

## माहेश्वराणि सूत्राणि - Ingenious classification of the alphabet

नृतावासाने नटराजराजो ननाद ढक्कां नवपञ्चवारम् ।

उद्धर्तुकामः सनाकादिसिद्धान् एतद्विमर्शे शिवसूत्रजालम् ॥

अ इ उ ण् ॥१॥

ऋ लृ क् ॥२॥

ए ओ ङ् ॥३॥

ऐ औ च् ॥४॥

ह य व र ट् ॥५॥

लँ ण् ॥६॥

ञ् म ड ण न म् ॥७॥

झ भ ज् ॥८॥

घ ढ ध ष् ॥९॥

ज ब ग ड द श् ॥१०॥

ख फ छ ठ थ च ट त व् ॥११॥

क प य् ॥१२॥

श ष स र् ॥१३॥

ह ल् ॥१४॥

इति माहेश्वराणि सूत्राणि ।

माहेश्वराणि सूत्राणि अणादि सञ्ज्ञार्थानि - The Mahesvara sutras are meant to name sets of letters beginning with (a set named) अण्.

एषाम् अन्त्या इतः। The last (letter) in each of these sutras is (an indicatory letter) इत्

हकारदिषु अकारः उच्चारणार्थः। The अकार = अ (i.e. the vowel अ) which is following each of the letters beginning with the letter ह् (in sutra #5) is placed there only to facilitate pronunciation (of the mahesvara sutras and the pratyaharas like हश्, झल् etc.) – that is these vowels are not to be taken into account when figuring out the characters included in a pratyahara.

लँण् मध्ये तु इत्-सञ्ज्ञकः। making an exception to the above rule the अँ following the लकार ल् in the sutra#6. This अँ is instead considered an indicatory i.e. इत् letter.

The last consonant in all the 14 sutras is designated as an indicatory i.e इत् letter. So there are a total of 15 इत् letters in the Mahesvara sutras.

Every pratyahara has only two characters – of which the first must be a non-indicatory letter and the second one must be an indicatory i.e. इत् letter. The इत् letter has to be one of it letters after which is after the

The process:

Pick up the pratyahara to be analysed.

Start with the first (and therefore non-indicatory letter) of the pratyahara – locate this letter in the mahesvara sutras – only one sutra can have it. Add this character to your basket. Then traverse left to right in that mahesvara sutra and then to the succeeding sutras (i.e. top to bottom) if necessary adding each non इत् (indicatory) letter as you traverse until the इत् letter in the pratyahara is encountered in the Mahesvara Sutra. The pratyahara is said to be a name for that set of characters, which were collected during the traversal up to the इत् letter.