

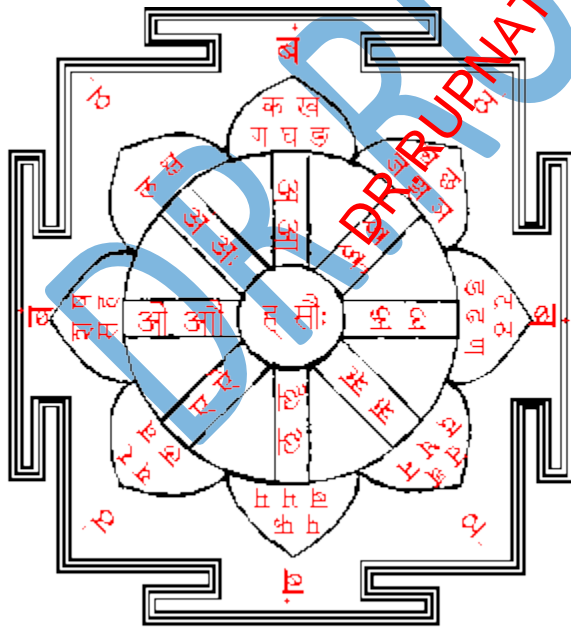
# Mantras and Vidyas -- Godhead as sound

**By Maha Yogi Paramahansa Dr.Rupnathji**

*There will be born at London English folk whose mantra for worship is in the Phiringa (foreign) language, who will be undefeated in battle and Lords of the World - Meru Tantra, XXIII, 17th century*

The 51 matrikas (letters of the Sanskrit alphabet) constitute the Goddess in the form of sound. This is why Kali wears a garland of 51 skulls and it is also why these letters are shown on the petals of the six chakras. The yantra above is called the Tortoise Chakra (source *Gandharva Tantra*) and is used to determine whether the area a practitioner is working in is inimical or not to his worship.

Below is the Matrika Chakra. This, says Ram Kumar Rai in his excellent *Encyclopaedia of Yoga*, is to be drawn with saffron (kesara) for [Shakti](#) worship and with ashes (bhasma) for [Shiva](#) worship. It contains all the 51 matrikas and is used in the first of the ten rites to purify a mantra (samskara) after it has been received from a guru. On the petals of the yantra are the consonants while the vowels are in the eight spokes. In the centre is the syllable Hsauh while in the cardinal directions is the Bam bija and in the intermediate directions the Tham bija mantra.



Perhaps one of the clearest expositions of the tantrik view of mantra is given in Sir John Woodroffe's collection of essays, *Shakti and Shakta*, chapter 24.

The supreme absolute (Parabrahman) exists in the human being (jivatma) as Shabda Brahman, the absolute as sound. Mantras are not prayers and the relationship of the letters of the Sanskrit alphabet, whether consonants or vowels, he says, point to the appearance of devata (divinity) in different forms. An uttered mantra is the manifestation of a more subtle sound while mantras themselves are forms of [Kundalini](#). Mantras may be male,

female or neutral. Female mantras are called Vidyas.

"By Mantra the sought for (Sadhya) Devata appears, and by Siddhi therein is had vision of the three worlds. As the Mantra is in fact Devata, by practice thereof this is known. Not merely do the rhythmical vibrations of its sound regulate the unsteady vibrations of the sheaths of the worshipper, but therefrom the image of the Devata appears." (op cit) Mantras are masculine (solar), feminine (lunar) or neuter. A female mantra is called a vidya, which means knowledge, while solar and neuter forms are called mantras. Mantras are only such if they were first revealed by a rishi or seer. Only then do they have life, according to the tradition. A mantra can only work if it is received from a [guru](#) who has, herself or himself, received it in an unbroken line from its first rishi. There are, however, exceptions to this, according to some tantras which prescribe methods of purification for mantras received in dream. And, according to [Mahachinachara](#), the [Kali](#) mantra does not rely on the very elaborate rules usually found in the Tantras.

In describing mantras, the different tantrik texts always give their origin or rishi as well as the metre to pronounce them. While a mantra is divinity in sound form, a yantra is the same in geometrical form and an image of the devata in gross form. Refer also to the page on [Tattvas](#) on the relationship between the consonants and the 36 tattvas.

## Bija Mantras

The word Bija means a seed and describes a mantra which is usually of one syllable. There are many tantrik 'dictionaries' of the matrikas which indicate their significance as well as the meaning of the bija or seed mantras. This section below draws information from the *Bhutadamara* (BD); the *Varnanighantu* (VN), alleged to be part of the [Rudrayamala](#); and the *Uddharakosha* (UK), ascribed to Dakshinamurti. Longer mantras are often formed from a concatenation of these bijas. The table below is not exhaustive, there are many more bijas.

