

Chandi Path Class #7 Athargala Stotram (pps 72 - 83)

*Broadcast live from the Devi Mandir by Swami Satyananda Saraswati
Class Duration, 55 min*

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Discourse

Om Sang Saraswatyai Namaha. Namaste. Namaste everyone.

On page 72, Athargala Stotram. This is the praise that unfastens the bolt. Let's recite together:

Swamiji recites pp. 72-83 in Sanskrit

Let's go back to the beginning and begin to translate.

Now, the praise that unfastens the bolt. And now here look at this opportunity we have. The door to the secret of the Divine Mother is a well guarded secret, it's a well-protected door. It's got a deadbolt latch and that's the argal. And it's got a sikal, what we call a security chain or a pin that latches the pin and that's called the kilakam. So first we have adorned ourselves with the armour of the Gods. We are well protected in any eventuality. Now our challenge is to open up the door to the secret. So we're going to open up first the deadbolt lock. And we're going to open up the lock through the argala stotram, the praise that unfastens the bolt. And that's what the bolt is. It's not like a bolt of lightning, it's a deadbolt lock. A securely locked door protecting the secret - the being of the Divine Mother. Because once we can open up those doors and enter into the secret, She becomes ours. So now let's

Om presenting...

Begin reading

...is the meter.

Now, most of modern Sanskrit is written in Anustup Chandah. It is a Vedic meter but it's called classical Sanskrit as compared with Vedic Sanskrit, which uses Gayatri, Ushnik, Brihat, Jagati, Pankti, Anustup, and Trishtubh - those are the 7 classical meters. However most of classical Sanskrit which is modern uses Anustup Chandah. And that means there are 32 syllables to the verse. There are 16 syllables to a line. There are 8 syllables to a quarter of a verse or to the half of the line. Four times 8 is 32. If you can count to 8 you can chant ninety percent of modern Sanskrit. It's just a pure mathematical formula and once you get it in your genes and flowing through your system, it just becomes second nature where you pause because the sandhi, the words, the poetry will automatically break on the eighth syllable. Let's just look at the first line as we go along.

You all know how to count. We count the spaces on the fingers. And we start with the middle space on the ring finger, that's one. The lower space on the ring finger is two. Then we go to the lowest space on the pinky and that's 3, 4, 5 and then go around again, 6, 7, 8, 9, and that's 10 if you need it. And you exclude these two spaces because they're the ones that point to you. And if someone is pointing to you, who is that, the pointer? Must be me. And if my goal is to dissolve my "I" then I don't want to be pointing any fingers at you. So we go 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 and this is 1 x 10 on the left hand, 2 x 10 – to 100 and I'm there. This is called, the hand is called kar, and this is called kara mala. And this mala is an external object so when you use it, and you can't possibly count to 8 or to 10 using a mala of 108 beads, how do you know when to stop. It's been my problem all my life – how do you know when to stop. So if you count on the digits of your finger, you know when to stop. I can stop on cue. Let's try the first verse. Watch this:

Jayantee...That's 8.

Vajra...That's 8 again. Two times 8 – 16.

Durga...Three, that's 8 again. 24

Svaha... And that's 4 times 8. 32 syllables to the verse. Let's try it on verse 2.

(Chant verse 2)

Anustup chandah. And watch this, this is even more fun:

(Chant verse 3)

All you got to do is count to 8 and you can chant 90 percent of all the material in classical Sanskrit. Just stop. After every 8 syllables, pause. Take a little breather, take a break. If you do, you will automatically break the sandhi in the right place. Automatically the grammar divides itself. So here, anustup, 32 syllables is the meter. "The respected great Goddess of true wealth is the deity." And remember, her true wealth is represented by the bija mantra shrim. The great Goddess of true wealth... (*Sanskrit*). The sh means shanti, ra means your mind, i means your heart, anuswar means perfection. The ultimate illumination of peace in your mind and in your heart is the true wealth. She is the great Goddess of true wealth, the Goddess of Peace. And She sits on the lotus of peace and She holds a lotus in her hand and the lotus stands for peace. She's the deity.

"for the satisfaction..."

- "this appendage" this is one of the angas, the appendages or the limbs or the part of the body
Who Tears Apart Thought"

Please start here. Please, don't make me think. And if I do have to think, let me think about something nice, like you. Just don't make me think about me. I'll be satisfied.

"Markandeya said..."

