

Exploration

Metaphysics through Ashtavadhanam

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Abstract

The Metaphysics and Avadhanam may be new words for general audience. The Avadhanam requires self-realization and immense memory power to recollect, recite and explain spontaneously the queries of audience. It is similar to handling multitask at a given time. A concert was organized to explain the philosophical ideas of science and society through Ashtavadhanam.

Keywords: God, Brahma, Vedas, Navdwar, mind, concentration, ego, planets, space, energy, time.

1. Introduction

Avadhanam is originated from Vedas and it is a literary performance of the great sages and scholars through the sanskrit language in the ancient days. It is more popular in South India. It is based on the concept of ekagrath - concentration of mind, collection of thoughts and multitasking activity^{1,2}. The anatomy of mind is complex and its process is complicated to analyze in detail and in all eras it has been a topic of hot discussion to understand the stable mind. All living entities have mind, but the humans have special mind and degree of thinking is more prominent than rest of creatures. The great scholars and saints used to go to lonely places such as Himalayas and forests to listen the vibrations of the sounds with great attention and recollecting and passing them accurately to generations.

The concentration of mind- ekagratha is a problem for humans. In order to develop the concentration, the concept of Avadhanma has been emerged in the literary field. The Avadhanam is considered as an activity or concert of highest level of attention and ability to respond simultaneously to multiple tasks. It is the analyzing skills of mind and senses by observing, sensing and listening carefully the questions of the audience, pertained to any field such as literary, science and mathematics, and keeping a count of a bell ringing at randomly, displaying as well as answering them through scholarly ideas, in the literary format of slokas and poems in logical and creative notions of different modes of intelligence. This may be similar to the multitasking activity or operation, what we call in our modern technology. The other popular Avadhanams are Chitravadhanam for painting, Nrutyavadhanam for dancing, Ganithavadhanam for mathematics.³

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The scholar who performs Avadhanam is called Avadhani and one who asks the questions called Pruchaka(Questioner). The Avadhanam of eight pruchakas(questions) is known as Ashtavadhanam, similarly Shatavadhanam (100 questions) and Sahasravadhanam (1000 questions). The well-known Avdhanis are Divakarla Tirupati Sastry, Chellapilla Venkata Sastry Sheikh Thambi Pavalar, Veni Madhav Shukla, R. Ganesh, Dr. Naga Phani Sarma and Garikapati Narasimha Rao and many more have contributed for enriching the heritage of avadhanam.^{1,2,3}

Metaphysics is the subject which deals about science and society; and relation between the science and society. The wisdom of the scholars, professionals of any field such as academicians, scientists, technocrats, doctors and artists etc. must be dispersed and utilized to increase the awareness in the people and for the welfare of the society.

This paper exhibits the collection of metaphysical ideas demonstrated through Ashtavadhanam to the audience which was organized by Andhara Vibhagam, Indian Social Club, Salalah, Sultanate of Oman on 29th November 2012. The purpose of organizing and demonstrating this Astavadhanam was i) for the realization of God and His creations in the spiritual and materistic world and ii) for the awareness of Astavadhanam for the younger generations so that it will not die.

2. Astavadhanam

The concert of this Avadhanam comprises of one Avdhani and eight Pruchakas (poets/ participants). The Avadhani recited the flower of Vedic slokas of “Mantra Pusham” of Yajur Veda (*Om yopam pushpam veda, pushpavan prajavan pashuman bhavati etc.*)⁴ are usually sung in a chorus after performing puja (worship) or Yagna; and in order to test and confuse the Avdahnani during the recitation, the Pruchakas, have inquired six metaphysical questions at different intervals of time and one member rang the bells randomly to assess the mental ability of Avadhani; and another member from audience demanded one rhythmic verse based on Brhma. In total, eight philosophical questions have been asked by the Pruchakas and the Avadhani had replied their queries logically, poetically and scientifically in sequence form. The questions and their answers given by the Avadhani are as follows.

Q1. *One member rang the bells randomly.*

Ans.: The number of bells were six.

Q2. *What is the difference between a Business man and an Artist?*

Ans.: A business man desires money where as an artist needs appreciation, but the business man donates the funds to organize functions and encourages Artist to exhibit his skills. Thus professional artists entertain general people.

Q3. *What is the difference between a friend and an enemy?*

Ans.: Your mind is your friend and your mind is your enemy. The friends and enemies are made by your mind. But the mind is run by your intelligence. The intelligent man talks lovingly and he is affectionate to all, whereas the dull and lethargic person battles with all for trivial things.

Q4. *Why the people are different in this World?*

Ans.: The vedic shloka of Bhagavad Gita (7.4)⁵ is recited as

*Bhumir apo nalo vayuh, kham mnao budghir evaca |
Ahankara itiyah me bhina prakrutir astadha //*

The eight characteristics-Earth, Water, Air, Fire, Sky, Mind, Intelligence and False ego (ahankar) are material energies of the Supreme Lord. The people are different in the world because of eight characteristics and their previous and present birth activities known as Karmas. These characteristic would force people to perform different types, may be noble or corrupt activities through Gananedriyas and Karmendiryas in this material world.

