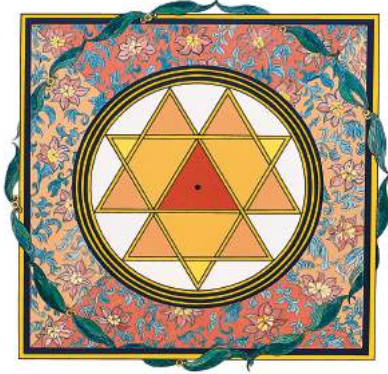


American Sanskrit Institute

Newsletter



Durga Yantra by PennyLea Morris

Sanskrit, a Sacred Model of Language

What makes a language sacred is how we use it. If a language is used to discover the sacredness of life, it becomes a sacred language. Whether or not a language is sacred is determined by who is using it. This in turn has a great deal to do with whether a language is being used consciously or unconsciously, whether we use language as an instrument to accomplish our real purpose in life, that is, wake up and find out who we are; or we are unconsciously programmed by lan-

guage, to maintain patterns of a struggle for individual survival established by previous generations.

Most of us, most of the time, tend to be at the effect of the unconscious operation of language. To make the point, let me describe a language exercise that I have done with thousands people to date. I ask a group of people to listen to some very simple Sanskrit sounds, sung in a rhythmic sequence, and then individually duplicate the sounds, based upon what they heard. I also make it clear that this is not an exercise in which it's important to get it right, and should anyone not remember a part of the sequence, he / she should simply make something up — fill in the blank. I also suggest that everyone should just have fun doing the exercise, and stay with the rhythm. Once we've been through several rounds, I ask everyone to describe what they were thinking, while doing the exercise, which was other than just simply listening and duplicating or making up sounds. Although I have done this exercise hundreds of times in different locations, I have always found the results to be practically identical. We are so completely consumed by the idea of "getting it right" and the approaching moment of "my turn" that there is little space left to actually listen and enjoy the

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sounds. This overriding preoccupation with getting it right is accompanied by an endless barrage of strategies, evaluations, comparisons, judgements, expectations, hopes, rationalizations and fears of consequences. By writing down this list of what everyone was thinking, the unconscious operation of language becomes visible. Most people are not

aware they are thinking all this until they see the language of it written on a flip chart.

But this is just peeling away the first layer. There's a still deeper layer of the unconscious operation of language where we have predefined who we are, based

on whether or not we get it right. This can be seen by making a list of the apparent implications and consequences of getting it right and getting it wrong.

If I get it right . . .

- * I am a smart person.
- * I am a competent person.
- * I am accepted and respected.
- * I am likeable and lovable.
- * I am a skillful person.
- * I am a powerful person.

- * I can make money.
- * I am a success.
- * I am a winner.
- * I am better than others.
- * I can be happy.
- * I have choices and options.
- * I am in control.
- * Others cannot control and dominate me.
- * I will not be abused, the victim of others' cruelty.
- * I will not suffer and die.

If I get it wrong . . .

- * I am a stupid person.
- * I am an incompetent person.
- * I am unworthy of respect.
- * No one could like or love me.
- * I am a klutz.
- * I am powerless.
- * I am a failure.
- * I am a loser.
- * Others are better than me.
- * I am doomed to poverty.
- * I'm doomed to misery.
- * I have no choice, no options.
- * I am a victim.
- * Others will control and dominate me.
- * I will be abused, the victim of others' cruelty.
- * I will suffer and die.

The above is a perfect example of a non-sacred model of language. We could call it a “dominate and survive model of language” or simply a “survival language”. What is most striking about this model of language is that who I believe myself to be is determined by whether or not I get it right. The other most distinctive feature of a survival language is the utter falseness of the conclusions it is used to arrive at. It's certainly not true that we are either smart or stupid because we do or do not get something right, let alone that we would live or die.