Remember Kal means darkness, Kali takes away all the Kal, she takes away the darkness. That's why she's dark. She's got all of our darkness. And Kali and Gauri are the two sisters, remember, they're the two sides of the same coin. Kali takes away the darkness and Gauri illuminates the light. The Bhadrakali, the excellent one beyond time, kal means time, she kali means beyond the kal, she's akal, she's Bhadra, she's excellent.

“durga...”

Kapalini, she's the bearer of the skulls of impure thoughts. Now she's taken up all the demons that are perplexing us. All the negativities within me and she's ascribed to them a form and a personality and all the voices that are debating inside the arena of my mind. And she takes Her sword and She grabs them by the hair and WHACK! She cuts off their heads and she makes a munda mala of all the negativities that are within us so that when we look inside, there's nothing negative left. She's wearing them all as an adornment, as an ornament kapalini, all the negativities, all the impurities, She's taking away.

“the reliever of difficulties...”

She is loving forgiveness and She forgives us and we got to forgive us too so I don't have to dwell on all the dumb things I've done, I can forgive me too. If she can forgive me, then why can't I. She's Dhatri, Siva Dhatri, the supporter of the universe.

And she's Swaha, remember all the Gods got mad, Agni was eating all the oblations. They were all getting hungry, he didn't leave any prasad for them even. They said what are we going to do? We're not getting our share of the sacrifices and they all got together and they said what should we do about this. Agni, this fire, he's eating everything! And they decided to get him married. That'll do it guys! So they all got together and they created this Goddess and they called her Swaha, I am one with God. Or swa means your own, and ha means Ishwar. Ishwar is my own or I am one with God and every time we make an oblation to the fire, we call Swaha and Swaha comes and she says okay hubbie, you get a share, but don't be a pig and I'm going to take and redistribute all the prasad to the intended recipient. So the oblations of I am one with God, then everybody got some food and then all the devotees on earth who were making these offerings, they called Swaha and She came and She took away all the prasad and She said okay, I'm cleaning up now. You've had your share. You have to distribute your largesse. So and Swadha is the Goddess who distributes the offerings to the ancestors.

“Conquer...”

Now why are we bowing to this dark night? Because the light only shines in the darkness. If there were no darkness, you would never see the light. So now we bow to you dark night because we see that you are a Goddess and you have brought your sister Usha the dawn and now we can see the light because of the darkness and we see, now we're in the light, we can see where the darkness was. Namaste, thanks for leaving. It was a pleasure for you to leave. And now when you come again, you have come as a worshipful Goddess and I'm not afraid of you anymore. I see you are allowing the light to shine so you are no longer an object of terror to me. You've become beneficent and that's why i bow to you. We all bow to you as the illuminator of the light.

“To you who...”

This is chapter one. Remember too much and too little are always saying, “hey you can’t sit still. You don’t have enough. Get up and get some more! Hey you can’t sit still you’ve got too much! Get up and get rid of some!” And now Brahma, the creative capacity praised Yoga Nidra, “Hey Goddess, wake up Vishnu! And let him fight, he’s the protector of the universe, let him put too much and too little into balance.”

“Give us your form...”

What will we do with your form? Show it to us, let us inculcate that form into our bhav, into our being, let us be representatives of the form of divinity and let us see your form all the time, whenever we get a chance. Give us your form, give us victory. We are struggling with these little ego selves. Please, we are fighting this battle, constantly, every time, every thought, every action, selfishness raises his head and says hey what’s in it for me? How do I get the most for me? And I’m struggling with this constantly, every moment. Why did she say that to me? Why did this happen to me? I’m struggling with this constant, we are all struggling with this battle. Give us victory Mom, it’s not anything major that we’re asking for, just let us win the battle. It’s not such a big deal for you, give us welfare. Give us this welfare, give us this great fame and fortune and welfare that we become heroic warriors and our reputations are repute. We’re known as those who have faced the battle and have come out victorious. If there’s any way that people in the world would call me, let them call me famous for having faced the enemy, myself, and having defeated him. Give us welfare.

“Dvisho jahi...”

All the dvish, all the conflict, all the hostility, all the confrontation, remove it. Diffuse all conflict immediately. That is, can I love you so much that I forget all about enmity with anyone. I have no enmity, I have no enemy in this universe. I don’t know what is confrontation, I see opportunities, I don’t see problems. I’m not confronted with conflicts, I see opportunities to select the appropriate solution and apply it as a seva, as my loving offering to you. This isn’t hostility, this isn’t conflict, it isn’t confusion, it’s an opportunity to select the most appropriate course of action so that we can all dwell in peace and prosperity and live in harmony.