ॐ	श्री	ही	क्री	हूं
Om	Shrim	Hrim	Krim	Hum
ऐ	फट्	क्रो	स्वाहा	क्रीं
Aim	Phat	Krom	Svaha	Klim
हुं	हौ	द्रीं	स्फे	प्लूं
Hum	Hraum	Drim	Sphem	Prem
क्रीं स्वाहा	ठः	प्रीं	ठं ठः ठः	स्फीं
Klim Svaha	Thah	Prim	Tham Tham Thah Thah	Sphim
ह्रूं	हुं	ह्रस्वफे	गं	ब्लूं

Hrum	Hrum	Hskphrem	Gam	Blum
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Om is the most renowned bija mantra. The *Bhutadamara* describes it as the face of Kala. Revealed by Mahakala, it is the form of creation, maintenance and withdrawal.

The bija mantra Shrim is described as Vishnupriya - the beloved of Vishnu - that is Lakshmi, according to the UK. The syllable Hrim is called the Maya bija. It is also Raudri, according to the *Bhutadamara*. The UK describes it as the Para or supreme bija. The bija mantra Krim is described as the pitribhuvasini, that is the goddess who dwells in the ancestral or cremation ground, [Kali](#). It is also the dravana and kledana bija.

Hum with the long letter 'u' is called the Kurcha bija and is the mantra of the Mother worshipped by heroes (viras). The *Bhutadamara* also describes it as the mantra of Mahakala. Aim is called Vagbhava bija and is the syllable of [Sarasvati](#), according to the BD. Phat is the bija of the great fire at the end of time (Pralayagnirmahajvala).

Krom is called the Krodhisha bija. Svaha, otherwise known as Thah Thah, is Vahnijaya, representing the fire sacrifice.

Klim is the deluder of the three worlds bija, also known as Kama or Manmatha, the Hindu god of love, often identified with [Krishna](#). It is the sexual desire bija, says the BD. Hum (with the short letter 'u') is called the [Kavacha](#) or armour bija. It is the bija of Chandabhairavi. Hraim is the bija which destroys great sins (mahapataka), and is the light mantra. Drim is called the great Kinkini (small bell) bija, says the *Bhutadamara*.

Sphem is the [Bhairava](#) (Shiva) bija which comes at the end of a yuga. Plrem is the Vetala (vampire) bija, according to the *Bhutadamara*.

Klrim Svaha is called the bija which causes things to tremble. It is the Manohari and ends in Thah Thah (Svaha, see above). The mantra Prim is the crow bija, used in works of Indrajala (magic). The UK describes this bija as the Vagura. Tham Tham Thah Thah are the bijas in the worship of the greatly alluring Chandika, says the BD. Sphrim is the bija of the uncanny Dhumrabhairavi (smoky Bhairavi), also known as Phetkarini.

The bija Hrum (with long letter 'u') is the single syllable mantra of Kalaratri, the great night of time. The same bija, but with a short letter 'u', is the mantra of Vaivasvata.

Hskphrem, says the BD, is the bija mantra of Ananda Bhairava in the form of one's own guru.

## Malas or Rosaries

*As Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshvara, God is not conscious of a Trinity; As the rose knows nothing of its fragrance, Men do not know their own Divinity - Dust and Bones, Dadaji*

Malas (rosaries) are an integral part of [puja](#), being used to count the mantra recited to the devata installed in image or yantra. According to [Devirahasya](#), the classic Tantrika rosaries are made of conch- shell, pearls, rodhra (symplocos racemosa), crystal, rudraksha, tulsi (basil), rubies, gold, lotus seeds, skull bone/teeth.

One should commence by purifying oneself, doing the usual [nyasas](#), opening the temple, and making the rosary. The number of beads may be 27, 54 or 108 -but there is always an extra bead inserted -- called the meru, so that one knows when the cycle is finished.

Breath should then be installed in the rosary. Again, according to the [Devirahasya](#), the seer of the purification is Kalagnirudra, the metre is Anushtubh, Shmashana Bhairavi, the Night of Time, the Great Playful One adorned with Human Skulls is the devata. Hsau is the Bija, Thah is the Shakti, Hrah is the Peg, and the object is the purification of the rosary.

After installing breath, the rosary should be bathed with the appropriate pure substances (upachara).

### **The mantras given in [Devirahasya](#) are:**

Conch: Om Shrim Shrim Om Shankhini Om Shrim Om.

Pearl: Om Hrim Hrim Om Muktamalini Shrim Shrim Svaha.

Rodhra: Om Strim Om Raudre Rodhramalini Sah Svaha.

Crystal: Om Ah Hram Hram Arkamale Hram Svaha.

Rudraksha: Om Ah Shrim Hrim Rum Rudrakshamalini Shuddha Bhava Svaha.

Tulsi: Om Shrim Om Strim Tulasi Vaishnavi Vaushad Svaha.

Ruby: Om Trom Dhum Manimale Manohare Svaha.

Gold: Om Shrim Trim Aim Klim Sauh Suvarnamale Sauh.