We are given every opportunity to simply have a good time, improvise, play with sounds. But instead we choose to take it as a test of survival. In other words, it's more important to prove our capacity to survive than it is to have a good time. The hidden unconscious language that we base our lives upon, dictates to us that we must get it right or we will be dominated by others, and that threatens our safety, our well being and ultimately our survival. The first sign of a non-sacred, survival language is that it refers to “getting it right” as “smart”, as “success” etc. Such a language defines a person by the way he/she performs in a particular circumstance. The person is always at the effect of the language. If I get it right, I'm smart. If I get it wrong, I'm stupid.

The problems and conflicts that occur with a survival language are myriad. To be happy, I must get it right all the time. And my primary motivation for doing so is to prove that I'm not stupid so others won't control me. My motivation for whatever I do becomes essentially a negative one. Since I can't get it right all the time, I either have to have a strategy for getting better than others and than I have been previously — faster; or I must withdraw from circumstances which could potentially make me look stupid. The problem with “getting better” is that I become programmed to always be getting better, but it's never good enough. Getting better is an endless proposition. This survival model of language has conflict and suffering woven into its very fabric.

This particular phenomenon is defined in the Yoga Sutras as avidyā, the fundamental lack of awareness which is the root kleśa, or subtle cause of all suffering. The definition of avidyā is:

अनित्याशुचिदुःखानात्मसु नित्यशुचिसुखात्मख्यातिरविद्या ॥ 2.5 ॥
 anityāśuci-duḥkhānātmasu nitya-śuci-sukhātma-khyātir avidyā

Avidyā is the defining of a self which is not the self; with happiness in what is actually suffering; with purity in what is really impurity; and permanence in what is really impermanent.

Avidyā perfectly describes the nature of a survival language. A survival language is steeped in avidyā. As long as who I am, is defined by such a language, I remain the victim of an endless vicious circle.

The question is — why would we choose a language which keeps us in perpetual self-judgement. The fact is that we never chose the language. It has always been around, and as children, we were given no other options. As long as we do not consciously redesign the way we use language, we remain at the effect of the past, conditioned by the very language of the past to repeat the patterns of the past, again and again.

As long as this survival model of language is in effect, it seems virtually impossible for people to learn Sanskrit. This is possibly due to the fact that Sanskrit is a perfect model of a sacred language, and a sacred language cannot be learned by means of a survival language.

This is not to say that English or any other language could not be used as a sacred language. In fact, it has to be, to begin the study of Sanskrit. Conversely, Sanskrit could be used in a survival mode. It's just that in the design of most languages, there is very little safeguard against them being used as survival languages. And in the design of Sanskrit, there is every conceivable feature built in to keep it operating as a sacred language.

The single most outstanding difference between a sacred and a survival language is the definition, orientation and usage in the language of the word “I”. “I” or its equivalent is the source of language. Without I, there is no you, he, she or it. The evolution of the word “I” into a complex language is a process of creation. In the development of a sacred language, the process is a conscious

one; language is an emanation, a creation, an instrument of “I”. In a survival language, “I” is an effect of the cultural patterns already unconsciously established by the language. In Sanskrit, even the sounds which make the word for “I” are consciously selected. AHAM. “A” is the first spoken sound, as well as the first sound of the Sanskrit alphabet. It can be discovered by breathing, in and with the mouth slightly open, releasing the breath with sound that requires the minimal effort. It naturally arises in the throat before the articulation of all other sounds. “HA” is the last letter of the Sanskrit alphabet. After all the systematic patterns created by the movement of the tongue and lips have produced in perfect order all the other letters of the alphabet, the final sound is “HA”. It also is the only consonant sound that moves by the power of the breath alone, and the only consonant in exact proximity to “A”. The final letter “M” is the very last sound produced in the mouth, because it occurs due to the closing of the lips. In Sanskrit, AHAM is the beginning, the breath of life which brings forth creation, and the end. And this is expressed not just symbolically by the letters A-H-A-M, but physically, based on their location in the mouth.

