

Three Minutes - 20 The path to the tower of wisdom

ennuyir tandu aLittavaraic
caraNam pukki
yAn aDaiyavE avar gurukkaL
nirai vaNangi
(svAmi deshikan,
adhikAra sangraham - 3)

என் உயிர் தந்து அளித்தவரைச்
சரணம் புக்கி
யான் அடைவே அவர் குருக்கள்
நிரை வணங்கி

yAn = I
caraNam = surrender
pukki = (and) take refuge
tandu = (to those) who have given
aLittavarai = and blessed
ennuyir = my life;
avar gurukkaL = and to their teachers
nirai = (their teachers ...) in that order
aDaiyavE = reach out
vaNangi = (and) pray (to them)

svAmi vedAnta deshikan.
remembering the AzhvAr's
(shrlvaiShNava saints) gift of tamizh
veda-s to all humankind, paid
homage back to them in composing
enormous amount of tamizh hymns
(shrl deshika prabandham). These
tamizh verses compete equally with
his saMskR^it hymns in style,
philosophical concepts, and flow.
svAmi deshikan's compositions can
be remembered via a simple
mnemonic: ABC (accuracy, brevity
and colorfulness). They reflect the
true meanings of the scripts (vedas

and smR^iti-s) as propagated by
previous teachers (pUrvAcArya) in
shrlvaiShaNava tradition
(sampradAyam). These works are
small enough to make the meaning
clearer, while the phonetics (flow,
rhyme, tune) reflect the context and
form a mesmerizing musical
enchantment.

This particular verse is in adhikAra
sangraham, which is a collection of
tamizh verses from his magnum
opus shrlmad rahasya traya sAram
(Essence of three secret mantras).
svAmi so precisely details the
AcArya lineage order, a holy chain
that one should always think of. First,
he starts with those who gave life:

Giving life can be interpreted as

1. **Physical life.** the natural parents
who gave birth to the body.
2. **Scriptural life.** the guru and
gAyatri mantra, which provided
the eligibility to learn the scripts
through the thread ceremony
(upanayanam)
3. **shrl vaiShNava life.** AcArya's
and shrlman nArAyaNa's
blessings with a shrlvaiShNava
life through five holy rituals
(pa~nca samskAram)
4. **Liberated life.** AcArya's and the
Lord's rescue of the lost soul from
the bondage (samsAra) to
perform eternal service (nitya
kaiMkaryam) through total
surrender (prapatti). There are
"no more births".

First, surrender to those who gave the life. Then, prostrate (fall flat in front of them) and pray to them. Afterwards, proceed in the order of one's teacher, one's teacher's teacher etc.. . Finally, the unbroken holy chain ends with shrl mAhalakShml and shrlman nArAyaNan. Thus, the lineage of preceptors (guru parampara) is very important. It is only with the contact and guidance of the teacher (AcArya sambandham) that allows our soul to become enlightened (removal of aj~nAna) and purified (samskAra).

What we learn from this.

- 1. Gratitude.** What the AcArya-s formally learned by going through rigorous studies, they have kindly instructed us with that knowledge, through minimal effort on our part. One can't even imagine the value of them or repaying a tiny token in reciprocation. The least we can do is being grateful.
- 2. Order (kramam) is crucial.** Even in daily life, no one likes to bypass the lower level and approach higher authority.
- 3. Spread the sampradAyam.** By watching and listening to the AcArya-s, one would also get inspired in contributing. The best help would be spreading the knowledge and the AcArya's fame.

- 4. Take pride and respect** the previous teachers' (pUrvAcArya) path. They are like a super market of knowledge and we can get anything in one short trip. Why go and construct a new road, when the easy and proven expressway is already available?

Two roads diverged in a wood,
and I took the one less
traveled by
And that has made all the
difference

(Robert Frost)

[Note: Less traveled is the elders' path,
since many shy away.]