

## SHRI LALITASAHASRANAMA

### LESSON THREE

Dear Sadhak,

As you study, please remember that many concepts may take a while to sink in. For those who are worried about the Response sheet please know that it is just an aid and that no judgements are being made on your knowledge here.

In order to keep the subject content to logical limits you will find that the lessons will vary as to the number of verses covered. Verses 34 to 37 in this lesson cover two main areas- the Mantra associated with SriLalita and the Sampradayas or traditions that are popularly associated with her worship.

#### Introduction to Mantras

Along with words such as Guru and Karma, Mantra has become an abused word in our society today. It has joined the rank of mere fashion unfortunately. The value of mantras however remains. Mantras have power. In the hands of a devolved being it can be destructive. Refer to our course on Ganapati where this is handled in greater detail. This is why rishis have often placed a plug ( brahma shaapam) on the efficacy of a mantra in case it falls in wrong hands.

Our scriptures say that in Kali yuga, naama sankirtana is the most efficient method of upasana when combined with an integrated personality. Most bhaktas think of nama sankirtana as merely the repetition of the Lord's name in chants or songs. Nama or name and rupa or form are intrinsically connected. Mantras are also evidence of this. After all mantras consist of sacred sounds. These sounds are associated with concepts of the divine. The word itself is God according to Sabda pramaanam ( the testimony of Sound). Did Sri Hanuman not prove that the name of Ram is even greater than Ram himself ?

Inspite of all the misuse, mantras remain valuable. This is being experienced by many in their own personal lives. Om gum ganapataye namah, Om namoh naaraayanaaya, Om namah sivaaya, Om namoh bhagavate vasudevaya, Haro hara, Swami sharanam., Om hreem dumm Durgaayaiaiy namah, Om mani padmey humm.....the mantric heritage of Bharatavarsha is like a stream. Our rishis have created many many mantras after having obtained the knowledge needed from life itself. Thus mantras are Rishi-tested -formulae. All mantras for effectiveness in rituals have a rishi ( he who conceived it) a devata ( the highlighted aspect of the divine ) chandas ( meter for reciting ) and generally a triad of syllables that form the core i.e. beeja, shakti and kilaka. This is usually uttered as a prologue to chanting.

Most Sanskrit mantras contain beejaksharas or seed syllables. These beejaksharas are alphabets from the Sanskrit language that are put together into a mantra by our rishis. The simplest ones are Om, the pranava mantra and Hreem, the maya or shakti mantram. In Kerala when Lipi Sarasvati puja is performed the entire pantheon of alphabets are used as a maala mantra to adore the Goddess of Letters.

#### Introduction to Sampradaya

When we use the term Vaishnava , Saakta, Saiva, Soura or Gaanapatya sampradaya we are referring to specific traditions of belief, worship and life style that has been in families and disciples-streams for many generations in Bharat. There are many sub-sampradayas within a main one. The Bhakti period in Indian History saw the pinnacle of growth for many a sampradaya. Diksha or initiation by a guru is often an important part of sampradaya lineage. A fact that is not publicised is that, very often the guru is a relative within the family itself.

The manner in which sampradayas work is very much like modern day software. Those who stay with one software tend to think that theirs is the best. Those who jump from one to the other too quickly dont master any. He who stays long enough with one software finds that all his needs are amply taken care of and more. It is the rare one indeed who having mastered one software thoroughly, finds that he has surprisingly the capacity to understand intimately all software.

haranetragnisandagdhakamasanjivan-oushadhi

Who is the cure that brought life to Kama who had been burnt by the fire from Hara's eye.

After the defeat of Bhandasura the devas praise the Devi and gently submit their worry about Siva's condition of inertia due to sorrow and his improbability of falling in love with Uma. Their marriage was vital as Tarakasura needed to be defeated by none other than a son born from them. As Kamadeva (the deity of Love) had no longer a body they were worried about Siva ever being subjected to the pangs of love. They bring her attention to the miserable condition of Kamadeva's widow Rati.