The other most important attribute of a sacred language is that each of its individual sounds are regarded as sacred. Anyone can feel this by getting relaxed and repeating the AHAM, over and over, and while doing so, feeling a complete all-encompassing expression of self. Then, becoming silent, continue to feel “A” as the inhalation and HAM as the exhalation. “A” is the only sound which is truly internal. “HAM” is a complete expression, arising directly from “A”, and closing after passing through all the positions of all other existing sounds. The design of a sacred language is such that the sounds perfectly express the vibrational essence of that which they describe. In this way, words establish knowledge and

understanding directly.

The next stage of establishing a sacred language is an intimacy with the other sounds of the language, becoming familiar with their exact location, savoring their delicacy, feeling their force and power, and the unique way they vibrate the body and atmosphere. This is simply a matter of enjoying sound without inhibition, as we did when we were children. In the process of learning the Sanskrit alphabet, one discovers that all sounds are encompassed in “AHAM”. As other words are created, the sounds which compose them become the means by which “I-AHAM” establish my relationship of unity with, rather than separateness from, all existence.

Part II

The primary characteristic of a sacred language is that the purpose for which it's being used is discovering one's own true nature. Sanskrit is so highly developed and refined as a tool for serving this purpose that even the task of learning the language seems “difficult” — unless the motive for learning is aligned with the function of the language, that is, to know oneself. When Sanskrit is approached with the humility and one-pointedness that is the trademark of a genuine search for truth, it becomes revealed. There arises a simple joy in all aspects of its study. Singing the alphabet is especially inspiring even when one has become proficient. My teacher, Shri Brahmananda Sarasvati, although a master of Sanskrit, with more than 60 years of study behind him, and his speech impaired by a stroke, still seems to find his greatest delight in leading a group of students through the alphabet. Perhaps, this says as much as anything about the nature of a sacred language.

We seldom hear anyone over seven years of age singing the English alphabet. Its not that these

sounds aren't enjoyable to sing. We do not have the same relation to the English language that adults and children alike who have learned Sanskrit have with it. That relation is a sacred one, based on the energy conveyed through sound, a love for the unique characteristics of each sound in engaging the mind, body, the breath, vocal resonance, the mouth, tongue and lips.

Because of the simplicity of life in ancient times, there was an acute awareness that all changes in life took place as a result of changes in language. As new discoveries occurred in language, there was an immediate and very noticeable shift in human beings' interactions and in the way that they perceived their environment. The evolution of human awareness was inextricably linked to the development of language. It was natural that more and more attention should be given to its development as the single most important factor in changing the quality of human life. This eventually gave way to discoveries whose magnitude is inconceivable to us in modern times, where language tends to be taken for granted.

The discovery, development and refinement of Sanskrit must have taken place over millennia. Although Sanskrit along with its great power to elevate human consciousness to sublime heights, is often attributed to a divine source, we can also hypothesize that its properties were discoveries that took place as a result of human beings actively and intensively engaging in the discovery of their own divine nature. The most significant question that must have arisen to the ancients was how to continue optimizing the human instrument, the body and mind, as a vehicle for the expansion of awareness and happiness. Knowing that the operation of the instrument depends entirely on the language with which it is programmed, they worked on the refinement of language software. They

scrutinized and experimented with the vocal instrument and the structure of the mouth and then selected only those sounds which had the greatest clarity, purity and power of resonance. They then organized these sounds in such a way that they could mutually enhance and brighten one another, and build upon each other's resonance. They explored the factor of breath in creating sound, and discovered that by minimizing the breath with certain sounds and maximizing it with others, the language would induce in the instrument a state of relaxed alertness that could keep it operating efficiently and tirelessly for long periods of time, while expanding and building prana-energy. And as they did this, they became happier.

