

Sri Hari:

MADHURAMURALI

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HH Maharanyam Sri Sri Muralidhara Swamiji*



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**"Ramarajyam is not too far off"
- Yogi Ramsuratkumar**



MADHURASMARANAM My Guru As I See Him

Dr A Bhagyanathan

(Personal Secretary to
Sri Sri Swamiji)

Athivaradar is the one subject matter filling television channels, dailies and all other social media.

News about the colour of dress adorning Athivaradar, Athivaradar wearing pearl crown, etc. keep appearing in newspapers. On the other side are several questions like 'who is this Athivaradar?' 'Was He the Main Deity (Moolavar)?' Or, 'is He the one who had at some point of time arose for the sake of Balalayam?' rising up. A set of people feel that Athivaradar cannot be the Balalaya Perumal as His height and form is akin to Main Deity. Another set of people, on the basis of the shape of the peetah below the Deity's holy Feet, hold the opinion that this Deity must have been originally installed somewhere. Several reasons are cited with regard to the Deity being kept immersed in Ananthasaras.

We understand that 48 days is deemed as one mandala puja. But none is able to comprehend the practice of bringing the Deity out once in 40 years. Well! Be it so, astrologers seem to be counselling on which day of the week people should have the Deity's darshan depending on their zodiac sign and birth star.

Lakhs of people have been coming from all parts of India and also from abroad to have darshan of Athivardar. Mutt heads, political bigwigs, high government officials, artists, sport persons and important officials from various fields have been coming in big groups. Though some felt breathless being caught in a huge crowd, devotees don't seem to be deterred by it. Devotees seem to be coming in great numbers even the very next day of this untoward happening. Let us bow down to the religious reverence of people.

At the behest of our Gurudev a silk dress was offered to Athivaradar. Mahamantra kirtan is going on in the Kirtanavalli Mantap close to the 16-pillared Mantap in Kancheepuram. This Mahamantra kirtan being performed in our Kirtanavalli Mantap is verily our service being rendered to Athivaradar. Food is being supplied (anna danam) daily to thousands of devotees and those involved in service. Pammal Balaji Bhagavata has been staying in Kirtanavalli Mantap for all the 48 days and administering the service. Nesapakkam Kartik, Tirumalachar, Kripakaran and others are serving along with him.

Sri Aravind stays permanently in Kirtanavalli Mantap, serving there. For those who have been having darshan of Lord Athivaradar for 48 days have already begun to feel restless thinking of separation from Him.

Azhwaars had worshipped verily this Athivaradar. It is verily this Athivaradar that Adi Sankara had worshipped. Alawandar and Perianambigal had worshipped verily this very same Athivaradar. It is verily this Athivaradar who had appeared as a hunter and saved Yatiraja. It is verily this Athivaradar with whom Thirukachinambigal had conversed and served Him by fanning Him every night. Yatiraja had sought and got 'teertha kainkaryam' (service of carrying water for the Lord's worship) verily from this Athivaradar. Vedant Desikar and Manavala mamunigal had both worshipped verily this Athivaradar. Acharyas of Madwa tradition had also worshipped only this Athivaradar.

Sri Sri Anna says, "It would be wonderful if this Athivaradar could give darshan permanently." We also desire and yearn for permanent darshan of this Athivaradar who had been worshipped by all such great Ones. Will this desire be fulfilled? One knows not. The authorities concerned would view from the point of Agamas and the temple's tradition. Just as the Azhwars says in his pasuram "look at it from my heart!" (en nenjinaall nOkkik kaaNeer'), this can be comprehended only by those who view it with the heart of prema bhaktas (love-filled Bhaktas).



ANSWERS AND BEYOND



Question: Aren't the kirtans sung at a music concert and in bhajans one and the same? Both have the same krithis of Thyagaraja, Purandaradas, abhangs, and bhajans of Meerabai and Kabeerdhas. What is the difference between the two?

Answer: The kirtans sung in music concerts and bhajans may be the same. However, there is variation between the two for sure. One can see difference even from the perspective of the listener. In a concert, the listener's attention goes towards the singer. Where the listener's attention goes towards Bhagavan, it is a bhajan.

Question: Swamiji! I started to chant Nama and continued chanting it too. But, my erroneous thoughts and actions also continued. And I have stopped chanting now.