“to you who caused ...”

And this is our refrain, throughout the opening of the deadbolt lock. What do I want from you? Darshan. I want the vision of your form. I want the intuitive vision of your form. I want to inculcate the attributes of that vision of your form. I want to project and reflect the perfection of unity with that form.

“to you who slew ...”

there ain’t nobody who does anything that isn’t in your seva. Everyone who does anything at any time or any place is only trying to serve you because we’re not the actors, we’re the witnesses of

the actions of nature acting according to her nature and act she will and act she must because that's her nature. Why shall we criticize the actions of others?

“give us your form...”

anything that is beautiful in this creation is only beautiful because it reflects divinity. It reflects Your attitude.

“give us your form...”

I can't even think about you. You are so great. You are so magnanimous. Your feet cover the earth, the top of your crown reaches the furthest extremities of the atmosphere. How can I conceive you?

“destroyer”

We have no opposition!

“give us your form...”

And that means mental, physical, every other way. Every type of malady, every type of disease, every type of dis-ease.

“give us your form...”

I don't want any disruptions. No interruptions, no disruptions, no obstacles.

“grant increase...”

And do you know what, if you give us increase in strength, we'll take that shakti and give it right back to you. We'll intensify our devotional worship and that's why we want increase in strength. Not because we want to defeat our enemies, we have no enemies. I am my only enemy.

“oh Goddess”

verse 15

Every time we bow down, the top jewel on my crown touches her feet.

“give us your form...”

Verse 16

Verse 17

Verse 18

Verse 19

That's Krishna. Brahma Vishnu...

“give us...”

Verse 20

Look, if it's good enough for Brahma, if it's good enough for Vishnu, If it's good enough for Siva, then why wouldn't we lazy devotees get off our butts and do something too. We could sing the praise, just like the other Gods do.

Verse 21

Verse 22

And believe me without the discipline, it's hard to even be aware of the great egotism of thought.

“Give us...”

Verse 23

Verse 24

Now, if I am Brahma, I am Vishnu, I am Siva, then my wife will be the Divine Mother. If I am a divine God then the only way I can remember that is to be married to the Divine Mother. And since she is the Shakti, she is the inspiration, she is the guidance, she leads from behind, always. Guys, you don't have a chance. So please request that you get harmony with your mind and a good leader who can lead across this ocean of worldliness. How does she lead from behind? She merely says, oh husband, I know that you have the best interests of our family in every decision that you make. Please, just for my edification, please explain to me how this decision is going to bring our family to a greater harmony.

All she has to do without putting up any resistance, without arguing, without fighting, without breaking dishes, all she has to do is say I accept any decision that you make, just please explain it to me so I'll know how to make that same decision myself if ever I'm confronted with a circumstance when you're not here to make the decisions for me. Just explain it to me. How is this going to lead our family across the ocean of worldliness? How is this going to take us out of bondage and across this ocean of objects and the relationships. Show me how I can illuminate wisdom.

I've got to stop here just for a moment and tell you the story from the Tripura Rahasya, story of Hemalekha and Hemachuda because Hemachuda was the crowned prince and he fell in love with Hemalekha who was the Rishi's daughter and he said, “Hemalekha, please I'd love to marry you.” And Hemalekha said, “that's up to the Rishi, it's not my decision. But please, crowned prince you are about to become the king and I am the Rishi's daughter and I have been raised in the forest practicing meditation. What am I going to do in the palace?” And Hemachuda said,

“Oh you are such a wonderful woman and so beloved to me I’m sure you will join me in illuminating our whole kingdom.”

So the Rishi came home and the crowned prince said to the Rishi, “I want your daughter.” And He said, “Okay. Tatastu. I give you the daughter, take her with you.” So Hemalekha and Hemachuda were married and Hemalekha went into the queen’s chambers and she sat down in meditation. And her husband came in and said, “hello honey, let’s enjoy a sumptuous feast.” And she said, “Oh I don’t enjoy that rich rajasic food. That’s so oily and greasy and spicy and it’s going to make my stomach churn. Please give me some simple roots and fruits and I’ll be more than satisfied.”

