**Chapter - 2**

The second verse in mṛgāram is:

यस्येदं प्राणन्निमिषद्यदेजति यस्य जातं जनमानञ्च केवलम्।

स्तौम्यग्निं नाथितो जोहवीमि सनो मुञ्चत्वहसः॥

yasyedaṁ prāṇannimiṣadyadejati yasyajātaṁ janamānañca kevalam |

staumyagniṁ nāthito johavīmi sano muñcatvahasaḥ ||

Similar to the previous verse, this verse is also a poem that follows the meter upariṣṭātjyotirjagatī. This has the following 19 words (padās) as per the pada pātham.

(1)यस्य (2) इदम् (3) प्राणत् (4) निमिषत् (5) यत् (6) एजति (7) यस्य (8) जातम् (9) जनमानम् (10) च (11) केवलम् (12) स्तौमि (13) अग्निम् (14) नाथितः (15) जोहवीमि (16) सः (17) नः (18) मुञ्चतु (19) अहसः

(1) yasya (2)idam (3) prāṇat (4) nimiṣat (5) yat (6) ejati (7) yasya (8) jātam (9) janamānam (10) ca (11) kevalam (12) staumi (13) agnim (14) nāthitaḥ (15) johavīmi (16) saḥ (17) naḥ (18) muñcatu (19) ahasaḥ

The meaning given by śrī Sāyaṇācāryār for this verse is: prāṇat – Those which breathe, nimiṣat - Those which blink their eyes, yat idam - all these beings and ejati – those which move, yasya - are subordinates of **which** Agni, jātam - (on the same basis) which were born before these, janamānam - which are being born, kevalam - without requiring any other evidence except the Vedas, yasya - are under the control of **which** Agni, agnim – to that Agni, staumi - I offer my praises, nāthitaḥ - I solicit His grace, johavīmi - I perform sacred fire ritual (homam) for him again and again. saḥ – He, muñcatu - relieve, naḥ - us, ahasaḥ - from the sins.

(I perform sacrifices [homams] for that Agni again and again, soliciting His grace, to whom all those which breathe, blink and move, which were born before and which are being born, are subordinates, requiring no other evidences but Vedas. Let Him relieve us from our sins).

From this what can be inferred? As stated by Azhwar in the verses,

‘enakkġ āṭ cey ekkālattum enu en manakkġ vandu iḍaivīḍini manni

tanakkġ āga enaikkoḻḻum īdġ enakkġ kaṇṇanai yān koḻ siappġ[[1]](#footnote-1)’

and,

‘ekkālattu endaiyāy ennuḻ mannil mau ekkālattilum yādonum vġṇḍġn[[2]](#footnote-2)’,

all the living and nonliving things are born to serve a person called Agni. Let us praise that Agni. We will solicit his grace by repeatedly offering oblations to Him. Let Him relieve us from our sins.

If we intepret the phrase Agni as the Lord Azagiya maṇavāḻan (Lord Ranganatha) or Azagappirān, who blesses us in idol form in front of our eyes, only then all the other glories mentioned for Agni in the will be appropriate. It need not be explained here that these glories will not be appropriate for the demigod Agni, but would only be appropriate for the supreme soul.

We can say that Svāmi Deśika echoed this verse (mantrā) in the pradhānapratitantrādhikāram, where he quotes the following verse of śrī Parasara Bhattar:

उपादत्ते सत्तास्थिति - नियमनाद्यैश्चिदचितौ स्वम् उद्दिश्य श्रीमानिति वदति वागौपनिषदी।

upādatte sattāsthiti - niyamanādyaiścidacitau svam uddiśya śrīmāniti vadati vāgaupaniṣadī |

All the phrases Azhwars bless such as “the lotus eyed person who owns all the worlds” are the explanations for this verse only.

Hence, we can say that no more explanation is required for this verse.

The phrase nāthitaḥ which occurs in this verse is interpreted by śrī Sāyaṇācāryār to mean the person who performs the yajñā representing himself as “I, who solicit the fruits or the benefits”. We, who relish Veda as Vedattāzhwan, interpreted on the same lines to mean “I, who solicit to please You by performing Your services”.

However, the word nāthitaḥ will not directly yield the meaning as “requestor”. Direct meaning for this phrase is “one who is being requested”. There is a convention to say bhuktāḥ brāhmaṇāḥ. This is said to mean that Brahmins have eaten. Here the direct translation of bhuktāḥ will yield the meaning as “were eaten”. However, since that meaning is not an appropriate one, we interpret this as “have eaten”. We convert the passive voice into active voice to understand. This has been accepted by most of the Sanskrit grammarians according to the grammar rule “kartari ktah”. The great poet Kalidāsā has also followed this and composed a phrase,

वनाय पीत - प्रतिबद्ध - वत्साम्

vanāya pīta - pratibaddha - vatsām

in the first poem of the second chapter of Raghuvamsam, that describes the cow Nandini which was shepherded by Emperor Dileepan as per the guidance of sage Vasishta. Here he assumes the meaning as “that Nandini who has a calf that was tied after it drank the milk” for the phrase pīta - pratibaddha – vatsām according to the dissolution as pītaśca pratibaddhaśca vatso yasyās sā. Here the phrase pītaḥ means “that which was drunk”. However, it has come in the meaning of “that which drank”. śrī Sāyaṇācāryār has explained the verse with the similar convention. Hence, I have also given the meaning on the same lines.

