



SAMSKRITAM AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (SAFL)

NEWSLETTER

November 1, 2019

IN THIS ISSUE

Sanskrit for the Next Generation

नमस्सर्वेभ्यः,

Parenting plays a very important role in shaping today's children to be tomorrow's responsible citizens. Indian-American parents face many challenges, not just related to academics, but also social-cultural challenges when raising their children in the United States. I remember growing up in the US school system with only one other Indian kid. We would be taunted for our Indian food, clothes, and definitely our gods. "Why does your food smell so much?," "Why is your 'Indian shirt' so long?," and "Why do you worship cows and monkeys?" were some stereotypical questions that I encountered. I never had a good answer for them. So, I used to try steering the conversation to something else that wouldn't make me feel ashamed of being Indian. Gradually, I changed myself to blend in and be more accepted by my western friends.

Fast forward to 2019 and the situation isn't much different. There may be more Indian kids in school, but few can still explain the true significance of our glorious Indian culture with an unapologetic pride. This is in stark contrast with other school activities. In school, we can always improve our grades, take the SAT/ACT multiple times, and get more community service hours. But how will the current and future generations of Indian-American youth find dignity and pride in their Indian roots? The

solution is certainly complex, but it fundamentally rests on understanding, experiencing, and taking enough pride in our heritage. And, to understand Indian culture, one must be able to comprehend the root language - Samskritam aka Sanskrit.

Sanskrit is a beautifully intricate and precise language that holds the knowledge of not only our scriptures, but science, philosophy, spirituality, culture, and more. There is a rich and vast literature in Sanskrit. Many Indian languages were derived from Sanskrit and some western languages have borrowed from it. There are many other benefits to learning a language like Sanskrit such as improved mental cognition and a more expansive view of the world. The culmination of all these great aspects of Sanskrit leads us to place Sanskrit on a pedestal. Subsequently, we feel that Sanskrit is too complex, too difficult, or just too intimidating to learn. But, today, learning Sanskrit in the United States has never been easier than before, primarily because of Samskrita Bharati.

Samskrita Bharati focuses on teaching Sanskrit in enjoyable piecemeal bites through the conversational method that can be easily digested. There are classes catered for young elementary school kids all the way up to adults. For high school kids, Samskritam as a Foreign Language (SAFL) was specifically created a decade ago. Through this three year program,

Sanskrit for the Next Generation

Important Dates

सुभाषितम्

Articles

students are able to go from knowing nothing about Sanskrit to parsing the meaning of literary texts like the Bhagavad Geeta, Ramayana, and Mahabharata. Additionally, SAFL brings these students together for a fun immersion camp every year to further develop their speaking and comprehension skills as well engage in community building with a large group of like-minded students.

I personally have gone through Samskrita Bharati's process, and it really helped shape who I am today. Because of Samskrita Bharati's pragmatic methodology, I have attained fluency in Sanskrit. As a result, I have gone through parts of the vast and rich Sanskrit literature and found meaning to many aspects of our culture. Today, I am an unapologetically proud Indian-American with a firm, deep, and broad understanding of our culture.

Pushun Sheth
SAFL Teacher since 2011
BS Aerospace Engineering
Currently working in Sunnyvale CA

IMPORTANT DATES

Important Information for SAFL2019-20 Academic Year

First Semester - Fall 2019

Sept 7-11, 2019 – First day of class (All courses)

Oct 12 - 16, 2019 – Unit Exams

–
I (SAMS101A/101B/101C/101D/101E/101F/101G/101H/101J)

Oct 19-23, 2019 – Midterm Exams

(SAMS201A/201B/201C/201D/201E/201F/201G/201H/301A/301B/301C/301D/301E/301F)

Nov 16-20, 2019 – Unit Exams

–
II (SAMS101A/101B/101C/101D/101E/101F/101G/101H/101J)

Nov 30 - Dec 4, 2019 – Thanksgiving Break (All courses)

Dec 21, 2019 – Jan 1, 2020 – Winter Break (All courses)

Jan 11 - 15, 2020 – Final Exams (All courses)

Inter semester break

Jan 18 – 22, 2019– Inter semester break - No classes (All courses)

Second Semester - Spring 2020

Jan 25 - 29, 2020 – First day of class

Feb 29 - Mar 4, 2020 – Unit Exams – I
(SAMS102A/102B/102C/102D/102E/102F/102G/102H/102J)

Mar 14 -18, 2020 – Midterm Exams
(SAMS202A/202B/202C/202D/202E/202F/202G/202H/

302A/302B/302C/302D/302E/302F)

Apr 11 – Apr 15, 2020 – Unit Exams –
II (SAMS102A/102B/102C/102D/102E/102F/102G/102H/102J)

May 16 – 20, 2020– Final Exams (All courses)

REGISTRATION FOR 2019-20

Registration for Direct Entry Exams opens February 2020, and the exam will be conducted in March 2020. Registrations for SAFL 2020-21 Academic Year opens April 2020. Stay tuned for details...

