Three Minutes - 20
The path to the tower of wisdom

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

This particular verse is in adhikAra sangraham, which is a collection of tamizh verses from his magnum opus shrImad 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. **shrI vaiShNava life.** AcArya's and shrlman nArAyaNa's blessings with a shrIvaiShNava 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".

svAmi vedAnta deshikan. remembering the AzhvAr's (shrIvaiShNava saints) gift of tamizh veda-s to all humankind, paid homage back to them in composing enormous amount of tamizh hymns (shrI 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 shrIvaiShNava 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.

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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 shri mAhakshmi and shriMAN NAryaNaN. 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.]