Feeling sorry for Rati, the devi casts a side long glance from where issues a more vigorous and handsome God of love. Srilalita advises Mantrini to decorate the bride and the marriage of Rati and Kamadeva is conducted in the presence of rishis and the learned .

In gratitude, Kamadeva and Rati take on the attitude of servants to Srilalita. She gives the following blessings and one dictum -

1. The invulnerability of victims to his arrows' power
2. The assurance that Siva would succumb to the power of his arrows. He would marry Uma and absorb her into half of his own body.
3. He will have the capacity to clone himself into many so as to enter all bodies.
4. Those who censure him would be deprived of the intrinsic powers of their gender.
5. That he in turn should make sure that those who are enthusiastic for worshipping Srilalita and are respectful to her devotees, are fulfilled in love and have their desires granted.

shreemadvagabhavakutaikasvaroopamukha pankaja 34

Whose lotus face is of the the form of the auspicious Vagbhava-kuta.

kantadhakatiparyantamadhyakutasvarupini

Who is the form of Madhya kuta from neck to waist.

shaktikutaikatapannakatyadhobhagadharini 35

Who as Shakti kuta forms the support from waist down and back.

mulamantratmikamulakutatrayakaleyvara.

Who is the atma of the mantra as well as its whole body of three kutas ( Mula-kuta traya )

To understand the symbolism here one must think of the figure of the devi as seated. A pyramid like shape is suggested. Her body is being considered in three parts. All parts forming the whole pyramid. Just as the atman is the core for the whole body including its parts so too the core of the pyramid connects all three sections.

The pyramid is the Mantra associated with SriLalita. The word kuta has two meanings, a pyramid like shape as we see in mountain peaks and the other means group. The mantra of Srilalita is considered in three groups. The first or upper kuta is Vaagbhava. The emphasis is on **Jnana** (Power of Knowledge). The second or middle kuta is Madhya, often called Kaama. The emphasis is on **icchaa** (Will power). The third or lower kuta is Shakti, the emphasis is on **Kriya** (Power of Action). Thus these three groups together form her whole body. The essence of the three is of the form of her atma.

In these lessons we will not be covering the actual aksharas or syllables in her mantra. It is enough to understand that there are many ancient sadhakas who have gained proficiency in her mantra. The popular fifteen of them are Hari, Hara, Virinca, Manu, Chandra, Kubera, Lopaamudra, Agastya, Nandikesvara, Surya, Skanda, Manmatha, Sakra, Durvaasa, and Yama. Srilalita- upasakas of today who are from a pure tradition owe allegiance as revealed in their path, to one of these founders .The mantra that each founder employed have some features that are common and some that are different. They are each considered as a separate vidya.

The mantra for Shrilalita is studied and practised in various ways. This is due to the fact that those who established the various ways had different priorities and leanings. Listed here are a few established ways.

1. Way of the gayatri upasaka
2. Way of the believer in advaita.
3. Way of the dvaita believer.
4. Way of the sankhya follower.
5. Way of the sole guru.
6. Way of the Trimurti concept
7. Way of the Sabda margi
9. Way of the Kundalini worshipper

**kulamritaikarasikakulasanketapalini 36**

Who revels in the nectar that results from worship and guards the kaula doctrine..

The resulting oneness of experience where subject of worship merges with the worshipper is like nectar. The devi herself guards the doctrine of the Kaulas.

**kulanganakulanastha kaulinikulayogini**

Who is the inner courtyard and the inner dwelling of kula, the kaulini and kulayogini.

She is the method of Kaula worship. She is the goal of the ritual of the Kaulas. She is also the Yogini for inner Kaula worship.

**akulasamayanthastha samayacharithpara 37**

Who is Akula, the goal of the Samayas and fond of the Samaya worship.

In the Shaakta sampradaya the Energy-Awareness principle is symbolised as Female. Here the triad of Jnana, Bhakti and Karma have to work with the triad of Tantra- Mantra and Yantra. Within the Shaakta sampradaya there are **many schools**. The two schools referred to in these verses are the Kaula maarga and the Samaya maarga. Within Kaula are two branches Uttara kaula and Purva Kaula. It is said that in Samaya marga both the Devi and her consort Siva are worshipped. Their name, form and functions are identical in essence. When Devi is worshipped Siva will be implied.