Lotus Seed: Om Prim Om Padma Akshamalini Hsauh Svaha.

Skull/Teeth: Hrim Shrim Klim Hram Sauh Dantamale Mundamale Prim Strim Hsauh Svaha.

After purifying the rosary with the appropriate mantra, one should then use it, using one's root mantra, and worshipping it with scent, flowers &c.

Then one should pronounce the following great mantra: Om Male Male Mahamale Sarvatattvasvarupini Caturvargastvayi Nyastastasmanme Siddhida Bhava Svaha. (Om, O Rosary, Rosary, Great Rosary, the true form of all things, place in me the Four Aims of Mankind. Give siddhi! Svaha )

One should then close the rite in the usual tantrika fashion, placing the breath in the heart again &c. When using a rosary to recite mantras, the fruit of the recitation should be given to the installed aspect in the yantra. Cycles of mantra should be 27:54:108 and more, according to will. The index finger should never be used when counting the beads, but the thumb and middle finger. The rosary should be kept safely away from others when not in use, and should never be allowed to touch the ground. If this happens, it must be reconsecrated. The same procedure should be undertaken if the string is cut. The beads should be scented with the eight great scents.

## Meditation (Dhyana)

*Shri Devi said: One may meditate on a visible image, O Mahadeva. What is the nature of meditation on the invisible? Shri Shankara said: O Devi, sound, uttered by me, is the absolute. By pronouncing a mantra with a devoted mind, there is invisible meditation and so forth. Maheshvari, this is true, true, self evident, undoubtedly - Matrikabhedatantra XII, 5-7*

The *Kularnava Tantra* defines *dhyana* in the following way: "Controlling the affliction of senses by the mind, contemplation by the inner being of the chosen deity is called *dhyana*". (KT XVII, 36, Rai's translation)

In the tantrik traditions, there are numerous *dhyanas* which require intense visualisation skills, themselves part of the "work on oneself" or *sadhana* required by an initiate. Simply put, in the *Bhagavad Gita*, that what the mind thinks on, it becomes.

Underlying these practices is the basic tantrik idea that the worshipper and the worshipped are one. Kalika, Shiva or any of the other 33 million devatas do not live in some separate place as disembodied beings who can bestow boons or curses. Instead, the macrocosm is, as the *Todala Tantra* and many other texts state, one with the microcosm. (See also the abstract of the *Siddhasiddhantapaddhi* on this site).

Not only is the ability to visualise in a concentrated manner one of the elements of *sadhana*, it is both a preliminary and an essential basis for many other tantrik practices, including the daily puja or worship, optional practices, *nyasa*, many yogic practices such as intense visualisations on the inner body à la *Kaulajnananirnaya*, the recitation of mantra, meditation of yantras, the performance of mudras and even sexual *sadhana* for some of the heterodox tantrik schools.

Not only must an adept be able to visualise sometimes very complex images, but also be able to hold such images, concentratedly, often for a long period of time. External images, the different elements of puja, and repeated practice lead eventually, so the masters of these traditions tell us, to perfection in which the meditator, the means of meditation and the meditated on are realised in their essential unity. Devotion and grace may also assist towards this end.

As with many other elements in the tantrik traditions, these visualisations/meditations can have either a gross, a subtle or supreme form.

"...attachment of mind to anything (raga) is Redness. The Consummation of worship (Upasti) is meditation one's Self. Siddhi is attained when thought does not wander from the contemplation of the identity of one's Self with the Object of Worship." (Arthur Avalon's introduction to the Sanskrit text of the *Tantrarajatantra*.)

This same tantra also gives examples of gross, subtle and supreme meditations on *Tripurasundari*. Avalon says in his introduction that the relation of Lalita with the other fifteen *Nityas* is the gross form, subtle meditation is when one meditates on the goddess in the six bodily centres or chakras, while the supreme form is meditation on the supreme Shakti as "one, impartite and impartible whole and visualising the Atma as a steady, motionless flame in a windless place".

From another point of view, the absolute, whether seen as Shiva, Shakti, or the union of the two, takes the form of an image or pratima in its gross form, of a yantra in its subtle form, and of a mantra in its supreme form. All three represent devata but are progressively more subtle. An advanced adept will develop the ability to visualise not just images of "gods" and "goddesses" but complex yantras such as the Shri Yantra.

It is clear from the foregoing, and from the many complex examples of meditation given on this Web site, that achieving a degree of success in these practices is not, necessarily, an easy thing.

This brings us to the iconography of the tantrik devis and devatas. The images sold in every Indian bazaar of Lakshmi, Shiva, Ganesh and others, where true to their original descriptions, are based on meditation images found in the tantras, the puranas and in other texts. The number of arms and heads, the weapons held in such hands, and other elements of the dhyanas, are intended to remind a practitioner of the essential nature of the devata meditated on. They often have a symbolic meaning, as well as providing rich imagery as objects of meditation.