And he said, “what kind of a queen are you? You’re the queen of the kingdom. You’ve got to enjoy all the festivities and all the pleasures of the royal status.” And Hemalekha said, “My husband please tell me one pleasure that does not bring pain and I promise I will enjoy with you. Show me just one pleasure that I can enjoy that won’t bring pain too because I learned from my childhood, and I may be wrong, I’m sure the Rishi doesn’t know everything, he may have made a mistake. Every time you invite pleasure you’re inviting pain at the same time. There is a constant cyclical transformation from pleasure into pain and pain into pleasure and in this way we continue to revolve around the wheel of life. Whereas if we seek peace and equanimity, we’ll find the greatest bliss and that’s why. You tell me why enjoying all the royal treats and delights is how that’s going to help me reach to God and I promise I will enjoy with you immediately.”

Well the crowned prince was a little bit taken aback. He didn’t know quite how to respond to this. So he said to her, “Teach me about peace and equanimity, I never heard about that before.” And she said, “Well this is how you do it. You see, you renounce all those worldly pleasures because they’re just going to bring about more conflict and striving and activity and you seek sattva. You seek pure being. You seek pure truth. Put your body and your breath and your mind into a state of equilibrium and balance and move inside. Bring your senses inside.”

Well the crown prince began to practice meditation and the council of ministers said, “What happened to the prince? I mean, he’s not enjoying all the sumptuous treats and delights of the royal household, what an anomaly. He’s only administering justice with equanimity. And he’s behaving in the greatest balance and peace and we better ask the prince about this.”

So the council of ministers went to the crowned prince and they said, “Sire, tell me about why are you not enjoying with us.” And the prince said, “Well can you tell me one pleasure that doesn’t bring pain? The greatest delight comes from internal pleasures. The pleasure of the soul has ever more longevity than the pleasures of the body. So I’ve decided to seek the pleasures of the soul and I’m looking inside.” And the ministers said, “How do you look inside? And the prince said, “Try to meditate.”

Well, the council of ministers started to meditate. And all the wealthy noblemen that came to the council of ministers for the administration of their various business duties, they found the ministers were meditating. And the noblemen said “what are you doing? Why are you meditating like that?” And the ministers gave instruction to the noblemen and the noblemen gave instructions to the merchants and the merchants gave instructions to the labourers. And in the

kingdom of Hemachuda there was peace and prosperity. And this is documented in the Tripura Rahasya, wonderful scripture.

Verse 24

She follows and she's leading. She leads from behind...And there are plenty of difficulties

Verse 25

And we all know which hymn of praise they're referring to, the Devi Mahatmyam, the Greatness of the Goddess. The Durga Saptasati, the 700 verses in praise of she who relieves all difficulties, also known as the Chandi Path, the recitation of the story or the qualities or the attributes of she who tears apart thoughts.

Verse 26

Namaste. Let's see if there are any questions.

Question: Would it be true to say that the purpose of the kavacam from last night's material in addition to protecting the various parts of the body, is also for awakening the shakti in all parts of the body prior to reading the Chandi or meditation?

Absolutely, that is true. And not only does it awaken the shakti, it establishes the shakti because the kavach is a nyas. It is the establishment within the body of the various energies of the Goddess which is really awakening the Goddesses who already dwell there. So we're reminding ourselves (ringing bell) "Wake up." Hey Goddesses, stand up, wake up. I'm calling upon you to please enliven yourselves and present your energies where I can perceive them through, I can actually empirically verify them. I feel you standing up in each place, in each of the places where you've been established. That's where you dwell in this body and that's how the kavach works. It becomes a suit of armour created out of vibrations of the Goddesses. And those vibrations are so strong they create a magnetic field and that field is so strong, it's an impermeable armour and nobody else's antithetical or inimical vibration can permeate our armour and that is the essence of the armour, that's the kavach.

Question: On the Kavach, could you please explain what is meant in verse 50 by "those born by themselves?"

If you have any kind of negative vibration, which is born in the water, born in the air, born by anyway or unborn or born by itself, it just came out of nowhere, I don't know where it came from. No matter what negative energy confronts us, we are protected. There is no energy no negativity that can permeate our kavach. We are armoured, invincible. Just watch Shree Maa walk down the streets of downtown New York. She doesn't even realize she's in New York. She just walks down the street and people move aside, wherever it may be. She wears the Kavach. She has a suit of armour on. They see that yellow and gold sari with red trim come marching down the sidewalk and people move aside. So that's how it works.

Question: Can you please explain the difference between classical and non-classical Sanskrit. Is it only the meter?

