

# Roots Of Divinity In Theatre

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Theatre is evolved from many traditions, customs and beliefs. These are elements are part of divinity. In this paper I am going to discuss about the importance and involvement of divinity in Theatre which helped society to lead a healthy and principled society.

Before discussing about the roots of divinity in theatre we have to know the actual meaning of the word divinity. Divinity means pure and eternal. Divinity gives purity to the mind, it will help human beings to come out from pity and fear. Most of Indian people are connected with divinity. The beliefs, customs traditions, everything linked with divinity. The present research paper discuss how the Theatre having its roots in divinity.

Angikam bhuvanamyasya  
Vachikam sarvavangmayam  
Aharyam chandra taradi  
Tam vande satwikam shivam

This is the opening Sloka of Abhinayadarpan by Nandikeswara. The meaning of the sloka is describing the Lord shiva and compared the four abhinayas with the body, literature, voice and the emotions of Shiva. The body language of shiva is angika abhinaya, the whole literature is Vachikam, the moon and stars are lord shiva aharyam and satwikam is shiva. This explains how the divinity roots are their in Theatre and how theatre is connected with divinity.

Natyasastra of Bharatha is the early work of Indian Dramaturgy, and considered as Bible of Indian Theatre, to give divinity to theatre Bharatha attributed the origin of theatre to Vedas and Brahma. Bharatha started the Natyasastra with the following sloka as prayer.

Pranamyashirasadevoupitamamaheswarou  
Natyashastrampravakshyamibramhanayududahritam

In thus sloka Bharatha told that Natya shastra is given by Brahma to Bharatha. In this 1<sup>st</sup> chapter of Natyasastra Bharatha described about the origin of the theatre that during the yugasandhi time, yuga sandhi means a gap between one yuga to another yuga, the people behaved with rakshasa pravrutthi i.e, with indiscipline, sadistic nature and not

performing their duties and responsibilities. Then the rishis, sages and devatas went to Brahma and requested him that  
“kreedaneeyakamicchaama drishyam sravyam  
chayadbhaveth”

This means that to create a art playable audio visual. Then Brahma went to meditation and created the “fifth veda”, “Natya veda”. Bharatha hear described how Brahma created the Natya veda by this sloka

“Jagrahpathyam rigveda  
Samabhya geetamevacha  
yajurvedad abhinayan  
Rasanad adarvanaadapi”.

Brahma took pathyam or text from rigveda, geeta or music from samaveda , abhinaya or acting from yajurveda and Rasa or emotions from adharvanaveda. By this we can analyze how the roots of divinity is their in origin of the theatre. The origin itself involves the aspect of divinity.

Not only Bharatha most of the critics and writers of India has treated the theatre as divine art. According to the critics the objects of the theatrical performance is rasanubhuthi or aesthetic pleasure. They equated the rasanubhuthi or pleasure with God or Brahma. According to the vedas the ananda or pleasure is Brahma and that is Rasa. The following statement from the upanishaths is proving the ananda is God.

“Anandobrahmethi vyajanth raso vaisaha”

According to Dhananjaya the object of the performance is brahmananda. In the first chapter of Dasharoopaka Dhananjaya stated like this:

“Anandanisyandishu roopakeshuvyutpatthi matram  
phalamalpabuddhihi  
Apeetihaasadvadaahasaadhuhutasmainamahaswssdupara  
nmukhaaya”.

The object of the theatrical performance is happiness. Epics like Ramayana and Mahabharatha teaches morals and ethics and way of living, just like this theatre also teaches morals and ethics and way of living. But some people will not accept these things, but this is proved by many theatrical performance that how the morals and ethics involved in the theatre. Kalidasa compared the theatrical performance a ritual doing with eyes. He called theatrical performance as Visual yaga. In his play Malavikagnimitram he wrote like this

Devanamidamamananthimunayahakantamkratumchakshy  
um

Rudrenedamumakrutavyathikaresangevibhakthimdwidha  
Trigunyodbhavamatralokacharithamnanarasamdrishyate  
Natyambhinnarucerjanasyabahudhapyekamsamaradhana  
m

In the above sloka kalidasa gave two major points about the divinity of theatre. One is above said point that visual ritual chakshusakratuvu. The second point is the samaradhan. He said that theatre is performed by various people in various ways but it is only one as the prayer to the God. He used the word samaradhana for the prayer to God. Samaradhana is ritual or prayer to the God.

In the commentary of probhodachandrodaya critic Vaandlla Gopaprabhu described about the object of the performance. While discussing about the junctions or sandhi of the play he stated like this:

Nirvahana  
sandhouvigitavedyantarahasakshathbrahmanadaeva

After the completion of the nirvahanasandhi or climax of the play the spectator will get the extreme happiness and almost he feels reaching the God.

According to Indian Dramaturgy everything is related to the theatre is divine, from the theme to object of the performance everything is divine, for example, Nandikeswara defined the theatre or Natya like this:

Natyamtannatakamchaivapujyampurvakathayutamthe  
theme of the play should be divine and with story of historical and divine people. Nandikeswara even defined the subha or gallery with the divine tree or kalpavriksha in the following sloka.

Sabhakalpatarurbhati vedasakhopasobhitaha  
Sastrapushpasamakeerno vidvadbhramara samyuthaha  
Most of the subjects of the early sanskrit plays belong to epics or histories except the play Mrichukatikam, kaludasa,

Bhasa, Bhavabhooti, and other playwrights took themes from epics and vedic subjects.

Not only in Indian theatre, even in western theatre also having its roots in divinity. Egypt and Greek theatre also started with the rituals. In Greek the theatre started in the rituals of the God Dionysus. During the starting stages of the Christian Era the representatives of the church performed the Biblical stories and miracle plays, mystery cycle, liturgical plays propagated their religion.

Even modern Indian theatre is also having its roots from divinity. The early Marathi play by Vishnudasbhava is seethaswayamvar is also from epic Ramayana. Almost all the early modern Indian plays either translations of sanskrit plays or originals based on the epics.

Not only classical and main stream theatre even the traditional and folk theatre of India also having their roots from divinity. Bhagavathmela of Andhrapradesh performs stories of bhagavatam, Therukootu of Tamilnadu performs epic Mahabharatha, Ramleela of UP is from Ramayana, Rasleela from bhagavatam, Jatra of Bengal performs different stories of God's, Teyyam of kerala, yakshaganam of Karnataka and so many other forms of India are based on rituals and linked with divinity. So the theatre having its roots in divinity, they cannot be separated. As some elders say 'ARTS ARE DIVINE', as theatre plays crucial role to get nearer to divinity.

#### REFERENCES

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