

MASTER SANSKRIT EASILY
(*Sa, skÅta Sarala Prabodha*)

By

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PREFACE

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About more than a decade and a half back, when I was heading the Maharshi Veda Vijnana Academy, Ahmedabad, as its Director, I wrote a book in Gujarati with the title 'Sa, skÅta SaraÅa Prabodha ' at the instance of Shri Ishwarbhai Patel, the former Vice Chancellor of the Sardar Patel University, Vallabhvidyanagar, of the Gujarat University, Ahmedabad and of the Gujarat Agricultural University, Dantiwada, and the then Chairman of the Trust managing the institution.

Shri Ishwarbhai wanted me to prepare a postal course for laymen to learn Sanskrit. I planned a course of twenty-eight lessons for the purpose, and later on the lessons were published in the form of the book with the title mentioned as above.

Since it was meant for laymen, the only equipment expected of those among them really interested in learning Sanskrit was a bare acquaintance with the Hindi script, and a sound knowledge of the mother tongue, Gujarati.

At the same time, I had planned the course in such a way that while providing the essentials of the structure of the Sanskrit language in a practical manner, rather than adopting a grammatical approach, all the necessary terminological background of the informal grammar, as also of the formal Pāṇinian, was provided in a simple way so that after completing the course successfully, if the reader wished to dive deep into the literature and the formal grammar, he will feel quite at ease and joyfully enthusiastic, rather getting bored. And, I was informed by a friend of mine working as a professor in a Teachers' Training College somewhere in Gujarat that he was using my book as a source work for teaching the content part to the students studying for a B.Ed. degree with Sanskrit Method as their special subject. He further added that while the choice of the Sanskrit Method as a special subject helped the graduates, irrespective of their belonging to Arts, Science or Commerce faculty, they knew Sanskrit to the extent of a compulsory, and hence a boring though good scoring, subject through their study during their

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INTRODUCTION

Sanskrit and Culture

Sanskrit language is an important link binding together the varieties of Indian culture into a variegated fabric. The Sanskrit works have preserved since times immemorial our treasure of knowledge. Scholars of India and all other countries the world over wishing to know thoroughly about the Indian culture take recourse to Sanskrit as the original source. Due to the naturally scientific and fixed unitary system of sounds and their utterance as vocables, this language has been recognized to be most suitable in this computer age. All the Indian scholars and others have almost universally accepted that even for the sound knowledge of all other Indian languages, both medieval and modern, the equipment of Sanskrit proves to be most helpful. This being the situation, it will be highly conducive to our cultural welfare if we take interest and learn, understand, read, write and if possible speak Sanskrit. It will surely afford us a vital key to the Indian cultural treasure for our family, and us too through us. And, on becoming well versed in Sanskrit we may also feel a sense of fulfillment in our life.

Language and Grammar

Language is but a speech. Human beings express their thoughts and feelings through their speech, which is a system of the sounds uttered through the throat. These sounds combine into words and sentences. Initially, since right from its infancy a child learns to utter sounds and to speak by imitating its mother, and then its father and other relatives, the speech it learns is its mother tongue and it does not need grammar for it. Although ever since the last so many milleniums to this day the Sanskrit language has been an invariable medium of instruction in the traditional P¹-ha¹l¹'s all over India, and although there is in Karnataka State a town, named Chikmanglore, where all its residents speak Sanskrit and carry on their day-to-day communications with one another in Sanskrit, currently the language is not in common popular parlance all over in any Indian state. One has, therefore, to resort to its grammar, which is but a short cut to

master its linguistic structure, much in the which is but a short cut to master its linguistic structure, much in the same way as a medical student learns about the human anatomy by resorting to dissection of a dead body, and thus familiarizing himself with the internal structure of different limbs, and their mutual relationships.

The Cultural Treasure In Sanskrit

A glimpse of the vast richness of Sanskrit literature, in the form of dramas, prose romances, stories, fables, epics, poems, lyrics, dramas, scholastic works on various philosophical systems, as also the expository commentary works on all these forms of literature can be obtained from the histories of Sanskrit literature written by celebrated scholars like and M. Krishnamachariar, M. Winternitz, De and Dasgupta, Krishna Chaitanya, Kunhan Raja, and many others in English. An access to Sanskrit is thus a window to the vast panorama of Indian life, philosophy, literature and culture. Anybody who aspires to become a well educated and a considerably cultured person would miss a great deal in life if this treasure were totally unavailable for him.