Purva kaulas believe that Sakti and Siva are alternating principles that gain varying dominance during creation and dissolution respectively.

Uttarakaulas believe that Sakti aspect is absolutely the only dominant principle during all cosmic processes.

**The above verses show that Srilalita can be known through any of these ways.**

The processes of Jnana-Iccha-Kriya, Knowledge- Will and Action, both individual and cosmic are like two triangles that share the same center. This is the common 6pointed triangle. One is Brahmanda, the PUBLIC WORLD of all and the other is the Pindanda- the PRIVATE WORLD of the JEEVA or individual. We go about our daily deeds hardly remembering this. The Brahmanda triangle has its apex facing down and its counterpart pindanda triangle has its apex facing up. The two share a common midpoint. Instead of functioning as triangles that share a common midpoint, we function as two quadrangles that connect on an extended line of **ahankara-sense of doership**. **Please refrain from the word ego as it does not mean the same**. Once the jeeva begins to live a life where all actions are tested in the fire of dharma and directed towards a life-divine then his ahankara gets reduced. Right Knowledge- Legitimate Desires- Proper Action will be the Standard Rule. Thus the 2 quadrangles slowly become 2 triangles. Eventually when this happens they move totally towards each other sharing this single point. A jeeva who aligns his behaviour with the cosmic order or ऋतं RRThM is at peace with himself and brings peace to his environment.

**\*\*Research at AMBA house has shown the following.**

A. Kaula marga was a dominant part of the worship of Devi and Siva in Kashmir. The last name KAUL of many Kashmiris point to this tradition even today. Currently we are working on a Kaula text in which a beautiful prayer - PARAADISHAKTI SAHASRANAMA is featured. We hope to make this as a home study course soon.

B. The term SAMAYA refers to practices whose vestiges we find today in Vajrayana Buddhism. These practices originated in India possibly in Orissa. It found its way into Tibet where it underwent several changes.

**SHUBHAM**

## SHRI LALITASAHRANAMA-Level 1

### RESPONSE THREE

Name:

Please mark T or F or D (True, False or Doubtful)

1. Mantras are Rishi tested formulae available for man.
2. Hreem is the pranava mantra.
3. The mantra is the sound body of the deity.
4. Rishi, devata, chandas,beeja-sakti and kilaka are the prologue in the use of a mantra.
5. Naamasankirtana is best suited for Satya yuga.
6. There are only Three sampradayas in vogue in Bharat.
7. There were relatively fewer sampradayas before the Bhakti movement.
8. Diksha within the family goes practically unnoticed by the public .
9. Tarakasura's defeat was to be caused by Skanda.
10. Srilalita brought Kamadeva to life with her glance.
11. Rati is the daughter of Kamadeva.
12. Geometrical shapes have been an integral part of pujas.
13. Agastya and his wife Lopamudra were the only two upasakas of Srilalita.
14. Kaula and Samaya are the only two sampradayas in Sakta worship.

Please draw lines to connect to the right association. Only one to one please.

Mulakuta traya is the	* atman of devi
Vagbhava kuta is the	* body of devi
Essence of the mantra is the	* face of devi
Iccha- Jnana- Kriya are the emphasis in	* Vagbhava-Madhya-Sakti kutas
Samaya marga	* Siva and Sakti are alternating principles
Uttara kaula marga	* Siva and Sakti are identical
Purva kaula marga	* Sakti devi is the dominant principle
Misra marga	

REFLECTIONS ( You need not answer the following )

Why was it so important symbolically to give life to Kaamadeva?

Why is the couple called Kaamesvara and Kaamesvari ?

What would life be without Kaama ? How would the world be without kaama ?

Is it possible that the story of SriLalita was composed at a time when renunciation was the dominant sadhana for worshippers ? Perhaps a time when monastic life was overly emphasized ?

SHUBHAM

Email answers to consultations@ambahouse.org