

Three Minutes - 8

Means and Ends

paranda sindai onRi ninRu
ninna pAda pankayam
nirandaram ninaippadAga nl
ninaikka vENDumE

(tirumazhisaiyAzhvAr,
tiruccanda viruttam – 101)

பரந்த சிந்தை ஒன்றி நின்று
நின்ன பாத பங்கயம்
நிரந்தரம் நினைப்பதாக நீ
நினைக்க வேண்டுமே

(திருமழிசையாழ்வார்,
திருச்சந்த விருத்தம் - 101)

sindai = (Oh Lord! my) thoughts
paranda = (are) spread out all over
onRi = (instead it) should focus and
ninRu = stick strongly
ninaippattAga = and has to meditate
ninna = (on) Your
pankayam = lotus (like)
pAda = feet,
nirandaram = permanently.
vENDumE = (for that) the requirement
nl = (is) You
ninaikka = have to put Your mind.

tirumazhisaiyAzhvAr brings out complex concepts so easily in this verse, which is his second treatise called tiruccanda viruttam in nAIyira divya Prabhandam. He is highly focused on establishing shrIman nArAyaNa as the sole, eternal authority above and beyond everything else (para brahmam) and this vigor is transparent throughout

his creative works. Here, he begs the Lord to rescue his mind and thoughts from the worldly matters and to bless him with the ability to permanently concentrate on His lotus feet.

AzhvAr is lamenting that his fragile mind is wandering in all directions. Powerful yet cheap earthly pleasures (shabdAdi viShayangaL – sensory pleasures) are attracting him. He, and everyone else knows that, in reality, they are all spontaneous, temporary (anityam) pleasures. Yet, however, no one can escape from them. Thus, he makes a desperate plea to the Lord to move his attention from those and to firmly concentrate only on the Lord's beautiful two lotus feet forever. He prays to Him to assure that his thoughts and the enjoyment will be eternal. That insurmountable feat can't be achieved by the AzhvAr's effort, abilities, or for that matter, any one else's. It solely rests with the God. Only the Lord's desire (bhagavad sa~nkalpam), and nothing else, primarily determines when, where, and how one can attain this permanent pleasure.

The amazing experience (anubhavam) brought out by the AzhvAr here is the realization of the Lord as both the means and ends (upAyam and upeyam). To ride on an elephant, you first need to climb on it. For that, you need the help from the same elephant. First, as a means (hitam), the elephant bends down for you to climb on and then as a result (puruShArtham), it allows you to sit on it and gives you a ride.

Bending down is the means (sAdanam) and giving you a ride is the rewards (sAdhyam).

In summary,

1. One needs Lord's blessing even to think about Him.

His unconditional grace without any specific reason (nirhetuka kR^ipA) on the individual soul (cit) is the trigger point. Then only comes the effect of soul's accumulated good deeds and sins (karma), teachers' blessings (AcArya kaTAkSham), presence in a good community (sat sa~ngam) etc.

2. Total surrender is the best means.

To get into the reward of meditating on Lord's feet permanently, one needs to surrender to the same feet as the means.

3. Request utopia on earth itself.

Scripts (veda-s) proclaim, the eternal (nityasUri-s) who are abode in the permanent bliss (mokSha), where the concept of time is lost, look mesmerized at the Lord, without even blinking. AzhvAr is requesting that this utopia be granted to him on earth itself. We shrIvaiShnava-s, following his path, make the same prayer to have that enjoyment start from today and last forever.

God - means (to) rewards