Answer: Our inherent tendencies (vasanas) are the reason for such thoughts and actions. You were unable to let go of these tendencies but could give up chanting nama. When you chant nama incessantly and reach a stage where you cannot give up chanting anymore, these wrong tendencies will leave on their own.

Sri Swamiji

Free Will or Destiny?

Many great realised masters like Sri Ramana Bhagavan say that all that happens in our life is predetermined. Bhagawan Yogiram Surat Kumar Maharaj also confirms that there is no free will.

A parable told by Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa seems to contradict this concept. The parable is about the calf and rope. Let us look at the parable.

“A calf is tied to a stick by the cow herd in the middle of a huge lush green field. The cow herd has given only one meter of leash for calf to graze. If the calf had grazed the one meter area completely, he adds another meter of leash for calf to graze further- giving it more freedom to move within the length of the leash. Now when one hears this, one may think it apparently contradicts words of other masters on “no free will”. Now we need to look at the context in which this parable was graced by Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. It was in the context of Spiritual Sadhana. When a person starts his journey of Spiritual Sadhana, as guided by the Guru, until he completes the practices given by the guru, he would not be given the instructions for the next step of his Sadhana.

A great mahan started his journey when his guru instructed him to do japa of gayathri mantra. He completed this step with utmost dedication culminating in the direct vision of gayathri devi; then he was guided to take Srividya mantra by his guru now that this first step was completed. He with Shraddha completed this practice also with perfection; then he was guided in gnana vichara and he attained gnanam. This mahan was none other than Sri Triveni Swamigal. Hence there is no contradiction in words of mahans.

In our day to day mundane life, all that happens is dictated by our past karma (destiny). The choices we make are actually totally goaded by our vasanas (innate tendencies). So there is absolutely no individual freedom here. The only freedom we have-if we can say so – is to stop bothering about our mundane life and either enquire into the nature of our self or submit totally to the will of master or god (which is actually one and the same). Agnanis (people who haven't realised divinity) have no freedom. Gnanis have totally merged into the divine whole and hence have no individuality and hence exert no individual " free will". If we examine this with an open mind and deep contemplation , this truth would be very evident.

Exceptions are rarest of the rare and hence do not become the general rule.



Padma Puranam talks about the greatness and uniqueness of listening to Srimad Bhagavatham in six chapters.

It commences as a discussion between Saunaka Rishi and the narrator, Sri Sutha Pauranika.

Saunaka asks a direct question, “What is the greatest of all good to be attained by humankind? What is the purest of all purifiers?” Immediately after this question he talks of a greatness of a Guru – If a Guru is pleased with his disciple, disciple attains Vaikunta effortlessly – that which is difficult for even striving Yogis to attain.

There is no question for means of the highest good to those who have attained a Satguru. But not all get an opportunity to get a Satguru, serve him effortlessly, earn the pleasure of the Satguru and hence attain Shreyas (the highest good). So for the vast majority of humankind, in this age to attain Shreyas (the highest good), Sri Sutha tells the Sukha Sadhanam for the same.

This joyous path to Shreyas is Srimad Bhagavatham. This is the reason why Saunaka Rishi competes the initial question with “प्रयच्छति गुरुः प्रीतो वैकुण्ठं योगी दुर्लभम्” – (If Guru is pleased, Vaikuntam - that which is difficult for even Yogis is attained (effortlessly) by the disciple).

Liberation’s Suka Sampadanam (joyous effortless means for one and all) is through listening to Srimad Bhagavatham.

‘avan uruvai uLLatthil kondiduvAi
Panivai endrum kaikkoLvAi

thunivudan mAyaiyai edhirthiduvAi
kAmakrOdhangaLai vittiduvAi nlyE

piraridam kutram pArAdhiruppAi
un kutratthai pArkka maravAdhiruppAi’

It is difficult enough for anyone to attain devotion; More difficult
than that is to safeguard and nurture the devotion.

STAIRWAY TO DEVOTION

- M.K. Ramanujam

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A person gets satsang and devotion owing to merits acquired over several births in the past. But to enhance this devotion and obtain the grace of Krishna, one should also essentially have few virtues. Most important of these is humility. A devotee should consider himself inferior even to grass. Devotion does not come to someone who considers himself superior or others inferior. Humility and patience are the manures for cultivating the plant of devotion.