सुभाषितम्

बुद्धिर्यस्य बलं तस्य निर्बुद्धेस्तु कुतो बलम् ।
पश्य सिंहो मदोन्मत्तः शशकेन निपातितः ॥

यस्य ज्ञानं वर्तते, तस्य बुद्धिः एव बलम्। अज्ञानस्य कुतो वा बलं भवेत्? यथा शशः बुद्धिबलेन मदोन्मत्तं सिंहं पराजयते तथा विद्वान् सर्वत्र धिया कार्याणि साधयति ।

A person who has wisdom, has strength. How can there be strength to a person who has no wisdom? Even a strong lion (as per the story) was brought down by a hare.

Articles

भारतीय-दर्शनशास्त्रे न्यूटोनियन् मेकानिक्स्

विभिन्नभारतीयशास्त्रेषु आहत्य अनेके वैज्ञानिकसिद्धान्ताः सहस्राधिकवर्षेभ्यः विना क्षयं शब्द-श्रुति-परम्परया परिरक्ष्यमाणाः सन्त्येव । एतैः विविधाः विषयाः बोध्यन्ते भौतिकं भवतु वा रसायनं, शिल्पशास्त्रम् उत धनुर्विद्या, अपि च आयुर्वेदशास्त्रं दार्शनिकं वा । गतेषु दशकेषु महता प्रयत्नेन लुप्तशास्त्राणि अपि अन्विष्टानि सन्ति । एतानि शास्त्राणि यद्यपि पुरातनानि तेषु विद्यमानाः विषयाः विचाराश्च आधुनिकाः प्रयोगात्मकाश्च सन्ति। उदाहरणार्थं गणितशास्त्रेषु प्रसिद्धाः विषयाः ये सामान्यतया पाश्चात्यपण्डितेभ्यः ज्ञायन्ते – यथा “Pythagorean theorem”, “Value of pi”, “square root of 2” – तादृशाः विषयाः बौधायन-शुल्बसूत्रेष्वपि समानशकाब्दात् सप्तशतकपूर्वमेव (ca. 700-800 BCE) सङ्कलिताः भासन्ते । [1, 2] किन्तु गच्छता कालेन विदेशीयाक्रमणसमये एतादृशाः अनेके अपरिरक्षित-शास्त्रीयग्रन्थाः विनष्टाः जाताः । यदि एते लुप्ताः विनष्टाः वा न अभविष्यन् तर्हि निश्चयेन भारतीयशास्त्राणि आधुनिकपाश्चात्यशास्त्राणामपेक्षया वैज्ञानिकप्रगतिदृष्ट्या च श्रेष्ठानि अभविष्यन् इति बहवः संस्कृतशास्त्रज्ञाः मन्यन्ते ।

Scientific knowledge in India has been orally passed on from generation to generation over several millennia as part of the traditional knowledge systems, remarkably without significant degeneration. These knowledge systems contain a wealth of information, be it in the field of physics, or chemistry, architecture or archery, medicine or philosophy. In the recent past, even some traditions that had been considered lost, have been recovered and are being studied. Despite these systems being ancient, the knowledge they contain is still very much relevant and pertinent in this current day and age. For example, concepts in Mathematics that we have come to learn from western mathematicians, such as “Pythagorean theorem,” “Value of pi,” “square root of 2,” etc., find their existence in Baudhayana’s *Sulbasutras* that were compiled around 7th or 8th century BCE. However, with passage of time and with the plundering by foreign invaders, many such invaluable texts remain either lost or destroyed. If they had not encountered such a fate, many Sanskrit scholars argue that scientific progress made in India based on the traditional knowledge systems may have been superior to that of the West.

गणितविद्याविषये एकादशे शतके जातः भास्कराचार्यः भारतीयेतिहासे सर्वोत्तमः वैज्ञानिकः इति विश्रुतः । [3] खगोल-गणित-शास्त्रेषु विस्तृतं शोधनकार्यं कृतवान् सः । उदाहरणार्थं सोमवीथ्याः पृथिवीकेन्द्रस्य च मध्ये भेदः अस्तीति परिगणितं तेन । [4] न केवलं तत् किन्तु गतेः/वेगस्य (velocity) विषयेऽपि वर्णितम्। गतिः द्विविधा – तात्कालिकी (instantaneous), स्थूला (average) चेति, यत्र गतिः दूरतायाः समयस्य च अनुपातेन गण्यते। यत्र गतिः समाना, तत्र कालः स्थूलकाल इति परिगण्यते, किन्तु यत्र गतिः तात्कालिकी अस्थिरा च, तत्र सूक्ष्मात्सूक्ष्मतरः (infinitesimal) काल एव स्वीकर्तव्यः (सूक्ष्मकालः) । [5] चलन-कलन-विषये (differential calculus) एतदेव ऐदम्प्रथमं प्रकरणं यत् न्यूटन्-महोदयात् षड्शतवर्षेभ्यः पूर्वमेव भास्कराचार्येण निरूपितम् इति अभिमानार्हः विषयः।