Furthermore, by coordinating the factors of purity of sound, enhanced resonance and breath, there also developed an awareness of the entire body as a resonating chamber through which sound could be transmitted. With increased vibratory power, the concept of the body as solid matter gradually became replaced by one of the body as the center of an energy field. In the process of transmitting sound energy, they observed subtle changes in the field and found they could expand it by following the sound waves. They had discovered that language has the capacity to convert the body and mind into pure energy. They began to feel joy.

It was further discovered that certain combinations of sounds would enhance the expansion of the field more than others, and this was experimented with, until sound combinations which could bring about this effect universally were revealed. Their joy expanded. These particular combinations became useful words for describing as well as feeling the state of consciousness they induced. In this way the breadth and depth of all that exists was explored. They looked

and listened and experienced changes in the energy field, to see how the language could be further refined, what new distinctions could be made. Eventually, they fathomed creation and found their own identity at the very source of it all. Their bliss was boundless. When they spoke with one another in this language they established love and harmony.

Over millennia, Sanskrit was refined as an instrument of Yoga. By 500 B.C. it had reached a point where it was perfected, and ready to be laid down formally. The genius Panini was born for that purpose. So masterful, concise and comprehensive was his great work, *Aṣṭādhyāyī* in formulating the Sanskrit language, that to this day, two and a half millennia later, no one has been able to improve upon his original work. For 25 centuries, the language has not only survived intact, but thrived through the love of countless enlightened sages, yogis and scholars, basically unmodified. Just imagine a language thriving with little change for 2500 years. In each century there have been spiritual geniuses, who immersed themselves in the blissful and timeless joy of Sanskrit. Many have elaborated or commented on Panini's original work, but none have changed it or replaced it. Yoga has thrived side by side with Sanskrit, but through all the practice, experimentation and discovery that has taken place in that science, there has been little need to develop new language or modify the old language in order to measure or inspire progress. Sanskrit had been perfected by 500 B.C. as a tool for defining the ultimate pinnacle of human aspiration.

Questions tend to come up as to why Sanskrit has not been used more as a popular language, or why we are not now utilizing it more widely. The primary obstacle, as I see it, is that we have had difficulty in accessing Sanskrit in the way that it is designed to be used. Because of the strong belief we hold that we are our

body/mind, our primary concern is what is going to happen to us individually. We see the possibility of change, being happy in the future. And we try to choose and do those things which will most certainly secure our future happiness or enlightenment. This equation is almost universally interpreted as “getting more and getting better”. The approach never works for learning Sanskrit, or for being happy.

Usually the motivation for learning Sanskrit is the enchantment, inspiration, peace and deep sense of spiritual connection felt when listening to it. Or it may have been a pure childlike enjoyment in duplicating those sounds. Most people would have no difficulty learning Sanskrit, if they simply remained in the mode of what motivated them in the first place, their enjoyment. But something else usually happens. The desire to learn Sanskrit starts to be perceived as a future goal, which, when and if achieved, will represent the securing of the happiness which generated the desire to learn it in the first place. The goal is usually accompanied by an expectation of mastering a certain amount of material within a certain period of time. The problem here is the old conditioning, all past memories of happiness, present or future, being thwarted by difficulties and interruptions. Greatest among these memories is the loss of the simple joy of being a child and the pure direct perception of life we all experienced in our childhood.

The nature of a sacred language such as Sanskrit is the direct way that it models life, or accesses through the purity of its sound and rhythms, the perfection and beauty of life that we all experienced as children. On our first exposure to Sanskrit, we reconnect with that purity and joy, and then with the desire to secure that again in our lives, decide that we must learn the language. On a very deep level, it's a decision to nourish our spirit, and

reestablish our oneness with life. But it also at the same time brings us face to face with our existential pain, the entire sum of our conditioning, all that has kept us in a state of feeling alone and separate for the greater part of a lifetime, as well as our repeated failure in attempting to regain that happiness.