तृणादपि सुनीचेन तरोरपि सहिष्णुना ।

अमानिनां मानदेन कीर्तनीय सदा हरिः ।।

...says Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Our Swamiji explains with a beautiful example - Will water ever flow into a place which is at a higher level? The lower the place, more easily water will flow into the place. The more humble and modest we are, more easily Lord Krishna's grace will flow on us.

To imbibe this humility, Sri Swamiji quotes a beautiful phrase – Adapt, Adjust, Accommodate – Whenever possible one should try to adjust, adapt, and accommodate. This will be very conducive to the growth of devotion.

Spiritual life is a long journey. Spiritual awakening within a second, self-realization within a week, awakening wisdom within a month are all not genuine spirituality. The word journey itself implies that one has to face and overcome many ups and downs, challenges, and obstacles. But if one realizes the greatness of the goal and the correct nature of the spiritual journey, he can progress overcoming all the obstacles.

‘thunivudan mAyaiyai edhirthiduvAi’

Even if we fall down a hundred times, we should not hesitate to take the hundred and first step. That is true courage, isn't it? Our tendencies have been within us for thousands of births. We should patiently overcome them with courage. It is not something that can be done in a day, or a month, or a year. How many ever times we fall we should again endeavour without losing enthusiasm. Due to the obstacles created by our tendencies we should not reduce or stop our spiritual pursuit like listening to the glories of the Lord,

chanting His name, singing Kirtans, and thinking about Him. Infact while overcoming the obstacles our efforts should become stronger. Sri Swamiji refers to this as 'thunivudan edhirthiduvai nIyE.'

Maya is that which pushes us from remembering God towards the world. Sri Swamiji says that one should overcome this with courage. Here courage could mean faith in Bhagavata Dharma or on the grace of God and the Guru. With a strong faith one should walk on the path of devotion and pursue spiritual listening, chanting, and God remembrance without sinking away from them. By these, one will be able to overcome maya with the grace of the Guru.

In the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna advises Arjuna that lust and anger are the two major enemies one should identify and discard.

काम एष क्रोध एष रजोगुणसमुद्भवः ।

महाशनो महापाप्मा विद्ध्येनमिह वैरिणम् ॥

'kAmakrodhangalai vittiduvAi nIyE', sings Sri Swamiji.

Anger is something that follows desire. When we encounter an obstacle in the achievement of our desire, we tend to get angry. Hence desire is the root cause of all evils. So Sri Swamiji says, 'Vittuviduvai nIyE.' Desires can never be overcome by satisfying them. Is it ever possible to put off fire by adding fuel to it? Hence we have to overcome them with effort. Sri Swamiji says 'Vittuviduvai nIyE' with emphasis on 'nIyE.'

One way to overcome desires is by seeing evil vices associated with that object. If you think of the virtues in that object, it will only increase our attachment.

In one of His madhurageethams, Sri Swamiji teaches us, 'jarA, marana, vyAdhi, dhukkam, vibathu kondathu bhUlOga vAzhkkai...'

In this way, a sadhak who is focused on God realization should again and again think of the evils associated with worldly life and overcome worldly desires. As desires reduce, one can win over anger.

Next Sri Swamiji will show us the ways and means to increase humility and destroy the mind altogether.

(Journey of devotion continues...)

Stay Alert!

This event from Mahabharat teaches us a very important lesson. The war between Kauravas and Pandavas took place for 18 days. All the sons of Gandhari were killed.

Duryodhana was lying down in the battlefield, heavily injured. Since, Duryodhana fell down, Pandavas gained victory. They were rejoicing over their victory. They had fought with great attention and diligence for the past 18 days, but, since, victory was so closer, they had taken their attention off of the war front and were concentrating on celebrating their victory.

Pandavas were taking rest somewhere in the battlefield during the night. The 5 sons of the Pandavas, who were known as Upapandavas, were sleeping in a tent near by.

Ashwathama, from Kauravas side, was burning in the thought of revenge.

He knew that he won't stand a chance in front of the Pandavas. So, he decided to kill the Upapandavas and Drishtadyumna brutally, when they were asleep. Ashwathama, along with Krupi and Kruthavarma attacked the tents on the battlefield, when Pandavas were not there.

