

The Ten Great Goddesses and the Vedas

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The Goddess is the natural instinct for Man to worship, seeing the image of the faultless and the Divine, All-Pervading nurturing Force. Whilst we know the Vedics had many Goddesses, few have related any Goddesses and their Tantric concepts to the Vedic texts, if at all, and especially, it lacks Rig Vedic references, which is understood by few.

Here, we discuss the Origin of the Goddess, her Forms and Concepts, from the Rg and other Vedas, and use the Dasha Mahavidyas, 'Ten Great-Wisdoms' - Goddesses who were Emanations from Kali, to understand Tantric and Vedic terms and related ideologies. These Goddesses are Kali, Tara, Chinnamasta, Bhairavi, Tripura, Bhuvaneshvari, Bagala, Dhumavati, Matangi, and the graceful Kamala.

These Goddesses represent many Vedic principles, but in the higher Rig-Vedic, or transcendent aspect as Sachi (Force, Power and Strength). These are powers such as the Divine and Blissful Soma or the Sun (Surya or Aditya), to the wrathful and firey Rudra and Agni, or the terrible transformative and destructive forces of Indra as Vidyut (Lightening), to Mantra or Word (Vak or Brihaspati), and so forth. Dark forces are there, such as Nirriti (Destruction) and Danu, wife of the terrible Vritra, demon of darkness or Yami, goddess of Death and the Underworld.

Sri Ramakrishna, Kalidasa, Ram Prasad Sena, Paramhansa Yogananda, Aghori Vimalananda, Sri Anandamayi Ma etc. are all names that ring bells, when one mentions about the Divine Mother - yet none of these have described her origin, either physically, psychologically, metaphoric or symbolic, in the Hindu tradition, dating back to the Vedas. At the most, we may find references to the Sri or Durga Suktas of the Vedas, yet often even these Suktas were composed largely of Rig Vedic verses, themes, terms or ideologies, which is not pointed out, or discussed by scholars, both Hindu and Western.

We may be taught that Shakta traditions are Vedic, but no elaboration is given - no evidence, no proof, no explanation of these ideas and concepts! Few even know that Vedic Saraswati was the River of the once-grand so-called 'Indus' Culture, now renamed Vedic-Saraswati, because the Vedas were composed along it (her) banks. Science and Archeology, then, also support her epithet as 'Veda Mata', 'Mother of the Vedas'. The Divine Mother was Vak (Mantra or Word) in the Vedas, both the Vedic Sanskrit language, and also it's Suktas, or Hymns. She was also Gayatri - supreme amongst Vedic mantras for the Brahmins or Vedic priests, and Rishis (Seers).

I. THE DASH MAHAVIDYAS - AN OVERVIEW

The Concept of the Mahavidyas is that all Ten Goddesses are forms of Durga or Rudranias her Daughters or Forms, and the Ten Pranas or Airs in Man. This is merely a Female version of the Vedic idea that the Rudras or Maruts were Sons or forms of Rudra or Shiva and the Ten Pranas, he the Self as Durga's Husband, the Supreme Self: "The Ten Breaths in

Man (Purusha) and the Atman (Self) is the Eleventh. When they depart from this mortal body, they cause men to cry, and as a result, they are called Rudras." (Brihadaranakya Upanishad, III.3.4)

The Counterpart of the Ten Mahavidyas is the Tradition of the Seven Goddesses which are the Seven Pranas and Chakras of the Vedas, also Rudras. But they are also Fire-Goddesses and forms of Agni's wife, Svaha. Agni himself is Vedic Rudra or Shiva also, hence the Seven Goddess Tradition is also Vedic as the seven Maidens that are forms of Agni, his Mother in Rig-Veda and wife and Mother of Rudra: "Kali (black), Karali (terrific), Manogava (swift as thought), Sulohita (very red), Sudhumravarna (purple), Sphulingini (sparkling), and the brilliant Visvarupi (having all forms), all these playing about are called the seven tongues (of fire)." (Manduka Upanishad, I. 2.4)

The entire teaching of the Mahavidyas is merely a feminine form of the Vedic worship of Rudra and the Maruts or Rudras: The Rudras like Mahavidyas are born from Maharudra or Rudra, like Durga. They kill Demons, are the letters of Sanskrit Alphabet, are the seven Pranas and Chakras as well as the Ten Pranas of Pranayama in Yoga in the Vedas, just like Mahavidyas. Most of all, they are also forms of Agni or Fire, like the Goddess are are likened often to Seven forms of Agni. Their feminine form are the Rudranis or Prishnis, later to be the Mahavidyas.