यद्यपि व्यवस्थापितरूपेण भौतिकशास्त्रविचाराः भारते कदा आरब्धाः इति निश्चितरूपेण वक्तुं न शक्यते तथापि महर्षिणा कणादेन एव प्रायेण पुरातनतमं प्रकरणं वैशेषिकसूत्रेषु प्रतिपादितम् इति विप्रैः चिन्त्यते। षड्शताधिकद्विसहस्रवर्षेभ्यः प्राक् रचितानि एतानि सूत्राणि मुख्यतया वैशेषिकदर्शनस्य आधारभूतचिन्तनानि प्रकाशयन्ति। कणादमहर्षिः एतेनैव सूत्रमाध्यमेन अणुपरमाण्वादीनां विषयाणां प्रस्तावनम् अकरोत् । अतः सः “भारतस्य प्रथमपरमाणुवैज्ञानिकः” इत्यपि सुविख्यातः । [6, 7]

In the field of mathematics, Bhaskaracharya (born ca. 1100 AD) is considered among the first scientists in Indian history. He extensively studied subjects like astronomy and mathematics. In his treatises, he has calculated the distance between earth's center and the moon's orbit. Furthermore, he has also described concepts like velocity, time etc. in good detail. Herein, he identifies two types of velocity – instantaneous and average, where velocity is described as a ratio between distance and time. In cases where the velocity is consistent, time periods are larger and taken as "gross time" and where velocity is instantaneously changing, time periods are infinitesimal. This is often considered the first instance of a treatise on differential calculus, presented about 6-7 centuries prior to that by Newton.

Even though it is hard to accurately estimate the beginnings of compilation of treatises on concepts in physics in ancient India, Maharshi Kanada is often credited with being the first and the earliest to do so, through the *Vaisesika Sutras* (or aphorisms), a magnum opus on the *Vaisesika* system of Indian philosophy, compiled more than 2600 years ago. It is through these *sutras*, that Maharshi Kanada has also delved into topics which in the current context could be related to those describing atoms and sub-atomic particles. As a consequence of this, Maharshi Kanada is also regarded widely as *Bharat's* first atomic/nuclear scientist.

महर्षिकणादः वैशेषिकसूत्रेषु प्रकृतिपदार्थानां (matter) विषये चर्चयन् निरूपयति यत् सर्वेषु तादृशपदार्थेषु "गतिः अथवा वेगः" (motion) प्रकृत्यामेव अन्तर्भूततत्त्वम् इति । वैशेषिक-भाषायाम् एषः वेग एव पदार्थस्य क्रियावत्त्वं (action) सूचयति । परिमाणः (mass), कर्म (action/energy) च प्रकृतिपदार्थेषु अपरौ मुख्यौ आधारविषयौ । [8, 9] यद्यपि एतानि सूत्राणि दार्शनिकदृष्ट्या आत्मसाक्षात्कारस्य च जगतः आधारपदार्थानां विषये बोधयन्ति, तर्करीत्या एतानि आधुनिकवैज्ञानिकांशान् प्रतिपादयन्त्यपि । एतादृशाः अंशाः एव अधुना सर्वत्र विद्यालयेषु भौतिक-गणित-खगोल-शास्त्रेषु पठ्यमानाः विविधाः मूलभूताः विषयाः न्यूटनादिभिः षोडश-सप्तदश-शतकवैज्ञानिकैः सुव्यवस्थापिताः वर्तन्ते । उदाहरणार्थम् -

शक्तिः/ऊर्जा (Energy) -

द्रव्याणि द्रव्यान्तरमारभन्ते गुणाश्च गुणान्तरम् ॥ १ । १ । १० ॥

(द्रव्यपदार्थानाम् उत्पत्तिः द्रव्येभ्य एव शक्या । तथैव द्रव्यगुणानां मूलं च गुणाः एव ।)

न द्रव्यं कार्यं कारणञ्च बधति* ॥ १ । १ । १२ ॥

(कारणेन उत कार्येण द्रव्यस्य विनाशो न भवति ।)

In his *Vaisesika sutras* Maharshi Kanada contends that "motion" or what modern physics would refer to as "state of inertia" is a naturally occurring attribute of matter. It is this "state of inertia" that determines the nature of "action" in an object of matter. Other major attributes to matter are mass and energy. Although these concepts, at a deeper level, expound on metaphysical aspects of existence, from the standpoint of logic, they share significant similarities with concepts pertaining to the physical world as described by Newtonian mechanics and other such scientists of the 16th and 17th century. For example:

Describing "energy" –

Substances originate another Substance, and Attributes another Attribute. (1.1.10)

Substance is not annihilated either by effect or by cause. (1.1.12)

* The form 'badhati' (instead of the correct form 'hanti') is found in aphorisms.