Shikandi, Drushtadymnan and Upapandavas died. Even before, the news of Ashwathama attacking the tents, could reach the Pandavas, all these mishaps had happened. Yudhishtira and other Pandavas were struck with grief. Yudhishtira lamented saying, "We were so overcome by our victory, that, we failed to pay attention and be cautious. Now, this victory itself has become our defeat. We can attain improvements in our lives only when we are alert. Being reckless, is only going to get us failures in life. Because of our lack of attention, we have lost our children."

Sri Krishna is teaching us an important lesson here. When we are close to victory, if we get carried away by that and take our eyes off of the task at hand, we will only get defeated. We have to be alert all the time. Especially, when we are getting close to victory, we have to be extra careful.

A TALE FOR CHILDREN

सोम

Sri Vishnupriya

Soma

The well-known meaning for the word 'Soma' is the moon. While describing the avatar of the moon, Srimad Bhagavatam says that the trinities Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva were born as the children of Atri and Anusuya and that Brahma descended as Soma, Vishnu as Dattatreya and Shiva as Durvasa. "दत्तं दुर्वाससं सोमं आत्मेशब्रह्मसम्भवान् "

Vedas and Puranas refer Soma or the moon, to be the mind of Bhagavan.

सोमं मनो यस्य समामनन्ति, says Srimad Bhagavatam in the 8th canto. May be, that is why the moon, being the mind of Bhagavan, always gives joy upon seeing!!

Not just that, it is Soma who is the head of all herbs, as it helps the herbs grow, merely by its rays filled with amrita. He is the king of all stars glittering in the sky. That is why Bhagavan, in the Vibhooti yoga of Uddhava Gita, says, सोमं नक्षत्रौषधीनां, that is, I'm Soma, amongst the stars and the medicinal herbs.

In Bhagavad Gita too, Bhagavan says, "पुष्णामि चौषधीः सर्वाः सोमो भूत्वा रसात्मकः", which means, "I, in the form of Soma, nourish all medicinal herbs.

Sri Krishna incarnated in such SomaVamsa or the ChandraVamsa. And, the star Rohini, happens to be the moon's favorite wife. It was in this Rohini Nakshatra that Sri Krishan was born!

Soma is the one to be worshipped for the fulfillment of desires. कामकामो यजेत् सोमम्, says Srīmad Bhagavatam in the second canto.

Somavar means "Thingal kizhamai' in tamil. 'Thingal' means moon and hence it is the most preferred day for Soma. In English, we refer it as Monday. Moon's day is what is changed as Monday.

Soma also means 'Amritham', nectar. During the churning of the ocean, Srīmad Bhagavatam says, "सुरगणान् हरिः सोमम् अपाययत् " - that is, Sri Hari made the Devas consume the nectar(Soma). Here the word Soma is used in reference to Amritam, the divine nectar.

Yet another meaning of the word Soma is Somalatha. This Somalata, that is, the Soma creeper is squeezed out and the essence is offered to Devas in the Yagas ,after which, the essence of Soma is given as prasada to the ones who did the yaga. There is a well known yagya called Soma Yaga and Somayaji is the name given to the ones who have done that Yagya.

There is a well known Sivalinga with the name 'Somanath'. Here Soma means the one who is along with Uma devi. 'Sa uma' is the meaning. Likewise, 'Soma Skandar' also refers to Shiva, who gives darshan along with Umadevi and Skanda.

Lastly, Somasudha refers to the daughter of Soma, the river Narmada. Just like how Yamuna is called as Suryasudha or Suryajaa, as she is the daughter of Surya, Narmada too, being the daughter of Soma, is known by the names, "Somasudha', 'Somodhbhava'.

The Divine Life of Namdev Maharaj

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Shiv Kanya - Shri Kanya

“Hey Namdev, off late you are becoming more and more adamant”! Here, give me the milk, I will drink it”, said Pandurang to the young boy.. Namdev jumped in delight and gave the piping hot milk to Pandurang. Pandurang gulped it down unmindful of how hot it was!

It was the first milk of the cow named Kapila. Namdev was happy that he could offer the first milk to Pandurang himself. He took the empty bowl home and placed it on the kitchen platform and went out to play. His mother Konabai returned after sometime and headed straight to the kitchen. She was surprised to see the empty milk bowl. She wondered how a bowl of hot milk would disappear within a short time. She called Namdev and began to ask him about it.

Konabai: Naamu, where is the milk I had kept ?

Namdev: Mamma, Oh that! I took it to the temple and gave it to vithala (Pandurang).

