

Three Minutes - 6

Mind, the command and control center

Ortta manattarAi aindu aDakki
ArAindu

pErttAl piRappu Ezhum

pErkkalAm

(pEyAzhvAr,

mUnRAM tiruvantAdii – 79)

ஓர்ந்த மனத்தராய்

ஐந்து அடக்கி ஆராய்ந்து

பேர்த்தால் பிறப்பு ஏழும்

பேர்க்கலாம்

(பேயாழ்வார்,

இரண்டாம் திருவந்தாதி - 79)

Ortta = (by having) a concentrated

manattarAi = mind,

aDakki = controlling

aindu = the five (organs),

ArAindu = (and) deeply researched
ideas of

pErttAl = turning away (from lowly
pleasures)

pErkkalAm = (one can) get rid of

Ezhum = seven (janma-s of)

piRappu = birth

This verse is sung by pEyAzhvAr, 3rd in the AzhvAr dynasty. Unlike others, he starts his poem by paying tribute to shrl (mahAlakShmi), who is the inseparable consort of shrlman nArAyaNa. The Lord nArAyaNa is always referred with an adjective "shriman" preceding His name. It is

shrl + mat, means inseparable from shrl.

In this verse, pEyAzhvAr suggests that the task of getting out of the birth/death cycle (samsAra) is not a difficult one. The four different methods (upAyam) prescribed in scripts (pramANam-s) are - duties, knowledge, devotion and surrender (karma, j~nAna, bhakthi and prapatti). The aspirant for permanent bliss (mokSha) might first start with controlling the senses (indriya nigraham).

Humans are blessed with five knowledge organs (j~njAna indriya-s) - eye, ear, mouth, skin and nose; five motor organs (karma indriya-s) - tongue, arms, feet, excretory organs and procreative organs. They are also blessed with an amazing eleventh organ called mind (manas). Here pEyAzhvAr says to use the mind as the command and control center for the knowledge and motor organs and not let the organs pull haphazardly.

For that, mind, the control center, has to have the authority and needs to issue clear commands. Authority comes from self-control and commands can be issued only after a thorough research on what is right and ethical. By putting senses in the righteous way, one avoids bad deeds. The common saying, "If you put your mind to it, you can do it" emphasizes only this. If one does that, pEyAzhvAr says that one can even cross seven births. The seven is just a figurative number and just

simply means the ability for one to escape the bondage (samsAra) completely.

The moral here is - the control of senses is probably one of the toughest battles that one might face. It is this constant mental battle that has been mentioned widely in all our scripts, anywhere from kaTha upaniShad to bhagavad gltA. Conquering this internal war requires an understanding of the scripts, practice (abhyAsam), detachment (vairAgyam), and a presence within a good community (satsa~ngam).

**You can't control the wind; but
you can control your sails.**