आधुनिकभौतशास्त्रे ऊर्जा-स्थिरता-नियमाः (laws of conservation of energy) ये सन्ति (यथा गलिलियो-लेब्रिट्स्-इत्यादिभिः सप्तदशशतकवैज्ञानिकैः निरूपितम्) तेषां समानता एतैः सूत्रैः सह कल्पयितुं शक्यते । चिन्तनार्हः विषयः अत्र यत् एम्पेडोक्लीस् नाम यवनदेशीयतार्किकोऽपि (Greek logician) समानशकाब्दात् पञ्चशतवर्षेभ्यः पूर्वं तादृशीं व्याख्यां रचितवान् आसीत् “On Nature” इति पद्यग्रन्थे [10]। प्रायेण समकालीनसभ्यतासु प्रकृतेः सर्वतोमुखप्रकरणं रचयितुम् आवश्यकता उत्पन्ना।

In modern physics, laws of nature such as those of conservation of energy, as postulated by 16th and 17th century mathematicians like Galileo and Leibnitz, bear remarkable similarities to those propounded by Maharshi Kanada in his *Vaisesika sutras*. It is also interesting to note that a Greek logician, Empedocles (ca. 500 BCE) who was a contemporary of Maharshi Kanada has also expounded on such concepts describing the physical laws of nature in his poetic work named “On Nature.” It is quite possible that several civilizations in that era made efforts to provide a holistic understanding of nature both from a physical and a metaphysical standpoint.

सप्तमे शतके आचार्यप्रशस्तपादः वैशेषिकदर्शनस्य विषये भाष्यमेकं रचितवान् “प्रशस्तपादभाष्यं” नाम्ना। तस्मिन् भाष्ये वर्णितानाम् अंशानां न्यूटन्-महोदयस्य गतिनियमानाम् अर्थसमानता समन्वयता च प्रशस्तपादाचार्येण स्पष्टतया निरूप्येते। [11]

एतैः चर्चितांशैः भारतीयवैज्ञानिकशास्त्रेतिहासे वैशेषिकसूत्राणां महत्त्वं स्फुटं दृश्यते। अपि च पाश्चात्यवैज्ञानिकैः पञ्चषड्शतकेभ्यः पूर्वं निरूपिताः अनेके विषयाः ये आधुनिकशास्त्रेषु आधारभूताः वर्तन्ते त एव कणाद-आर्यभट-भास्कर-प्रशस्तपादादिभिः भारतीयप्राचीनवैज्ञानिकैः सहस्राधिकवर्षेभ्यः पूर्वं विस्तरेण प्रतिपादिताः। अत्र संक्षिप्तरूपेण गतिवेगप्रकरणादिविषये ये विचाराः प्रस्तुताः ते तु भारतीयशास्त्रमहासागरात् प्राप्ताः लघवः जलबिन्दवः एव इति कथने नात्र संशयः। एषा सम्पद् या अस्ति अस्माकं सकाशे सा संस्कृतमाध्यमेन अस्ति इति किं न गर्वस्य विषयः?

A 7th century Indian philosopher by name Prashastapada has compiled a commentary to Maharshi Kanada's *Vaisesika sutras*, called *Prashastapada-Bhashyam*. Principles of mechanics as postulated in Isaac Newton's *Principia Mathematica* find commonalities with those described in this commentary text.

From this, the importance and relevance of *Vaisesika sutras* in the context of Indian philosophy and the history of scientific discovery is very evident. Furthermore, similarities in conceptual understanding of nature as described by Western scientists and mathematicians 15th century and later, and those of ancient Indian philosophers more than millennia ago, are indeed extremely remarkable. This too appears to be but a drop in this ocean of knowledge that Indian *shastraic* teaching has to offer. To know that this wealth of knowledge is now accessible to us through Samskritam, is it not a matter of pride for us?