No, in Vedic Sanskrit there are 4 criteria. There's the meter, the meaning, the tone and the swar. So you have in addition to include regular classical Sanskrit, we talk about the meter, the meaning and the rhyme, but in Vedic Sanskrit you have a swar, you have a song, a musical notation, an inflection of voice and a tone of the sounds. There are three classical sounds of Vedic Sanskrit, dirgha which means one beat. I'm sorry, hashya is one beat. Dirgha is two beats and pluth is three beats. And then you can add jivanam which is adding life adding jivam to the mantra. So if you have just a short vowel like, verse 56, labate, lab is hasya, one beat, bha is b h a and te is both Plutho, they're two beats, lub bha tey. Rupam is three beats, it's plutho. Om is jivanam. Without count. So these are Vedic formulas and that's the difference between Vedic Sanskrit and classical Sanskrit.

Question: What is your great staff of discipline? Can you explain this a little bit more?

It's the staff that pokes me in the behind and says go to the temple in the morning and sing the Chandi. It's the discipline that says hey I've got a commitment, I've got a discipline I'm going to be regular with it. It's the one that doesn't let me sleep in the morning and say "I'm going to be lazy today." I have a sankalpa, I have a discipline, I have a firm determination, I have defined what my behaviour is going to be like and the discipline, that staff is the one that pokes me every time I say, "Well I'll just kick back and do a little less." And then the staff comes along and says "uh uh, you're on staff, or the staff is going to be on you, get to work!" And that's what the staff is about. It says I'm going to do a certain discipline regularly at this time and any time I want to be lazy and neglect my commitment, the staff comes along and whaps me and says, "uh uh, no shortcuts. Don't be lazy." You won't get there if you're lazy. If you don't have a firm commitment, if you don't have a regular discipline, forget it man, you're kidding yourself, go out and party, otherwise get to work.

Question: On page 2 in the Chandi book it says we can either watch her dance or make her stop. I thought watching her dance means becoming the witness and that is the highest state. Is that correct? What does making her stop mean?

It means nirvikalpa samadhi. It means I see sunya, nirvikalpa, nirvana. It means consciousness perceives consciousness infinitely with no dwityam, no other form, no other object in the field of perception and that's how we make her stop. Submerge ourselves in the consciousness of infinite consciousness. But if you like to watch her dance, that's fun too. Every movement we perceive is her dancing on the stage of consciousness. Take your choice. But don't think that you're the dancer, although I've seen you dance and you do a good job! You're a good dancer but she's much better.

Question: On verse 46 of the kavach, it says whoever will constantly make its recitation at the three times of prayer ... Can that be also a separate sadhana?

Well it's part of your sadhana, certainly, it certainly can be a separate sadhana at the three times of prayer, morning midday and evening I'm going to recite the Kavach, that can be an appendage or you can recite the entire Chandi from cover to cover. That would be nice too, after you do the Cosmic Puja.

Question: On verse 55 of the Kavach, at the end it says that individual will attain the supreme station which is difficult even for Gods to attain. Can you talk a little more about that? Because if it's difficult for the Gods, where does that leave us?

Devotees are higher than the Gods. Devotees are higher than the Gods. Even the Gods have to stand with folded hands when a devotee calls with pure devotion. When we are truly devoted, all those Gods and Goddess will come marching off that altar and they'll come down here and say okay devotees, what do you need? So if you have the pure devotion, a really pure devotion, with no thought for what's in it for me, but only thinking of what a privilege it is to be praising to thee, then the Gods will become servants to such a devotee and that's what it means. The supreme station where even God has to bend the rules because of the purity of our devotion and that's the kind of devotion we're seeking, we're cultivating. We're trying we're practicing to be real devotees, because right now we've got a couple of imperfections. But we're removing them one by one, slowly but surely and we pray that you help us more and more to become true devotees.

Question: You were talking about Hemalekha and Hemachuda, there was one part in there that I never did understand him where she tells him that if whatever he is capable of seeing by shutting his eyes is meaningless. Can you explain what she was saying?

Absolutely. It's the same discussion that Ramakrishna had with Vivekananda. He said if you have to close your eyes in order to see God, you're at a much lower status than a devotee who keeps her eyes open and sees God everywhere and that's just what Hemalekha was telling to Hemachuda. You administrate your kingdom and you practice justice and you bring harmony to your people and close your eyes. You serve God and then close your eyes. It's the same thing as the Isopanishad, it says by meditation alone you can't get there and by work in the world alone you can't get there but by work in the world, you overcome death and by meditation you achieve immortality. Both. That was the meaning.

Om Sang Saraswatyai Namaha.
Namaste.