Konabai: Wasn't it very hot? I had just boiled it. How did you take it?

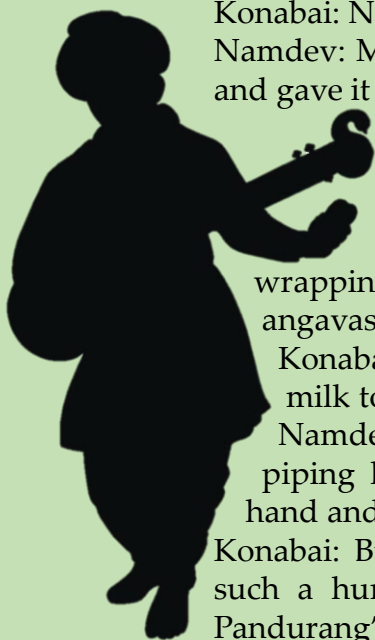
Namdev: Yes mamma, it was very hot. But I took it very carefully,

wrapping the bowl with my angavastram.

Konabai: Did you really give the piping hot milk to Pandurang?

Namdev: I told you Mamma, yes , i took the piping hot milk to Pandurang, held it in my hand and he drank it.

Konabai: But tell me Namdev, why were you in such a hurry? The hot milk would have burnt Pandurang's mouth.



Namdev: No mamma, he drank the whole milk when I offered him. Why don't you go and ask Pandurang himself?

Upset at hearing Namdev saying he offered piping hot milk to Pandurang and fearing that it would have burnt Pandurang's lips, she set out to the temple to personally see Pandurang and ask him about it. Meanwhile Rukmini saw these blisters and asked her lord, "What are these blisters on your lips, my lord?". Pandurang replied, "Oh! These are nothing, just small blisters".

As Konabai reached the temple , she heard the conversation between Pandurang and Rukmani. She looked at Pandurang's lips and saw the blisters and was horrified. She asked with concern, " Whatever happened to your lips, how did you get all these blisters"? Pandurang replied with a smile, "Your son Namdev, he came here with piping hot milk and offered me and I drank it". Kona bai replied, " Pandurang, why did you drink it if it was piping hot? See how it has burnt your lips"!

Pandurang replied, "Namdev is a child,He never thought that it would be hot, his only concern was that he wanted to offer the first milk of Kapila to me. When he offered the milk with so much love, how could I refuse??

Konabai was ecstatic to hear these words. Namdev also remained Pandurang's favourite child throughout . His later life is also full of many leelas played by Pandurang.

Snippets



We Loved

How Sanskrit Led To The Creation Of Mendeleev's Periodic Table

www.swarajyamag.com
Subhash Kak

How the two-dimensional structure of Sanskrit could have led to the creation of the periodic table.

It is an amusing fact that the original names used by Mendeleev for gallium and germanium are eka-aluminum and eka-silicon, where the eka, Sanskrit for one, has the sense of beyond. The prediction for the existence of these elements was made by Mendeleev in a paper in 1869, and it was the identification of these elements in 1875 and 1886 that made him famous, and led to the general acceptance of the periodic table. In all, Mendeleev gave Sanskrit names to eight elements in his periodic table. Here we speak of how the two-dimensional structure of Sanskrit led him to his momentous discovery.

Mendeleev was born at Tobolsk, Siberia, and educated in St. Petersburg. He was appointed to a professorship in St. Petersburg 1863 and in 1866 he succeeded to the Chair of Chemistry in the University. He is best known for his work on the periodic table, which was soon recognized since he predicted the existence and properties of new elements and indicated that some accepted atomic weights of the then known elements were in error. His periodic table formulated in 1869 remains one of the major conceptual advancements in the history of science.

Mendeleev arranged in the table the 63 known elements based on atomic weight, which he published in his article "On the Relationship of the Properties of the Elements to their Atomic Weights". He left space for new elements, and predicted three yet-to-be-discovered elements including eka-silicon and eka-boron. The earlier attempts at classification had considered some two-dimensional schemes, but they remained arbitrary in their conception. Mendeleev's main contribution was his insistence that the two-dimensional should be systematic and comprehensive. In this he appears to have been inspired by the systematic arrangement of Sanskrit sounds in the standard akṣara-mālā, which he indirectly acknowledges in his naming scheme.