The aim of Goddess worship is also to awaken Kundalini. Vedic Agni, who is Shiva or Rudra is also Kundalini and hence the worship of the Goddess in this aspect as Serpent is also from the Vedic worship of Rudra as Kundalini:

"What time the Holy One, Wind-urged, hath Risen Up, Serpent-Like Winding through the Dry grass Unrestrained, Dust lies upon the way of him who burneth all, black-winged and pure of birth who follows sundry paths." (Rig-Veda.I.141.7)

"Germ of the world, ensign of all creation, he sprang to life and filled the earth and heavens. Even the firm rock he cleft when passing over, when the Five Tribes brought sacrifice to Agni. So among mortals was Immortal Agni established as holy wise and willing envoy. He waves the red smoke that he lifts above him, striving to reach the heavens with radiant lustre." (Rig-Veda.X.45.6-7)

"He in mid-air's expanse has golden tresses; a Raging Serpent, like the Rushing Tempest" (Rig-Veda.I.79.1)

The Goddess Bhairavi is especially Kundalini - again merely a female form of Rudra or Shiva as Fire or Agni: "He with the Braided Hair we call with Reverence down, the Wild-Boar of the Sky, the Red, the Dazzling shape." (Rig-Veda, I.124.5)

Like the Mahavidyas, all the Seven Goddess can hence also be traced to the Rig-Veda and are also the Pleiades in the Rig who mother the baby Agni who is Skanda, as in later times. Prishni is also Skanda's mother in the Rig-Veda and many times the image of her is like the latter images of the Goddess and her child. The Pranis or Prishnis are the later Seven Goddesses as forms of Fire or Rudra's wife or female form.

Kali is the Vedic goddess Sachi, a form of Indrani and is the Supreme form in Rig-Veda, and also as Svaha and Fire, like in latter times. Hence why she consumes the Yajna or Ego that is Prajapati or Brahma that is killed by Brahma or Indra. Kali and Chandi are merely female forms of the Vedic myths of Rudra and Indra, as are all the Goddess Myths.

The Myth where Durga is created by the Devas to kill Maheshasura or where she appears as Lalita to teach the Trimurti a lesson are derived from the Vedic Myth where Rudra is created by combined forces of the Devas to kill Prajapati or Brahma, the Great-Ego, who is also Varaha, the Boar or Buffalo or Bull etc., hence Mahesh. Rudra appears before Indra, Vayu and Agni in Kena Upanishad to show his superiority over them like Durga does.

Hence, Devi Mahatmya merely makes Vedic myths of Rudra and the Rudras more feminine. The Gandharva Tantra itself traces Shaktism or the Goddess cult to Atharva-Veda and Atharvanism, the Vedic Cult of Magic, Astrology and Yoga, hence it's continuation of these practices from Atharva-Veda and Brahmanas in the Tantras! Moreover, the chief Atharvan deity was Rudra or Fire and the Rudras, cognate to Durga and the Mahavidyas of Tantra, hence the Devi cult was a reflection of the Vedic Atharvanism and the Tantras reflections of the Atharva Veda and it's Brahmanas and mantras, rituals etc.

Dadhyak, the chief Atharvan deity is the headless God and also the yajna or sacrifice, cognate to Chinnamastaka of Mahavidyas or Shaktism, and both relate to Hum or Fire-mantra and forms of Fire. Dadhyak is also a Marut or Rudra as Chinnamasta is a Dakini, Yogini or Rudrani, form of Devi. Moreover, in places in S.Indian Tantric sects, Kali, Bhairavi and their related forms are actually called Atharvani meaning 'Female Fire Priest' or Atharvan deities - which again connects us to them. Note that Kali or Svaha is also chief of the Devi Cult and hence chief of Vedic Atharvanism as Svaha is mantra of offering and also, Kali is chief of the seven Flames of Fire or Agni (Rudras) wives in the Vedas and Upanishads!

In the Seven Goddesses Tradition, the Goddesses are: Varahi, who is the Vedic Goddess Yami or Prithvi, Earth as the Boar-God, Varaha's wife. Prithvi is also Varaha's wife, as is Yami making both cognate and found in Brahmanas. Indrani, who is Indra's wife in her form as Aditi or the Supreme Ruling Goddess. Vaishnavi who is Ushas or Shri, Surya or Vishnu's wife, Chamundi who is the Vedic Goddess Prishni as the Great-Death counterpart of Shiva as Mahamrityu in the Vedas or Rudrani, Maheshwari who is Shachi or Mahendrani, Indra or Shiva's female Counterpart as the Supreme Goddess, and Goddess Kaumari who is Vedic Agni-Jataveda's wife as Svaha or Valli in latter times and the other Goddess is Brahmi or the Vedic goddess Saraswati or Vak.

Goddess Chinnamasta can be viewed as Vritra (Vasuki) in his be-headed aspect as Rahu and Ketu or the former as the headless Serpent who Chinnamasta also relates to. Vritra was killed by Indra showing the relation. Others are Ganesh, Brahma or Daksha that were be-headed by Shiva or Kabhandhasuran. Dadhyak who loses his head which is replaced by the AshvaMukha or Horse-Head is also Chandi since Ashva is the Vedic Yajna. Or it may also be related to the Dhanyu Bhagat myth where the Raja offered his head to Durga.

So in all aspects, the Goddess is Vedic and has been worshipped since Vedic times in India!