Once the task of learning the language is conceived, the criteria for achievement are unconsciously measured. Success is determined by comparing what one has managed to learn with what remains to be known and how much others know. Success also depends on the mastery of a certain quantity of information in a certain period of time. The universal question asked at the beginning, is “How long will it take me to learn it?” But the Sanskrit language is so vast and distinctly different from other languages and other learning tasks, that from the very outset, it becomes apparent that it is going to be very difficult to achieve the expected success in the expected period of time. In addition, there are many Indian speakers and scholars, one could never even hope to catch up with. This inevitably brings the conclusion “Proficiency is further away than I had believed.” Along with this assessment — automatically arise the words “too difficult”. Sanskrit is too difficult.

But the problem is not really the perceived difficulty based on the amount of information that exists in the Sanskrit language. The fact that there is more information actually represents more enjoyment. If one were offered a large collection of the greatest music of all time accompanied by a continuous flow of increasingly majestic and panoramic visions, one would not be disappointed because it would take too long to listen to. In other words, discouragement about being able to learn Sanskrit has absolutely nothing to do with Sanskrit. Sanskrit is an enjoyable experience at all stages. Working with Sanskrit

increases and develops energy and clarity of mind. There are seemingly an infinite variety of euphonic sound combinations and rhythmic patterns to be enjoyed. Experiencing them expands the capacity of the mind to operate as the cosmic computer it is designed to be.

The only real problem that arises with regard to learning Sanskrit is forgetting why one decided to learn it in the first place — to feel the joy and purity one felt as a child. When the real purpose is forgotten, we automatically default to concerns about success and failure based on past programming. It is only in regard to this that the idea “too difficult” can arise. Once “too difficult” takes root, the usual result is giving up, because one’s image of oneself being proficient, seems too difficult to attain within the time limitations calculated as a factor in producing the necessary satisfaction.

Although such resignation is based on the fact of long-standing pain, it is not the truth. The truth is the original inspiration, the joy, the play, the heightened awareness. If Sanskrit seems too difficult, it’s doing its job perfectly. A sacred language must teach us to discover where the energy of being flows, and it becomes easy.

The obvious solution is to have no expectations whatsoever with regard to time or quantities of information. This is an approach which serves our original purpose — to enter into that timeless dimension. If concerns come up or it seems to be getting difficult, it’s merely an indication that we’ve forgotten our real purpose. The moment the idea of getting or adding “more” arises, we lose the direct absorption, the enjoyment, the sense of play. This is direct bio-feedback — “I am off course”.

I have not yet seen Sanskrit, or life, fit into anyone’s time calculations or strategies.

Sanskrit is a play, a dance of energy in the eternal now. It, modeling life, is perfectly designed to take us beyond our expectations, our self images, our programming. But we must be ready to be in the role of a perpetual learner, a student of life, of the ancient, eternal wisdom, miraculously encoded in this sacred language. If we believe that by learning a sacred language, we will gain knowledge and power, then we look to a future goal which is by definition opposed to our true nature. The power of a sacred language is to immediately mirror this back, as if to say, NO ACCESS. A sacred language, is one which guides us to our own true nature, and every time we derail ourselves, reminds us in some way that we’re missing out on its real nourishment. If we are going to engage, it must be with our total being, one pointed awareness, free from the distraction of where it might bring us, or rather, we might take it in the future.

Sanskrit is the living heritage of great rishis who walked this earth thousands of years ago. It presents us with an awesome responsibility and a lifelong challenge, while it inspires us to remain fully engaged in exploring what’s possible for a human being. Learning Sanskrit is an opportunity to know directly for ourselves what the rishis discovered long ago. Most important, when approached as a sacred language, it makes us happy.

“On the seashore of endless worlds children meet. The infinite sky is motionless overhead and the restless water is boisterous. On the seashore of endless worlds the children meet with shouts and dances... Tempest roams in the pathless sky, ships are wrecked in the trackless water, death is abroad and the children play. On the seashore of endless worlds is the great meeting of children.”