References

- [1] *Baudhayana Sulbasutram, i. 61-2. Apastamba Sulbasutram, i. 6. Katyayana Sulbasutram, II. 13.*
- [2] D. W. Henderson, "Chapter 13: Square Roots, Pythagoras, and Similar Triangles," in *Experiencing Geometry in Euclidean, Spherical, and Hyperbolic Spaces*, Prentice Hall, 2001.
- [3] "Wikipedia," [Online]. Available: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhaskara_II. [Accessed 3 March 2016].
- [4] Bhaskaracharya, "Chedyadhikarah," in *Siddhanta Shiromani*, ca. 1150 AD, pp. 10-21.
- [5] Bhaskaracharya, "Ganitadhyaya," in *Siddhanta Shiromani*, ca. 1150 AD.
- [6] P. Priyadarshi, "Mechanics in Hindu Literature," in *Seminar on Science and Technology in Ancient Indian Texts*, 2010.
- [7] B. Seal, *The Positive Sciences of The Ancient Hindus*, Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass, 1958.
- [8] Kanada, *Vaisheshikasutra*, ca. 600 BC.
- [9] N. Sinha, *The Vaisesika sutras of Kanada - Translation*, Allahabad: Allahabad Panini Office, 1923.
- [10] "Conservation of Energy," [Online]. Available: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conservation_of_energy.
- [11] D. Shastri, *Prashastapadabhashyam of Prashtapada - Hindi Translation*, Varanasi: Chaukhamba Sanskrit Sansthan, 2002.

Sudarshan Narayanan
SAFL Teacher since 2014
B.Tech, IIT Madras
Ph.D. Materials Science, Carnegie Mellon University
Currently working in Pittsburgh, PA

महान् वटवृक्षः

नमस्ते ! आवां सुजयः त्रीशा च २०१९ तमे वर्षे मेधाशिबिरम् अगच्छाव । तत्र सर्वे छात्राः सप्ताहद्वयं यावत् बेङ्गलुरु-नगरे अक्षरे अतिष्ठन् । शिबिरं बहु उत्तमम् आसीत् - सर्वे आनन्दम् अनुभूतवन्तः । बहवः प्रख्याताः जनाः आगत्य भाषणानि दत्तवन्तः । अपि च प्रतिदिनं सायङ्काले सर्वे गणाः एकं नाटकम् अथवा गीतं प्रदर्शितवन्तः ।

मेधाशिबिरे वयं सर्वे बहून् नूतनान् पाठान् पठितवन्तः । नूतन-मित्रैः सह वार्तालापम् अकरवाम । एकस्य लघु-चलनचित्रस्य निर्माणम् अपि कृतवन्तः ! मेधाशिबिरम् अतीव सम्यक् आसीत् । भारतदेशे अस्माकम् अनुभवः अद्वितीयः आसीत् ।

अस्मिन् वर्षे वयम् एकं वटवृक्षं द्रष्टुं गतवन्तः । तस्य नाम "Big Banyan Tree" । यदा प्रथमवारं वयम् उद्यानं प्रविष्टवन्तः, तदा अस्माभिः बहवः वृक्षाः न दृष्टाः । परन्तु आश्चर्यं नाम संपूर्णे उद्याने एकः एव वटवृक्षः आसीत् ! सः वृक्षः तस्य वृक्षमूलानि प्रसार्य मुख्य-स्थाणुना विना जीवितुं शक्नोति । एतस्य वृक्षस्य वयः ४०० वर्षाणि । एषः वटवृक्षः पृथिव्यां बृहत्तमेषु चतुर्षु वृक्षेषु अन्यतमः । वयं हरित-उद्याने मनश्शान्तिम् अनुभूतवन्तः ।

यथा वटवृक्षः तस्य मूलानि प्रसार्य सर्वत्र भवति, तथैव संस्कृतम् अपि सर्वत्र प्रसृतम् अस्ति । जयतु संस्कृतम् !

About the Authors

द्वौ लेखकौ अपि अमेरिका देशतः भारतदेशं गत्वा मेधाशिबिरे अपठताम् । तौ वर्षत्रयस्य SAFL पाठ्यक्रमं समापितवन्तौ ।

सुजयः - अहं Maryland राज्ये वसामि । अहम् एकादशे वर्गे पठामि । अहं विज्ञानं पठितुम् इच्छामि । मम प्रमातामहस्य नाम तीर्थपुरनन्जुन्डैयश्रीकण्ठैयः महोदयः । सः प्रसिद्धः कविः, लेखकः उच्चारणज्ञः च आसीत् । कन्नडभाषाम् आङ्ग्लभाषां संस्कृतभाषां च जानाति स्म । सः बहूनि संस्कृतलेखनानि कविताः च लिखितवान् । अमेरिका-देशम् आगत्य UPenn-महाविद्यालये अनेकानि संस्कृतभाषा-संबद्धानि लेखनानि लिखितवान् । यदा अहं संस्कृतभाषां पठितुम् इष्टवान् तदा मम अम्बा उक्तवती - "यदि भवान् संस्कृतभाषां पठति, तर्हि भवतः प्रमातामहस्य संस्कृतलेखनानि पठितुं शक्नोति" इति । एतत् श्रुत्वा बहु प्रेरितः अभवम् ।

