

Shatavadhan Could Imply A New State of Consciousness

Surendra Singh Pokharna

Dr. Daulat Singh Kothari Institute for Research and Education, Udaipur, India
Science and Spirituality Research Institute, Ahmedabad, India

ABSTRACT

Recent advances in neurosciences and an attempt to explain properties of consciousness has opened new frontiers to understand the properties of consciousness from various perspectives like quantum biology, neurophysiology, neuropsychology, quantum physics, computer science and several other disciplines. Here we describe a state of consciousness known as Shatvadhan. Shatvadhan in Jainism means one hundred states of extraordinary attention of the brain. In this state a person will listen or observe one hundred questions of different types from one hundred persons or more for over a period of say 2-3 hours without break and without using any paper or pen or electronic device. This is a demonstration of extraordinary memory to retain and recall questions and their answers in same sequence, reverse sequence or random sequences involving complex questions. This appears to represent a new state of consciousness which involves demonstration of extra ordinary memory, highly sequential ordering of memory, recalling, remembering sequences also in which memories of events are stored, simultaneous storing information from different sense organs and others. This also involves mathematical computations which are done in parts in different activities and simultaneous observations of pictures and listening of audio sounds. It appears that this process represents a new state of consciousness mostly found in saints who are highly advanced in the process of spiritual development. An analysis of this may provide new avenues of thought regarding storage and recalling mechanism of memory in the human brain. It may also involve non-local information transfer in the brain through quantum holography and similar mechanism.

*Corresponding author

Surendra Singh Pokharna, Dr. Daulat Singh Kothari Institute for Research and Education, Udaipur, India, Science and Spirituality Research Institute, Ahmedabad, India. E-mail: sspokharna15@yahoo.com

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Introduction

Power of human memory and functioning has been demonstrated by some individuals through mystic powers of mathematical computation by Shakuntla Devi from Bangalore, India, spiritual gurus like Swamy Vivekanand who had a photogenic memory. There are persons who can recall most of their past life history and various activities of their life. This capability is known as hyperthymesia. Here we describe a completely different capability of extraordinary memory known as shatavadhan.

Shatavadhan (Shat in Sanskrit means one hundred and Avdhan implies states of deep concentration) is the ability to receive, retain and/or execute one hundred activities accrued through the eyes or ear during one period of attention. A person who achieves the stage of Shatavadhan is called Shatavadhani. This unbelievable power has been attained by a handful of people over the human history because it occurs after a very high stage of spiritual development. According to the modern scientific belief, a common man can hear and remember serially 3 or 4 statements/events at a time. This is based on the conscious mind. Anyone with exceptional intellect can extend this number from 3-4 to 10-11. A person who can mentally execute hundreds of tasks or can remember hundreds of tasks in a sequence and can answer them in any sequence is rarest of the rare. The tasks can be simple to very complex and even mathematical in nature and even they can be distributed over time and falling into two or more activities. Simultaneous involvement of more than one sense organ is also possible. It also involves photogenic memory.

This process involves extra ordinary memory, storing in distributed ways, recalling, answering the tasks in different sequences involving widely different varieties of tasks, some of them involving more than one individual. It appears that such a phenomenon may involve non-local information like concepts and even quantum hologram like systems which are now fairly established for human brain and used in MRI and fMRI.

Such phenomena are rare but still they are there among Jain monks.

Materials and Methods

This unbelievable power has been attained by a handful of people over the human history because it needs very high stage of spiritual development. This is possible only when one is able to have self control in order to experience the power of soul. A Shatavdhani can utilize maximum of mental potential which demands immense concentration. That is the reason that history can name only countable shatavdhanies

In Jain tradition one can name Shrimad Rajchandra, Guru of Mahatma Gandhi (Kalarthy Mukul, 2004) whose method of non-violence also played a key role in getting freedom of India from British Raj. Mahatma Gandhi had learned the concept of ahimsa (non-violence) from his Guru Shrimad Rajchand. Shrimad Rajchand exhibited his mnemonic powers in late 19th Century in Mumbai. Gandhiji had great impact of this faculty of shrimad on his religious beliefs. This is also narrated in his autobiography.

The procedure adopted by Shrimadji in giving these demonstrations of his rare powers was indeed most exacting. In one demonstration, he could carried out fifty two activities in a sequence (Table 1). He would begin all the fifty-two activities at once, simultaneously. He would attend to a portion of each task at a time. He will then attend second task, next move on to third task, fourth task, and so on. After some time, he would return to the first task. He would cover these rounds, one after the other, until he had covered all the fifty- two tasks. He made it a rule not to put down any points on paper while attending to these various activities, nor to take any notes and to ask any one to repeat anything.