— Rabindranath Tagore

Part III

From the perspective of Yoga, all life ultimately merges into samādhi. It could be said that samādhi is the essence of yoga, In the Yoga Sutras, samādhi is defined:

तदेवार्थमात्रनिर्भासं स्वरूपशून्यमिव समाधिः ॥ 3.3 ॥
tad evārtha-mātra-nirbhāsaṃ
svarūpa-śūnyam iva samādhiḥ

That (consciousness, engaged in sustained focus upon a single object), reflecting the object alone, as if empty of its own nature, is samādhi.

Everyone has had the experience of samādhi, whether in childhood, or some deeply absorbing experience, such as listening to music. It's a period when our usual identity disappears because our habitual use of language has been discontinued.

My teacher used to say “the body is a prison only when you cannot come and go as you please”. The experience of samādhi is the freedom to come and go. Without samādhi we live in a prison of language, whose walls consist of words, whose bars and locked doors are the meanings and significance we unknowingly give to those words. Unknowingly, because the meanings were never consciously selected. They were programmed into us by prior generations. For example, when people make a mistake, they tend to feel stupid or embarrassed. But whoever (aside from lexicographers) really defined for themselves what a “mistake” is? All we know is that we make them, we feel stupid because of them, we feel we should be able to correct them, but often don't, which is a “big mistake”. When did we ever decide my life would be enhanced if I could find a word that would make me feel stupid, embarrassed, and worthy of contempt each time I act with imprecision?” From our parents, all the

way back, the past has cultivated words and meanings which now survive as our prison. We were even told that it's a nice place and we should be able to succeed there. What was perhaps actually meant by “mistake” was “anything which one's child does that creates a fear that the child is not finding it to be a nice place, does not want to do what everyone else is doing, will not be able to succeed, and therefore survive.”

If you multiply all the words of the English (or any) language, times all prior generations' fears about survival, you could get an idea of just how thick the walls of this prison are. Our ultimate challenge is to see right through those walls rather than to take them apart brick by brick. The former means changing our entire relationship to language. The latter would be equivalent to getting the inmates (practically everybody) to agree on redefining each word. For example, if we got together and decided that “mistake” from now on means “what occurs during a momentary lapse of attention from one's activity — essential (as a bio-feedback device) for all phases of human development and self discovery”, we would be removing a large brick from the wall. But when someone screams at you #!#!# XXX, from another car, when you forget to use your turn signal, the brick has suddenly popped back into its old place. While it's a good idea to keep redefining words and clarifying definitions, it's absolutely essential to redefine our relationship to language. This means deciding once and for all that language is the ultimate tool for being fulfilled in life and “I choose to use it as such”, as opposed to unconsciously allowing the language of the past to subconsciously dictate my identity. “I am at the source of, prior to language, rather than at the effect of it, after it. I am using language, not the other way around.”

The sage Shankara wrote:

satsangatve nissangatvam
nissangatve nirmohatvam
nirmohatve niścalitatvam
niścalitatve jīvanmuktiḥ

In a state of satsanga, good company, (comes) non-attachment; in non-attachment, a state beyond confusion; in truth beyond confusion, motionlessness; in motionlessness, living freedom.

The verse could be used as a model of the necessary conditions for making the shift from being at the effect of language to being at the source of it. It all begins with satsanga, good company. The best example of this that I know of is a group of people who have come together to learn Sanskrit. It seems that on some level, perhaps unconsciously, a person who has decided to learn Sanskrit, has decided in some way to use this sacred language for that which it was designed — to be free. It is remarkably easy for such a group of people to change their relation to language, to put themselves at the source of language and then select and use language in a way that gives them access to Sanskrit, with ease and enjoyment. Without the mutual agreement of the group, satsanga, good company, it would be highly unlikely that the shift could ever take place.