त्रीशा - अहं California राज्ये वसामि । विद्यालये दशमे वर्गे पठामि । मम प्रियतमः विषयः साहित्यशास्त्रम् अस्ति । मम परिवारे बहवः जनाः - मम जनकः, जननी, सहोदरी, पितामहः, दायादयः सर्वे संस्कृतं पठितवन्तः अधुनापि पठन्ति । मम पिता संस्कृतशिक्षकः अस्ति । अतः सः माम् अन्यान् च संस्कृतं पाठयति । अधुना अहम् अपि संस्कृतं प्रसारयितुं शक्नोमि ।

सनातनधर्मः

सनातनधर्मः भारतदेशस्य पुरातनः धर्मः अस्ति । एषः धर्मः अस्माकं जीवनं कथं भवतु इति पाठयति । भारते वेदाः शास्त्राणि उपनिषदः इतिहासाः पुराणानि च सन्ति । चत्वारः वेदाः सन्ति - ऋग्वेदः, यजुर्वेदः, सामवेदः अथर्ववेदः च । ऋग्वेदे वैदिकभाषया लिखितानि 1017 सूक्तानि सन्ति । अस्मिन् वेदे देवपूजार्थं मन्त्राः सन्ति । ऋग्वेदे दश मण्डलानि सन्ति । यजुर्वेदे भागद्वयमस्ति - कृष्णयजुर्वेदः शुक्लयजुर्वेदः चेति । एषः वेदः यज्ञविधिं सूचयति । याज्ञवल्क्यमहर्षिः शुक्लयजुर्वेदं बोधितवान् । एषः महर्षिः सूर्यदेवस्य पूजां करोति स्म । सामवेदे 1549 सूक्तानि सन्ति । अत्र कृषिरक्षणमन्त्राः, सर्पदंशमन्त्राः इत्यादयः सन्ति । सामवेदस्य अपि भागद्वयम् अस्ति - पूर्वकाण्डम् उत्तरकाण्डं च । जमदग्निमहर्षिः पूर्वकाण्डं, व्यासमहर्षिः उत्तरकाण्डं च लिखितवन्तौ । पूर्वकाण्डस्य अपरं नाम कर्मकाण्डम् इति अस्ति । अत्र देवानां पूजाविधिः दत्तः अस्ति । उत्तरकाण्डस्य अन्यत् नाम ज्ञानकाण्डम् इत्यपि अस्ति । अस्मिन् काण्डे अनेकानि आध्यात्मिक-चिन्तनानि सन्ति ।

सनातनधर्मे 18 पुराणानि अपि सन्ति - तानि भागवतपुराणं, विष्णुपुराणं, नारदपुराणं, वामनपुराणं, मत्स्यपुराणं, गरुडपुराणं, ब्रह्मपुराणं, भविष्यपुराणं, अग्निपुराणं, ब्रह्मवैवर्तपुराणं, ब्रह्माण्डपुराणं, पद्मपुराणं, शिवपुराणं, लिङ्गपुराणं, कूर्मपुराणं, मार्कण्डेयपुराणं, वराहपुराणं, स्कन्दपुराणं चेति । रामायणं महाभारतम् इति इतिहासद्वयम् अस्ति । तत्र अधर्मस्य उपरि धर्मस्य जयः दर्शितः अस्ति । षड् दर्शनानि अपि सनातनधर्मस्य मुख्यांशाः - तानि साङ्ख्यं, योगः, न्यायः, वैशेषिकं, पूर्वमीमांसा, उत्तरमीमांसा चेति । एतेषु शास्त्रेषु संपूर्णजीवनस्य सिद्धान्ताः सन्ति । यदि वयं तेषाम् अनुसरणं कुर्मः तर्हि मोक्षमपि प्राप्तुं शक्नुमः । अतः सनातनधर्मस्य रक्षणम् अस्माकं परमं कर्तव्यम् अस्ति ।

Adhinarayanan Padmanabhan
SAFL 100 Level student
Grade 8

Learning about Yoga: Part 1- Yoga Sutras

At the outset I would like to acknowledge that I am by no means an authority or an expert at Yoga. I humbly want to share my perspective of Yoga as a 14-year-old student.

One day, in third grade, my dad asked me whether I wanted to participate in the annual Yogasutra competition which was conducted by Sanskrit Bharati. I figured it was just memorizing some verses for the opportunity of winning a prize. So, I aced it. The joy was very short-lived because when I was getting down from the stage, an elderly gentleman asked me if I knew the meaning of what I was reciting.

