of the old gurus in the old school said, "I am going to let you figure out this knowledge by yourself. I am giving you this knowledge to meditate upon and if you meditate upon these verses, after sometime you will come to understanding of what it is means. And you yourself will arrive at the beej mantra. You yourself will understand and discover by yourself. You become the rishis of the Chandi yourself." So that is why the rishis in days of old gave the code and let the disciples discern by themselves from their own meditation. They became the rishis of the Chandi. Now today, I understand that many people do not have that much time. Especially those of us who started this journey over the age of 40 or 50. We do not have that another 50 or 60 years to meditate upon the verse in order to understand what it means. So I thought it would be easier to decipher the code. But that is why they gave it to us in code. The rishis asked their disciples to come back and tell them what it meant and the disciples invariably would say, "Kama means desire and yoni means womb and kamala means lotus and Vajrapani means thunderbolt in the hand." At which point, the Guru would say, "You better meditate a little bit more."

### ***Is it ok to use "kaeila hrim hasakahala hrim sakala hrim" for jaap?***

Swamiji: Yes, it is ok. It is not only ok but desirable. You are totally authorized to use that mantra for jaap.

### ***Can you please tell us if Chandi worship is linked to Sri Vidya upasana?***

Swamiji: Yes, it is. Any worship of the female form of divinity is Sri Vidya. All meditations on the female form of divinity are Sri Vidya. The knowledge of the highest respect is to worship Mother. If you worship Mother, you are a Sri Vidya mediator. We won't get into all the details but there are many forms of Sri Vidya and there are many forms of the knowledge of the highest respect. If you worship the Goddess, you are a Sri Vidya meditator.

### ***When the meter changes frequently, how do we determine when to pause?***

Swamiji: The path or blank verse is called *kakubh* in vedic parlance. It is a blank verse and the only way to really know is to sit with your Guru and recite. But you will feel for yourself as you are reciting the blank verse where the sandhi vicched will occur. You will understand where it is grammatically correct to break the sandhi. And that will determine how you pronounce.

### ***What is an example of a mixed spiritual discipline mentioned at the bottom of page 99?***

Swamiji: There are many spiritual disciplines that are mixed. Our discipline is mixed. There are three of forms of discipline (primarily in pujas): vedic, puranic or tantric, and mishra (mixed) which means that we mixed the vedic mantras with tantric mantras or puranic mantras. So Chandi is mishra because it starts with Rgvedoktam Ratri Suktam and ends with Rgvedoktam Devi Suktam and in the middle are the tantric mantras or puranic mantras which are generally written in either anustup or trishtup chandah.

***When you say to meditate on the mantra, does that mean doing jaap of the mantra?***

Swamiji: When we do jaap, we are automatically drawn to the understanding that just reciting by rote as a parrot is not going to bring us to the highest fulfillment. We start to contemplate the meaning and application of every word and every syllable in the mantra. After some time of doing jaap and saying the mantra again and again, one day we are going to say, “What is it that I am saying? What does that mean?” And then we go deeper. We consult other texts, translations, commentaries, and dictionaries. We start looking up the words and start thinking, “Hey, what is that what I am saying.”

I love **Kaliyugabrah** who said, “He who repeats what he does not understand is no better than an ass with a load of books.” And in same way, as we start chanting and we are doing jaapa then suddenly a syllable jumps out at us and we understand the meaning. And suddenly a word pops out and we understand the meaning then we put two words together and we understand more meaning and pretty soon we will read someone else’s translation, someone else’s commentary, and then we read the Sanskrit and then we know what it is means to be. So as we are doing jaap of these mantras, we are going to start feeling the beejas coming through, or feel the energies coming through, the vibrations coming through. The Chandi Path or whatever text it might be will take on a whole new dimension of meaning for us and those meanings will grow and we starting employing them in our lives. We start living our lives based on these principles and suddenly we turn around and say, “Whoa, I am not that same person I was when I started reciting this text.”

***Is verse 19 referring to Hrim as the one syllable mantra?***

Swamiji: Yes

***Is the last verse referring to the recitation of the Chandi Path or the mantras of Devyatharvashirsham?***

Swamiji: This is the Upanishad so they are talking here about the Devyatharvashirsham but it also applies to the whole Chandi Path, of which the Devyatharvashirsham has been incorporated, so it is part of it.

So you could say, if you want a short cut, “I am just going to recite the Devyatharvashirsham 108 times” or could say, “I am going to recite the entire Chandi Path along with the Devyatharvashirsham.”

***In verse 24, the Goddess resides in form of letters. Should we recite the alphabet as part of our sadhana?***

Swamiji: Absolutely, it is the part of the puja and we should recite as part of our puja. We are going to perform the nysas of the matrikas of all the alphabets and it will go right into our being and become part of us. So, if somebody says the letter of right ear, you know where it is.

***What is meaning of reciting in Amrita Siddha astrological union ?***

Swamiji: Many levels of meaning. There is an astrological yoga (according to the almanac or the specific time). Or it means if you put yourself into the yoga, into the union with Amrita siddhi, the Siddhi of Amrit - the nectar of immortal bliss, the nectar of eternal attainment, in the union with this nectar of immortal bliss, nectar of pure devotion. So it has many levels meaning. It

could be an astrological one (in the almanac which specifies a particular time, perhaps every 3 or 4 years). If you recite at that time, you will get the great death avoided but if you just put yourself into the attainment, this siddhi of perfect union of yoga with the amrit, the nectar of immortal bliss, and you can stay in that union, who cares about the time, who cares about the almanac? So many scriptures have a reference to an astrological configuration that is most appropriate for this scripture and those calculations have many levels of meanings.

***Can Mother be worshipped in a female or male form? I have always seen Thakur as Mother also.***

Swamiji: You are absolutely right. He-she is both, he and she. Actually we say that the body is prakriti and the soul (atma) is purush. You can worship the container as prakriti (Divine Mother) and you can worship the soul with the container as the Divine Father. So when you worship Thakur (the form of Ramkrishna), you are worshipping the Goddess and when you are worship Shree Maa, you are worshipping Lord Shiva.

***The Goddess tells us in verse 5 that She travels with the Relievers of Suffering. Is not the Goddess Herself the Reliever of Sufferings?***

Swamiji: Yes She is and She had appointed many Rudras to take away all of our sufferings and She travels with them all. And She herself works through them so that Shiva, Brahma, and Vishnu can perform their functions. So She herself is the Reliever of Sufferings and She travels with all of Her ambassadors.

***Do you have to do 108 oblations in one asana?***

Swamiji: You do not have to but if you want it to be effective, then you will want to give the most. So start off the first time just doing 108, how long it takes you, I don't know, perhaps 8 hours. Do 8 hours over the course of a few days. Work up to it. This is tapasya. We want to give You our tapasya. We want to demonstrate to You the sincerity of our devotion by the performance of tapasya. Now, if it says recite 108 times, then recite 108 times as you can and after you know that you have recited 108 times, then try to do it in two asanas and then after you get it in two asanas, and then try to do it in one asana. Then, try to do it in one breathe and keep going. There is no limit how much we can give in order to demonstrate how much we love Her.

Om Sam Saraswatyai Namah. Namaste.

### **Further Information**

36 classes were held in 2008 to discuss the Chandi Path. Please visit us on the World Wide Web at <http://www.shreemaa.org/> for the other classes and for more information. The Chandi Path text used in this class can be found at the online bookstore.