The present endeavour of introducing a reader to the basics of the structure of the Sanskrit language is practice-oriented and not just grammatical. The objective is to gradually help the reader gain a considerable mastery over the language structure proper, so that he can have considerable confidence in reading, understanding, writing and possibly speaking Sanskrit, so as to enter into the vast literature gradually and almost unaided by a teacher. It is necessary to follow meticulously the instructions given in the book for its study to obtain expected proficiency, comparable to a Sanskrit graduate. of any Indian university.

Method of Study

It is recommended hereby that one should study just two lessons a week, say the first on Thursday and the second on the next Monday, and so on further for the lessons that follow. The lesson started on the Thursday should be read twice on that day, both in the

morning and evening, and in the same way on the next two days; consequently the same lesson would be repeatedly six times, thus precluding the necessity of cramming it, and it would enable the reader to inculcate it thoroughly. In this way the whole book consisting of twenty-eight lessons would be covered and fully learnt in about fourteen weeks, i.e., about three and a half months or so.

(2) While repeating the lesson on the same day and the following ones, one should try to recollect it so that it gets installed in his subconscious.

(3) As to the portion of the lesson under the instruction of speaking out loudly, one should try to read it aloud rhythmically in case of prose portion, and sing it melodiously in the case of the metrical one. This is meant to help the reader realize the auditory beauty of the language, as also to facilitate correct pronunciation and inculcate a habit of speaking the language on his part.

(4) The purpose behind the advice of singing rhythmically the metrical verses in the lessons is that they can be memorized easily. These verses are selected in such a way that while illustrating the relevant grammatical forms of the Sanskrit words, like nouns, verbs, participles, and etc., they incorporate the cultural values and wise sayings very useful in day-to-day life. If they get ingrained in the memory, they would occur immediately to the reader at appropriate relevant occasion, and would add to his oratorical personality.

(5) The rest of the portion of a lesson is meant to be understood, mentally grasped, thoroughly mastered, and visualized mentally.

(6) The reader who observes these instructions and carries them out carefully will surely gain the proficiency in Sanskrit language comparable to the graduation level, within time duration of just one collegiate term of the Indian universities.

Sanskrit Devan'gar" Alphabet and its Transliteration

Since this book is meant for the English readers, we have used the Roman script with appropriate diacritical marks to indicate the equivalent Sanskrit sounds. But normally Sanskrit

language is presented through the devan'gar" symbols. A comparative list of the symbols is given below to facilitate the interested readers, who may like to read the original Sanskrit works in future.

Vowels: a = , 1 = , i = , » = , u = , Ø = , Å = , ð = , e = , ai = , o = , au = , a, = , aâ = .

Consonants:

Guttural: ka = , kha = , ga = , gha = , ja = , ha = ;

Palatal: ca = , cha = , ja = , jha = , ña = ;

Retroflex: -a = , -ha = , © = , ©ha , °a = ;

Dental: ta = , tha = , da = , dha = , na = ;

Labial: pa = , pha = , ba = , bha = , ma = .

Semivowels: (Palata) ya = , (Retroflex) ra = , (Dental) la = , (Labial) va = .

Sibilants: (Palatal) ŋa = , (Retroflex) -a = , (Dental) sa = , (Rolled) ða = .

Anusv'ra : A single dot on the Devan'gar» letter, like a dot in the Roman letter i.

Visarga: like a colon sign after a Devan'gar» letter.

Syllabic Style of Devan'gar» Characters:

Ka = , k¹ = , ki = , k» = , ku = , kØ = , kÅ , kð = , ke = , kai = , Ko = , kau = , ka, = , kaâ = . End of a word or a sentence is indicated by a single vertical stroke (/), and that of a verse by such double strokes (//). In the ligature of one or more consonants followed by a vowel, also called the conjunct consonant, the Devan'gari signs for the consonants are combined together, as for instance, in kta = , k-a = , dbha = , dma = , mna = , tsna = .

With this much introductory information about the **Devan'gar»** script and its roman equivalents, the reader can proceed further with simple Sanskrit sentences, and progress easily.