Julius Lothar Meyer (1830–1895) published his classic paper of 1870 that also presented the periodicity of atomic volume plotted against atomic weight. Meyer and Mendeleev carried on a long drawn-out dispute over priority. But it was Mendeleev's predictions of yet-unknown elements that secured his fame. The most famous of these predictions was for eka-silicon (germanium) for which not only did he postulate its existence, but also its properties in its chloride and oxide combinations.

The Sanskrit Tradition and Mendeleev's Discovery

Note that the Sanskrit alphabet is represented traditionally in a two-dimensional arrangement based on how the sounds are produced. The first group of sixteen is that of the vowels, which are simple vowels or diphthongs. The remaining letters are consonants which are divided into five classes: those pronounced from the throat are gutturals; those from the palate are palatals; those pronounced from the roof of the mouth are cerebrals; those pronounced from the teeth are dentals; those pronounced from the lips are labials. Each of these classes contains seven consonants: five mutes, one semi-vowel, and one sibilant.

Pāṇini, the author of a famed grammar of Sanskrit who lived in the fifth century BC, in his Śiva Sūtras (also called Māheśvara Sūtras) came up with another classification in 14 categories based on phonological properties of sounds. According to Professor Paul Kiparsky of Stanford University, Mendeleev was a friend and colleague of the Sanskritist Böhtlingk, who was preparing the second edition of his book on Panini at about this time, and Mendeleev wished to honor Pāṇini with his nomenclature. Noting that there are striking similarities between the Periodic Table and the introductory Śiva Sūtras in Panini's grammar, Kiparsky says: The analogies between the two systems are striking. Just as Panini found that the phonological patterning of sounds in the language is a function of their articulatory properties, so Mendeleev found that the chemical properties of elements are a function of their atomic weights.

Like Panini, Mendeleev arrived at his discovery through a search for the "grammar" of the elements (using what he called the principle of isomorphism, and looking for general formulas to generate the possible chemical compounds).

Just as Panini arranged the sounds in order of increasing phonetic complexity (e.g. with the simple stops k, p... preceding the other stops, and representing all of them in expressions like kU, pU) so Mendeleev arranged the elements in order of increasing atomic weights, and called the first row (oxygen, nitrogen, carbon etc.) "typical (or representative) elements".

Just as Panini broke the phonetic parallelism of sounds when the simplicity of the system required it, e.g. putting the velar to the right of the labial in the nasal row, so Mendeleev gave priority to isomorphism over atomic weights when they conflicted, e.g. putting beryllium in the magnesium family because it patterns with it even though by atomic weight it seemed to belong with nitrogen and phosphorus. In both cases, the periodicities they discovered would later be explained by a theory of the internal structure of the elements.

Kiparsky has examined the question of the optimality of the Śiva Sūtras elsewhere. He suggests that this optimality might have provided him with the confidence in a similarly optimal two-dimensional table of elements. My own view is that it is unlikely that Panini's Śiva Sūtras influenced him, because there is no evidence that he knew Sanskrit well enough to appreciate the subtle points related to the organization of the Śiva Sūtras.

It is more plausible that he noted the comprehensiveness of the two-dimensional arrangement of the Sanskrit alphabet (*varṇamālā*) which is apparent to even the beginning student of the language. The tabular form of the Sanskrit letters is due to the two parameters (point of articulation and aspiration) at the basis of the sounds, and Mendeleev must have recognized that ratios/valency and atomic weight likewise defined a two-dimensional basis for the elements.

Convinced that the analogy was fundamental, Mendeleev theorized that the gaps that lay in his table must correspond to undiscovered elements. For his predicted eight elements, he used the prefixes of *eka*, *dvi*, and *tri* (Sanskrit one, two, three) in their naming.

It should be recognized that some of the most brilliant European minds studied Sanskrit in the nineteenth century, and philology and natural science papers were published in the same proceedings of the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences, as at other academies. The two-dimensional regular representation of Sanskrit sounds must have been well-known to Mendeleev.

Mendeleev, by using Sanskrit names, was tipping his hat to the Sanskrit grammarians of yore, who had created astonishingly sophisticated theories of language based on their discovery of the two-dimensional patterns in basic sounds. The connections between computer science and Sanskrit grammatical conception have been investigated by several scholars. But the connection between these grammatical ideas and modern theories of matter is a most fascinating chapter of history of science that has remained forgotten for over a hundred and thirty years.

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