Table 1: List of Activities that were carried out by Shri Rajchand (Guru of Mahatma Gandhi) one after the other without using any pen or paper

S.N.	Item No.	Detail
1	1	To play the game of chopat, a kind of checkerboard, with three different players
2	2	To play cards with three different persons
3	3	To play chess with one person
4	4	To keep a tally of the chimes of a Zalar a small gong
5	5-8	To Keep computing sums mentally invoking addition, Subtraction, multiplication and division
6	9	To count the beads on a thread
7	10-25	To compose verses on sixteen diverse topics selected afresh, and in metrical forms chosen by various referees
8	26-33	To answer eight new riddles
9	34-49	To recall four hundred words given at random from languages including Greek, English, Sanskrit, Arabic, Latin, Urdu, Gujarati, Marathi, Bengali, rearranging them in proper order such as subject, object etc. all the while attending to various other matters.
10	50	To explain certain things to a student
11	52	Commentary on certain items of figures of speech

In 1887 AD, Shrimadji reached the peak of his achievements in this direction. He was in Mumbai at that time. He gave there a demonstration of his powers for simultaneous mental attention, this time covering a hundred different activities. He gave these demonstrations at centers including Faramjee Cowslip Institution at Dhobi Talao in Mumbai. The demonstration of powers to attend to a hundred different activities simultaneously earned him a tremendous amount of admiration all around. People were profoundly impressed by his extra ordinary mental powers. However, author could not get the list of these hundred activities).

After one hundred and twenty five years of performance of Shrimad Rajchandra at the age of 19, another shatavdhani is now creating history, again at the age of the 19 years. This great young shatavdhani is param pujanya shatavdhani munishri Ajitchandrasagarji Maharaj sahebji. He can reproduce not only 100 facts but 108 facts in ascending, descending and random order. The details of questions are given in the Table 2. This demonstration was done twice in Ahmadabad (Nov 16, 2008 and January 9, 2009). The former was held in Town Hall and author was present there. Author has also seen the programme conducted in Shankmukhanand Hall in Mumbai on March 4, 2012 in which

Ajit Chand ji Maharasahab answered two hundred questions.

Table 2: Actual questions asked to Shri Ajeet Chandra Sagarji Maharasahab on November 16, 2008 at Town Hall, Ahmedabad (Gujarat, India)

S. N.	Item No.	Description of activities
1	1- 10	One Line sentences may be in questionnaire form
2	11-20	Words of Wisdom in a sentence of 5 to 7 words
3	21	First line of a Sanskrit Shloka
4	22 to 30	Synonym or Antonym in Gujarati
5	31	Second line of the same Sanskrit Shloka
6	32 to 40	Idioms
7	41	Third line of Sanskrit Shloka
8	42 to 50	First line of any Sanskrit Shloka (other nine shlokas)
9	51	Fourth line of Sanskrit Shloka
10	52-60	Names of any famous priest, religious book or religious place
11	61	A mathematical miracle
12	62-70	Name of any philosopher, scientist or patriotic person
13	71	First part of 16 Blocks- mathematical miracle
14	72 to 80	See and Remember (Darshan Avadhan)
15	81	Second part of 16 blocks- mathematical miracle
16	82 to 90	See and Remember (Darshan Avadhan)
17	91	9 Blocks- Mathematical miracle
18	92-99	Mathematical calculation with 8 persons
19	100	Day of the Birthday
20	101-104	A line from Jain Religious song or cultural song or any patriotic song
21	105 to 108	Any Shloka from Jain aagam

A living Maha Satavdhani

On November 16, 2014 was a memorable day in the history of the world. After 500 years, a Jain monk gave a demonstration of 500 Avadhans in presence of 5,500 persons and media in Mumbai. His accuracy was almost 99.5 percent because of delay in reply of 3-4 questions. Now he is teaching this capability to some children.

