

THE STUDENT'S GRAMMAR OF THE HINDÍ LANGUAGE

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The Student's Grammar of the Hindi Language by W. Etherington

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OF THE

HINDÍ LANGUAGE,

BY THE

REV. W. ETHERINGTON,

MISSIONARY—BENARES.

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PREFACE.

HINDÍ is the mother-tongue of, probably, not less than twenty-five millions of the people of India. It is spoken throughout the North Western Provinces, the Panjáb, the greater part of Rájputáná, Central India, and Behár; and, in the form in which it is used in Benares, it is readily understood by Sikhs, Guzarátís, Mahrattas, Nepálís, and other tribes having distinct dialects of their own. Whether, then, we think of the extent of country over which it is spoken, or of the number and importance of the tribes that speak it, Hindí, if any, may be regarded as the language of Northern India.

A similar claim is often set up for Urdú, the vernacular of the Mahommedans, a comparatively small community. But though spoken in the cities and in many of the larger towns of Northern India by many educated Hindús also, as a second language, Urdú has predominance in no province of India, it never has been, and, in the nature of things, it never can become the language of any class of the people except the Mahommedans.

Hindí is a derivative from the Sanskrit to which it bears a greater affinity than any modern Indian tongue, except the Bengálí. Not less than nine-tenths of its vocabulary is traceable to Sanskrit roots, many of the words being pure Sanskrit and others varying only in the permutations of certain letters. The existence in Hindí of some words apparently not traceable to Sanskrit, together with the fact that many of its gram-

matical forms differ from that language has given rise to the theory that Hindî may have once existed apart from Sanskrit. The theory has but little to support it, for though it may now be impossible to account for all the changes that have taken place in words and grammatical forms during the centuries that have elapsed since Hindî was formed from Sanskrit, yet many words that at first seemed obscure have been satisfactorily traced to the Sanskrit through the Prākṛit, and the most peculiar grammatical construction in Hindî, viz., the use of the particle *अ* with the nominative in the past tenses of transitive verbs, has been clearly traced to Sanskrit. (See the note at p. 140.) Further study of the Prākṛit, in which the Sanskrit began to be broken up and which formed an important part of the process by which Hindî and other living languages of Northern India were formed, will tend to throw light upon the origin of many words that are now not satisfactorily traceable to Sanskrit or to any other language; changes, for instance, so great as *lāḥ* from *yaśāḥ*, *nāḥ* from *nritya*, *mor* from *mayīrah*, *bis* from *vināṭi*, are accounted for by means of the Prākṛit.

Hindî has been but little cultivated, its vocabulary is therefore poor as compared with other languages; it possesses, however, the elements of a fine language and has in its parent, the Sanskrit, ample resources both as to matter and form from which it is continually being enriched. It needs no foreign aid, and all attempts to force such aid upon it only tend to mutilate it and obstruct its natural growth. In the following pages I have rejected all words of Arabic, Persian, or Urdū origin, as well as all constructions that seem to me

to belong more to Urdú than to Hindí. The jargon in which several educational books have lately been published, some may be pleased to term Hindí; but in reality it is a strange medley of Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, Urdu, and Hindí. To understand some of it would imply considerable acquaintance not only with the words, but also with the syntax of three or four languages. It is much to be regretted that such books have found favor with any; they interfere with the spread of education, and are most offensive to a correct taste.

The want of a Hindí grammar has been long felt: no attempt that I am aware of has hitherto been made to supply it, except "The elements of Hindí and Braj Bhákhá grammar by the late Dr. Ballantyne," which, though good so far as it goes, contains but the bare outlines of the subject in thirty-seven large print pages. I have endeavoured to make the following work as comprehensive as the present state of the language will admit. As Hindí varies a good deal in different provinces, it was necessary to adopt some one form of it as a standard; and, as that of Benares is generally acknowledged to be the purest, I have followed it.

I have consulted the works of Shakespeare, Forbes, and Monier Williams, and have derived some aid from them. I am especially indebted to the last named writer, whose Sanskrit Dictionary, Sanskrit Grammar, and Urdú Grammar have been of great use to me. I have also read the *Bhāshāchandroday*, and the *Sandhi* in the *Vyākaraṇa* of *Upakramaṇikā* from which a few of my examples are taken. I am most of all indebted to the suggestions of the late Rev. John Parsons,

Missionary at Monghir, perhaps the most accomplished Hindi scholar that has yet appeared among Europeans. He most kindly undertook to revise my manuscripts before they were sent to the press; the latter part of the syntax was with him when he died. Pandit Rām Jasan also, the head Sanskrit and Hindi teacher, Queen's College, Benares, read with me nearly all the examples in the syntax and approved of them. My thanks are also due to John Christian, Esq., of Monghir who at my request wrote the chapter on Prosody for this work. From his extensive acquaintance with Hindi poetic writings, he is more capable than any one that I know to perform such a task. The following remarks from his pen bearing upon the study of prosody are important and worthy of the reader's attention. "Students of language should not think that Prosody constitutes but an ornamental part of Grammar. In the study of Hindi Grammar, especially, prosody will be found to be no less useful than ornamental. The Hindús have a natural predilection for numbers, which is evident from the fact that few books of any note are written by them in prose. Their ideas whether relating to art, science, language, or philosophy, are embodied in measured language which is brought to bear upon even the concerns of their every-day life. Few Hindús will be found whose memory is not the repository of some scraps of their proverbial poetry which they readily and aptly quote.

The Hindú mind is exhibited in poetry, and it is in the poetry of the people that their manners and customs are portrayed; hence, if the student, whether of a literary or philosophical turn of mind, whether a minister of the Gospel