Obviously, I had no clue and this got me thinking. "Isn't Yoga just a bunch of asanas we do for exercise, how can there possibly even be 195 complex phrases on different postures?" "Doesn't there have to be something more?" I decided to start my journey as a student of Yoga by reading a book on it. We found a book in the Samskrita Bharati book-store with pictorial representations, compiled by Sri. B. Ravikanth. The author of the Yoga Sutras is Maharshi Patanjali. The book has 4 chapters-Samadhi Pada-(Talking about the state of mind); Sadhana Pada-(The practice); Vibhuti Pada-(The benefits); Kaivalya Pada- (Self-realization).

I realized that only one of the sutras was about posture. The simple definition of yoga in Sanskrit is union; which I thought meant being united with God or probably a supernatural power but interestingly, the

sutras don't talk about God at all. It just talks about a supreme state of the mind which probably is the highest state of intelligence. This could also be what people refer to as Self-realization. But honestly, for me, I would be happy if Yoga can help me focus better on my learning.

The gist of the book is in 3 sutras of the Samadhi Pada:

योगश्चित्तवृत्तिनिरोधः, --Yoga means restraining the activities of the mind

अभ्यासवैराग्याभ्यां तन्निरोधः -- By practice and detachment that is contained

तदा द्रष्टुः स्वरूपेऽवस्थानम् -- Then the witness will be in its true form (state of self-realization)

After reading the book, the word Yoga kept popping out wherever I see it. I noticed that 4 major self-realization streams Jnana, Karma, Bhakti, and Raja yoga had Yoga as a keyword and they seem to have been influenced by specific parts of the Yoga Sutras. It wouldn't be an overstatement if I say the Yoga Sutras are the roots of any of Yoga philosophies in the world. It is also interesting to note that all the chapters of the Bhagavad Gita have a name ending with Yoga. I will cover these in my next article.

Prajval Sharma
SAFL 200 Level Student
Grade 9

Scrambled! How A Language Can Be Scrambled and Still Be Understood

The sentence you are now reading is strictly bound by certain rules of English grammar. If the phrase “certain rules of grammar” is included, then a preposition like “by” needs to be in front of it, and not in any other order. To demonstrate the point, the order of the words in the sentence will be mixed up.

‘Grammar reading you now by the sentence is rules certain are of bound English.’

The above sentence doesn’t make any sense whatsoever. If it made sense, then English would be much more interesting, and rhyming would be much easier in poetry. So what if there was a language that existed in which the order of the words could be switched around and the sentence would still make sense? Well, there’s Sanskritam. In linguistics, there’s a characteristic of a language called inflection. A strongly inflected language is one with a lot of inflections, while a weakly inflected one is the opposite. So what’s an inflection? An inflection is simply a different form of a root word. So for the word ‘pizza’, there’s only one inflection, “pizzas”. There’s no such thing as ‘pizzaed’, or ‘pizzan’. For the word ‘write’, there are only a few inflections, like ‘wrote’, ‘writes’, ‘written’, or ‘writer’. English, is a weakly inflected language because words on average tend to not have too many inflections. Oftentimes, prepositions and other phrases are used to add additional information, and the order is crucial since misplaced modifiers cause confusion. The measure of inflection of a language is a measure of how much information can be packed into one word. Languages that are strongly inflected like Samskritam give more information per word. This mass of information is one thing that allows Samskritam to be flexible.

Another thing that helps the case for Samskritam is the lack of punctuation. Samskritam generally only uses periods, no semicolons, no commas, nothing else. English uses all these and as a result, it is required to stay by its very rigid grammar. Independent clauses need at least a comma and a coordinating conjunction between them, but a dependent clause and an independent clause only need a comma. And the ideas don’t make sense sometimes if the order of the sentence is not correct. Samskritam is not like this; it does not have all those order restrictions. So that, combined with the efficiency of the words in Samskritam allows for the order to be jumbled up and the sentence still makes complete sense. In fact, if you have 8 words in a Samskritam sentence, almost every permutation of that sentence will make sense. If only 80% of those sentences make sense, then there are over 30,000 sentences that can make sense for just 8 words. And that is what makes Samskritam an awesome language. Imagine a small town, where every single person would be able to say a different sentence with the same 8 words, but in different ways and it still makes complete sense.

*Aalok Bhattacharya
SAFL 200 Level Student
Grade 9*

Shraddha Camp Experience

Namaste! My name is Diya Patel. This is my second year as a SAFL student and I would like to talk about my experience at Samskrita Bharati's annual seven day Shraddha summer youth camp in New Jersey.

To begin with, I think that Samskrita Bharati did a wonderful job of organizing a camp where students can have an educational and enjoyable experience, where they can meet new people and learn the language of our holy scriptures. At camp, our days were filled with fun, cultural and educational activities. Our day would begin at 6:00 a.m. with a wake up call. At 7:15 a.m. we met for our daily yoga session, the girls yoga session would be held in the dorms while the boys would be at the Student Center.