These Jain monks and others carry out a highly spiritual life style. They strictly follow celibacy and most of the time remain in a state of meditation and remain silent for months together. (Figures)

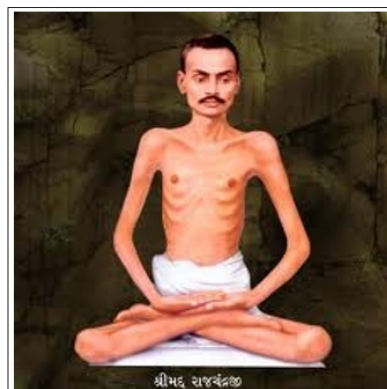


Figure 1: Shrimad Raj Chand, teacher of Mahatma Gandhi was a well-known Shatavdhani



Figure 2: Maha Satavadhani (500 avadhans) Shri Ajeet Chandji Maharasahab and his Guru Pujyaniya Naya Chand Sagarji Maharasahab

Results and Observations

Table 1 shows list of fifty two activities carried out by Shri Rajchand. First activity describes a game of chopat which is checkboard like a game and he plays with three other players. Second activity involves playing game of playing cards and that is also with three other players. Third activity involves game of chess being played with another player. Fourth activity involves counting chimes of a Jhalar (some kind of tuned bells organized in particular way). Activities five to eight involve doing some mathematical calculations like addition, subtraction, multiplication and division (may be with five different persons). Activity nine involves counting beads on a thread. Activities 10-25 constitute constructing verses on sixteen different topics selected by different referees on widely different subjects.

Activities 26-33 consists of eight types of riddles made on different subjects by different persons. Activities 34-49 involves recalling four hundred words given at random from languages including Greek, English, Sanskrit, Arabic, Latin, Urdu, Gujarati, Marathi, Bengali and rearranging them in proper order such as subject, object etc. all the while attending to various other activities.

The Table 2 shows the list of one hundred and eight activities. Activities from one to ten involve simple sentences like Einstein was a great scientist and others. Activities eleven to twenty involve simple sentences of wisdom like charity begins from home and so on. Activity twenty-one involves first line of a Sanskrit shloka, being chanted by a participant. Activity from twenty two to thirty involve telling synonym or antonym of a word in Gujarati language (similar to Sanskrit) spoken by some participant (it could be nine participants). Activity thirty-one involves second line of the Sanskrit shloka whose first line was spelled out under activity number twenty-one by one participant. Activities thirty-two to forty involve nine different types of idioms in Hindi and Gujarati. Activity forty-one involve third line of first shloka to be chanted by the participant. Activities forty-two to fifty involves first line of nine Sanskrit shlokas (nine persons can choose any nine shlokas). Activity fifty-one involves fourth line of the fist shloka spelled during twenty first activity. Activity number sixty-one involves a mathematical computation. Activities sixty-two to seventy involve names of any philosopher, scientist or patriotic person of any part of the world. Activity number seventy-one involves a mathematical exercise involving placing numbers in a 4x4 matrix with only half of the cells being filled during this activity such that sum of

diagonal and individual rows or columns is same. (Second set of entries will be done later during activity number eighty-one). Activity number seventy-two to eighty is known as “See and remember” attention (Darshan avadhan). Here a shatavadhani will be shown one or more item like Pen, Pencil, Mobile, a Purse etc. by different persons. Activity eighty-one involves second part of the mathematical puzzle mentioned in activity number seventy-one. Here half of the numbers will be filled in eight cells so as to achieve the same sum in all rows, columns and all diagonals of the 4x4 matrix defined in activity number seventy-one. Activity number eighty-two to ninety again involve “see and remember” activity in which again some objects are shown by participants to shatavdhani Maharasahab. Activity ninety-one involves a nine-block mathematical puzzle. Activities from ninety-two to ninety-nine involves another mathematical puzzle which involves eight persons. Activity number one hundred involves to say day of any birth day expressed as date. Activity number one hundred one to one hundred four involves one line sung from religious song, agama gatha or patriotic song or a shloka. Activity one hundred five to one hundred eight involves any shloka from Jain aagamas (Jain scriptures having at least a standard set known as Jain aagams like four vedas) [1-11].

Discussion

This analysis is a very preliminary attempt to understand the concept of shatavdhan in a scientific way. This involves performing one hundred activities in a sequence totally through brain and keeping a record in the brain’s memory. This performance lasts for few hours and several persons participate to ask questions of highly different varieties. The shatavdhani listens, observes and participate in all activities for two three hours without speaking anything. It is only after 2-3 hours that he will start giving answers to all one hundred questions in the same sequence or reverse sequence or any random sequence. It is definitely a new concept of extraordinary memory and is very different from many other concept of extra ordinary memory. The varieties of activities carried out by such spiritual masters in simultaneous way and keeping a perfect sequence implies parallel processing of memory related events. It could also involve non-local memory mechanisms including quantum holographic mechanism which are now well established through MRI and fMRI. This phenomenon can provide some new mechanisms of memory storage and recalling and needs further investigation.

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