We grew up in a world where a mistake was a bad thing, enough so that most people would not risk making one. This led to massive withdrawal. Though people remained in a group, they were not really part of the group. In truth, fear dominated nearly all groups. Natural unity was shattered. The satsanga was lost. Groups were ineffective. Alone, individuals were powerless. Everyone was hopelessly at the effect of the language of right/wrong and smart/stupid. In effect, a “group” could have been defined as a “body of people which has come together to determine who is worthy and who is unworthy.”

Fortunately, the Sanskrit language has given us the word “satsanga”, which could be defined as “a body of people who have come together (sanga) to ascertain reality (sat).” The fundamental agreement of such a group, such as the one which has come together to learn Sanskrit, is that “I” am prior to language. I use language to direct my attention to a full appreciation of the beautiful sounds of the Sanskrit language, their harmonies and their organization, as well as the truths expressed through the language. The language that makes this possible is the language of yoga, another gift of Sanskrit. The satsanga agrees upon abhyāsa the selecting and sustained attention upon a single focal point, for example, listening to the sounds of the Sanskrit language. It’s also agreed that there’s nothing “wrong” with being off the point. Becoming aware that I am at “other than point”, without satsanga — I might worry about what I missed that others got, I might worry about being left behind — “others are succeeding where I fail.” But in satsanga where the language of yoga has been agreed upon, there is vairāgya or non-attachment, “the full awareness of my own mastery to not-attach myself to habitual experience and simply return to the point, and even acknowledge ‘I missed something — could it be repeated?’”. For the satsanga, if anyone missed anything, it’s an opportunity for it to be reviewed and clarified and enjoyed again by everyone. It sounds too good to be true. Yet it happens exactly this way by shifting our relationship to language. This would not be possible without satsanga.

In the state of satsanga (satsangatve) comes non-attachment (nissangatvam). There is no more attachment to being right, and concurrently the fear of being wrong. The real satisfaction derived from the wholeness of group unity, the much greater capacity of the group to focus together, enjoy sound together, appreciate the beauty of Sanskrit together, all

make the prior condition of being at the effect of words such as right/wrong or smart/stupid or success/failure seem totally irrelevant.

Through satsanga, there's a complete shift in our relation to language — we see through the prison walls.

In non-attachment (nissangatve), there comes a state beyond confusion (nirmohatvam). I'm no longer holding myself back because of the fear of consequences. I am feeling my oneness with the group. It's safe to put myself into it. There is no conflict over wanting acceptance, while fearing rejection. My confusion over whether to participate or not — will I be rejected if I do it wrong or isolated if I do it right — is gone. The illusion, and the confusion (moha) of being separate from others dissolves. The truth that we are one emerges. When we move as one, we go beyond success and failure and access our natural ability to perfectly reflect whatever we perceive — samĀdhi.

In the state beyond confusion (nirmohatve), is motionlessness (niścalitatvam). This happens in the Sanskrit satsanga. In the absence of striving to be better, fearing getting worse, the old language that raced through our mind stops. The mind becomes still, sensitive. A state of listening is present, samādhi, in which we feel the nuances of Sanskrit, its power, and the subtle way it resonates in the heart of our being, like ancient and eternal music. There's no more struggle to learn, to gain and accumulate knowledge. The words of Sanskrit, through their sound vibration are like waves of pure energy, which we enjoy as if watching a performance taking place inside us — while their meanings describe our own fathomless perfection, as the seer of all, ancient, eternal.

In motionlessness (niścalitatvam), living freedom (jīvanmuktiḥ), The prison walls, even the memory that they were ever there, has dissolved. From beginning to end, from the

first attempt to learn Sanskrit to the direct experience of the meaning of its ancient words of truth and power, Sanskrit generates and establishes an entirely different relationship with language. It's the proper relationship, the true one, establishing our real unity, freedom from the bondage of the past illusions. It keeps us savoring the timeless enjoyment of the universe of sound, and a perfect creation.

Vyaas Houston