During yoga, we said prayers followed by multiple calming meditative exercises. At 8 a.m., everyone met at the breakfast hall to have our first meal of the day. Our first class of the day began at 9 a.m. at the Student Center, followed by two more classes. After our first three classes of the day were over, we had fun playing language games for half an hour to further improve our Samskritam.

At 12 p.m., all the students gathered for our second meal of the day, lunch. During this time we socialize with our friends and peers while we enjoy our lunch. Immediately following our lunch, we had 45 minutes of free time where we can play outside or go back to the dorms to call our families, etc. Then we had our final two classes of the day followed by a short break for a snack. At 5:00 p.m., we gathered with our groups outside to play multiple games. At 6:00, we met for a half hour of Satsang where we said prayers and listened to lectures, followed by dinner at 6:30 p.m.

We then had some time to finish any assigned homework that we may have, followed by an entertainment program where groups of students would take turns performing skits in Samskritam. We ended our entertainment program by having a moment of silence to reflect after our busy day. At 10:00 p.m. we returned to our dorms to have a good night's sleep and be refreshed for the following day to come.

Diya Patel
SAFL 200 Level Student
Grade 9

Immersion Experience: Prajnaa Camp

Imagine having a hoard of activities from sunrise to sunset at a summer residential camp where you are immersed in a strange new language and without parents. First you promptly get up at 5 A.M and take a shower. After that, you do some yoga and meditation which is followed by the daily pañcaangavivaranam (almanac), suuktih (proverb), and subhaashitam (verses with messages). The exercise makes you and your fellow camp mates very hungry which is satisfied with a scrumptious breakfast of upma, chutney, and cereal. After that, you go straight to your respective SAFL classes (SAMS103", in my case"). Your teachers, Mrudula Bhagini and Ramakrishna Bhat Mahodaya teach you and your fellow SAMS103 classmates all the 8 vibhaktis. Ramakrishna Mahodaya gives each and every one of your classmates the chance to form sentences using each of the 8 vibhaktis. This in turn is followed by some fun bhAShAkriDAH (language games). A delicious lunch is served after the fun games. Fun time follows soon and promptly at 2:15, your fourth and fifth classes of SAFL starts. At the end of the classes, as a reward, you get to go on a hike or hunt for some treasure in Samskritam. When you get back, you join a satsang with some music that calms you down for a delightful dinner. After dinner, you enjoy some entertainment for 45 minutes with some jokes and skits that make you laugh again and again. To wrap up the day, you finally go back to your cabins and sleep to wake up for the next day.

I attended Prajñaa SAFL camp in June of 2019 for a week and the description given above was almost like a daily routine for me. It was an awesome and fresh experience to meet other kids from all over the United States from a similar age group learning Samskritam. I got new friends who live as near as Seattle and as far as Greenville, South Carolina. Govinda Mahodaya and Geetha Bhagini, the camp coordinators, managed the camp extremely well. This year's shibiram was a smooth and successful one. I want to thank my teachers, Mrudula Bhagini and Ramakrishna Mahodaya for being great teachers in teaching all that I needed to know in order to go to the next SAFL level.

On the last day, in front of the parents, my fellow classmates and I sang Maitreem Bhajata. As a result of the immersion in Samskritam, I started speaking Samskritam to my family members. Without Prajñaa, this would not have happened. For that, I loved Prajñaa this year and I hope it is even better next year. | धन्यवादः |

*Mukhil Narayanan
SAFL 200 Level Student
Grade 8*

SAFL and Camp Experience

My name is Vasant Balamraju and I am a 9th grader from Dallas, Texas. I am currently a SAMS 100 student and I attended the Shraddhaa camp. I only knew how to read and write the Devanagari script, but I was not able to speak Samskritam. At first I did not like the camp because I could not understand anything anyone was saying. After two to three days, I started to understand them more, and the classes became more fun as they were interactive. I also made a lot of new friends who helped me along throughout the camp.

I joined SAFL at first to mainly get my language credits for high school, but over time Samskritam has become more and more interesting to me. For example, I was doing my ratanam homework, which is repeating sentences said out loud, and I was able to understand most of what I was saying, and I realized how good the program really is. The homework is not lengthy, but it is still productive. The classes are not repetitive, and they go at a good pace. I would recommend anyone with any interest at all in learning Samskritam to join SAFL.

*Vasant Balamraju
SAFL 100 Level Student
Grade 9*



Newsletter

SAFL

Sanskrita Bharati

2068 Walsh Avenue, Suite B2,
Santa Clara CA 95050

Contact:

safl.sanskritabharatiusa.org

safl@sanskritabharatiusa.org

408 752 2182