Q5. *Describe a poem which should contain Navggrahas(Planets), Vighrahas(Deities) and Pradashakans (Circumambulate)?*

Ans.:The nine planets (Nava Grahas) move around the Sun in our solar system and they get sun light and energy. A deity in a temple is called Vighraha i.e visesh graha or specific deity. The regular recitations of vedas and performance of ceremonial functions such as Pujas, Abishakam , Rudhra Abishakam and Mahanaysam , the deity acquires energy and becomes powerful to provide spiritual and materialistic desires of people. The Pradakshana namaskaram of vedic shloka is

*Yaani kaani cha paapaani janmaatara kruthaani cha |
Taani thani vinashyanti pradakshina padae padae //*

When devotees circumambulate (perform pradakshans) around a deity in a temple or a religious places, the energy gets transformed through electromagnetic radiations which eliminates sins committed in this birth and previous births by putting their steps one by one. They are inspired by devotion(bhakti), they are liberated(mukthi) and they realize happiness(shanti). Sometimes they touch the diets to get immense pleasure and direct transmitted energy. Hence in order to have the direct impact of a speaker, students in class room and audience in any function prefer to occupy the front rows.

Q6. *Could you please recite a poem based on “Panch Buthas and Navadawara ?*

Ans.: It is a lovely city (kshetram) of complicated anatomy with complex neural network. It runs itself methodically and scientifically under the control of one element. It has innumerable committees and sub and sub committees. It comprises of nine gates called Navdwar. It runs itself methodically and scientifically under the control of one component. The materialistic houses have only one gate and organizations have few committees but still thefts, murders and corruptions take place in the society. This beautiful city is nothing but a human body created by

Supreme Lord⁵ consists of nine gates (Navdwar) - two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, one mouth, the anus and the genital; and temporary Mind, eternal Soul and Supersoul sits on each and every living entity.

“Nature is made up of five elements,
Body is made up of nine gates,
Soul gives life to the body,
Pray to the God for giving me
as human body on this earth.”

"पंचभूतों से बनी हुई प्रकृति,
नवद्वार से बना हुआ शरीर,
शरीर को प्राण दिये आत्मा ने,
मानुष को जन्म दिया परमात्मा ने,
प्रणाम करो परमात्मा को

Q7. *What does a man do and what does he want ?*

Ans.: This has been described in two parts in terms of metaphysics:

a) *What does a man do?*

Not only a man, but all living entities do only two activities- sometimes they sit (rest) and sometimes times they walk (motion). There are only two states - rest and motion. The sitting yields potential energy and whereas the motion leads to kinetic energy. Thus the energy gets converted from one form to other. It is nothing but the conservation of energy principle in Physics.

b) *What does he want?*

Every living entity created by the Lord desires and struggles from time of birth to death to have only three things - Space, Energy and Time.

Space: Every human wants to acquire more land and would like to travel whole world and go to Moon.

Energy: Every human wants to acquire Materialistic power- movable and immovable properties; Money power - Flats, Palaces, business, etc.; Muscle power - bodyguards and securities; Education- degree and awards ; Spiritual power to become scholars , saints, sages , for self-realization and knowledge of absolute truth etc.

Time: Every living entity prays and cries for more and more time. The 24 hours in a day and 100 years life period gifted by that Lord, may not be sufficient to complete his work and enjoy the materialistic world on this planet. If I had some more time I would have realized the symptoms of cardiac arrest and my wife would have been saved. If he had some more time he would have scored more marks in the examination.

Thus all activities which we perform in every day comprise of Space, Energy and Time. I am sitting here means I am occupying the Space, delivering Energy in the form of sound waves, propagate in the space up to the audience in a given time. This can be explained in

simple harmonic wave equation as $y = A \sin(kx - \omega t)$, where y is the displacement, A amplitude, K wave number, ω the angular displacement, x spatial coordinates and t time.

Vedic Sloka:

Lokah samastah sukhino bhavantu /

The universe comprises of Space, Time and Energy. The universal vedic prayer for welfare of all living entities is also composed of Space, Energy and Time; *Lokha* means a world - *Space*; *Samastah* means all living species- *Energy*; *Sukhino bhavantu* means be happy during the time you live on this earth represents *Time*.

Q8. Could you please recite a rhythmic shloka (verse) based on Brahma?

Ans.: The vedic shlokas of Sri Vishnu Sahasranamam (71)⁶ and Bhagavad Gita (4.24)⁵

Bramhanyo bramha-krut bramha barmha bramha vivar-dhanah /
Bramha-vitbramahno bramhee bramhagno bramhana-ptiyah //

Brahmarpanam brahma havir brahmagnau brahmana hutam /
Brahmaiva tena gantavyam brahma karma samadhina //

3. Videography of Ashtavadhanm



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yg4PZs7ag84>

The concert was video recorded and participants are : Avadhani (at center) – D. Pramod (author) and eight Pruchakas (clock wise : K Sai Subramnyam, B. Chini Krishna, T.N.V. Murali Krishna, N.Srinvasa Murthy, A.V.D Murthy, Ratnakar Surabhi , Sudheer Siripuram, B.Mahesh - as audience) .One can watch the Ashtavadhanm by using the above URL link.

4. Conclusion

One who is born with creative, meticulous analyzing and remembering power, literary scholar and self-realized about absolute truth may practice to become Avdhani. There are many poets, scientists and Nobel Laureates but there are only very few Avdhanes in the world.

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