

A short note on Srividya Sampradaya (a method of worship of the Divine Mother)

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October, 2013



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Srividya denotes the mantras of Maha Tripurasundari who is also known as Lalitambika or Raja Rajeshwari.

In this cult, the Divine Mother namely Tripura Sundari is the Ultimate Reality who is one with the Brahman [the Universal totality] and also the Atman or the Self.

Several mantras have been categorised as Srividya mantras. The most important ones are the Panchadasi, Shodasi, Mahashodasi and Navarna (also known as Navakshari) mantras. All these mantras are very potent because they are all made up of beejaksharas [the energy seeds in capsule form]. Among the first three mantras mentioned above, the Panchadasi is the main base for all the three mantras of syllables. In the second and third mantra, certain other syllables are only added in the beginning and in the reverse order at the end. Many are fascinated by Shodasi and Mahashodasi mainly because of their repetition as japa results in acquisition of many mystic powers. As the Panchadasi consists of three groups of

letters, it is told that, many like Kubera, Lopamudra and Atri attained liberation by only chanting one group alone in the Panchadasi.

The three groups are named as Vagbhava Koota, Madhya Koota and Sakti Koota. These Srividya mantras are special because they not only ensure that one gets final liberation but it assures full enjoyment and happiness in this world too. It is said,

“Sri Sundari sevana tatparanam
Bhogascha mokshascha karastaeva”

These Srividya mantras give both happiness in this world as also guarantee final liberation. Normally, all the mantras have been categorised into either as ‘for liberation (Moksha)’ or as ‘for happiness in this world (Kama)’. Another speciality of these Srividya mantras is that, it is fated to be obtained only when this is our last birth [i.e. final liberation] or if Lord Shiva himself begs the Divine Mother to give him any of those mantras. It is told, “Athava paschimam janma athava sankarah swayam”. Among the followers of Srividya, there are again two categories. The leftist (Vamamargam) followers and Samayacharam followers. While Samayachara comes under the vedic type of worship, the leftists uses the five M’s (Pancha Makara) namely – Madya [liquor], Mamsa [meat], Matsya [fish], Mudra [ritualistic gestures] and Maithuna [the close physical intimacy or sex with a woman], etc. The modern leftists in this cult however give a different interpretation to the five M’s. According to them, meat represents the white pumpkin because according to ayurveda, this vegetable is considered as equal to meat. This again cannot be conceded as in Mahanirvana Tantra there are chapters delineating in detail which animals meat or flesh can be used in this worship and which are prohibited. In the name of the tantric sanctions, the practitioners have become corrupt and licentious by over indulging in sex and liquor in the name of the religion. And actually speaking, in the Samayachara, the external ritualistic worship of the mother is strictly prohibited. All worship should be mental – “*Bahya puja na kartavya*”.

All these mantras can be used either alone for doing japa which takes you to a no mind state and thus to the ultimate reality or it can be used as part of the external ritualistic worship. These mantras are considered as very secret and should not be passed on to anybody else unless we reach a mature stage by constant and incessant repetition of the mantra for a long time. The mantras are to be pronounced only mentally and not loudly at all where anybody else could hear.

In order to bring a vast object like river Ganges from a place far away, one has to use a limited vessel. Similarly in order to bring the eternal essence of the cosmic energy and beyond, Srividya Upasakas use graphics known as Sri Chakra. The middle of the Sri Chakra is known as Bindu (a dot) and this is considered as the place where the Divine Mother (Para Sakti) dwells and before reaching here a formal worship of nine enclosures within which the Bindu is situated is prescribed. These graphics are usually made on copper or silver plates

for using in the Poojas. Inside there are nine triangles, of which five will be pointing upwards (representing Sakti) and four will be pointing downwards (representing Siva). There are also drawings which appear as petals of a lotus. A two dimensional representation of Sri Chakra is known as Bhoo Prastara and a three dimensional representation is known as Maha Meru or Meru.

Normally, the practitioners of this Srividya, do not reveal easily about their sadhana and not even that they do Srividya mantra.

Infact in any orthodox vedic ritualistic puja, the use of onions and garlic in the offerings to the mother or any other God is strictly prohibited. Perhaps, the cult of the leftist has made imperceivable intrusions into the Samayachara so that as a compromise between meat and liquor and purely vegetarian offerings, a compromise is made by mixing up onions in the food offerings for Naivedya. Many of these practitioners use the Srividya mantra for acquiring various mystic powers in order to impress people at large.

One of the most famous practitioner of Srividya was known as Bhaskaracharya in whose name even today there is a village in Tamil Nadu with the name of Bhaskarapuram. Once a monk from the Advaita lineage happened to come to the village of Bhaskaracharya and stayed in the forecourt of a house. Bhaskaracharya used to go daily by that path for taking bath in a river but never prostrated before the monk nor greeted him even. The monk was vexed at his conduct and used to comment about it before his disciples. The matter reached the ears of Bhaskaracharya who came to the monk and told him, "Swamiji, I have no objection to prostrate before you a thousand times if necessary. As a demonstration, please keep your head gear, your kamandalu [water pot] and your danda [the monk's stick] before me and I shall prostrate before them. You see what happens to them and still if you feel, that I should prostrate before you, I shall certainly do it. Accordingly the monk placed before him the three items as suggested and Bhaskaracharya prostrated before them. By the power of Srividya, all those items caught fire and were reduced to ashes in no time. The monk was scared and vacated the village the same evening.

Even today, the people who have been initiated into the secret lore of Srividya, are respected by everybody. As many of the people do not know about the leftist, many of the new seekers fall into their hands and get corrupted. Each one of the practitioner has to practice with another of the opposite sex in their own room. This is called the Bhairava and Bhairavi tradition. So one has to be very careful and should have the prior knowledge of what he is letting himself into.

* * HARI OM * *

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