However, we, who enjoy Veda as Vedattāzhwan can interpret the phrase nāthitaḥ as one who has been requested by Emperuman to do something.

In the commentary preface of the “īḍu” (commentary on Tiruvaimozhi) for the Tiruvaimozhi “veetrirunda” it has been mentioned as follows: “Lord tells Azwar, ‘You are seeing that I am here without any decrease in My Lordship that extends sovereignty all over the seven worlds. All these Lordship will be seen if you can speak a word on this’, and the Azwar blesses the verse in accordance with this request”. On this basis only, the tradition has set in that the service has to be done only after the concurrence of the Lord. We normally observe in temple sannidhi-s that when arcaka-s says "shrI vaiShNava-s aruLippADu" (meaning they can now recite the sacred verses), the latter accept saying, "nAyante nAyante" and feeling blessed ("nAthitan AyinEnE"), chant vedams, prabandham-s, PurANa-s etc... Vedattāzhwan also follows this when he sings ”nāthito johavīmi”.

It seems that Tirumangai Azwar won’t sing the holy verse if not requested. There is an interesting anecdote for this.

After singing on the Lord of Tiruvallur, Azwar went to Tiruninravur. There the Lord Bhaktavatsala did not ask Azwar to sing the holy verse. Hence, Azwar also didn’t bless any verse. He went to Triplicane.

The Ninravur Pirātti asked the Lord – “Did Azwar sing about You?”

Lord – “No”.

Pirātti – “Did you request the Azwar to sing?”

Lord – “No”.

Pirātti – “That is the reason why Azwar did not sing on you. Please go and ask Azwar to sing on you. Since he is the last Azwar, if he does not sing about You, how will You become Divyadesa Emperuman?”

So, the Lord goes in search of the Azwar. At that time the Azwar was singing about Tirukkadal mallai Emperuman. Ninravur Bhakatavatasalan stood behind the Azwar to attract his attention to sing on Him. Hence Azwar sung about Him since he was requested. That’s why in the ‘pārāyathu’ Tirumozhi he sings about Tiruninravur also as,

pūṇḍavattam piarkkaḍaindu toṇḍu paṭṭup

poynnūlai meinnūl enum di

māṇḍu avattam pgātġ vammin endai

em vaṇaṅgappaḍuvānai gaṇaṅgaḻ ġttum

nīṇḍavattak karumukilai emmān tannai

ninavūr nittilattait tottār slaik

kāṇḍavattaik kanal eri vāyp peivittānaik

kaṇdatu nān kaḍalmallaittalasayanattġ

Lord Bhaktavatsala goes back to piratti and proudly narrated the incident of making Azwar as nāthitan and getting a song. Pirātti encouraged the Lord to get one more song from Kaliyan. Hence, Lord again went in search of the Azwar. Then, Azwar was singing about Tirukkannamangai Emperuman as per His request. Ninravur Lord requested the Azwar again and Azwar responded by singing the verse on both the Emperumans as:

ġnai imayattuḻ eḻ īsanai

immaiyai maumaikku marundinai

āalai aṇḍattu appuattu uyttiḍum

aiyanaik kaiyil āzhi onu ġndiya

kūinaik kuru mā maṇik kuninai

ninavūr nina nittilat tottinai

kāinaip punalaic cenu nāḍik

kaṇṇamaṅgaiyuḻ kaṇdu koṇḍġnġ

Thus, even the service to the Lord has to be performed as per His request. Even Adisesha feared that he exceeded the brief when he performed a service without Emperuman’s concurrence. When Madhu and kaidaba came to disturb the sleep of the supreme Lord, Adisesha killed both of them by spitting venom on them. Periyazwar describes this story as,

kāyndu iruḻai māik katir ilagu māmaṇigaḻ

ġynda paṇakkatirmġl vevvuyirppa – vāynda

madukaidavarum vayiu urugi māṇḍār

adu kġḍu avarkku iuti āṅgu

However, Adisesha felt ashamed that he did something without the order of the Lord and hence hung his heads down. Lord consoled him that he had done a good job. In this position we can still see him as “tirumeyya malaiyilġ ādisġṣanām”.

Unlike the above, it is shown through the phrase nāthita that one should do service only after receiving His order. It is appropriate to say - one does kaiMkaryam on being ordered. But, do not think of it this way - "the word nāthita would mean a devotee serves when emperumAn requests; this does not sound right". When emperumAn gives an order, it will sound like a request; that is what His nature is.

In the vīirundu Tiruvaimozhi, to explain the phrase “āalmikkāḻum ammānai” in the poem,

vīirundġzulagum tanikkl sella vīvilsīr

āalmikkāḻum ammānai vemmā piḻandān tannaip

pi enġ kaikaḻ ārat tozudu sonmālaigaḻ

ġa nġku ini enna kuai ezumaiyumġ

TirukkurugaippiLLAn blesses as “though He is a complete personality like this, he with a humble nature (unaffected by the high position)” (ippaḍi paripūrṇanāi irukkac ceyde anudrikta svabhāvanāi). While explaining this, we can see that SakshAt Swami has explained this as “āalmikku – With excessive forbearance or patience, āḻum – though inherently and independently capable of ruling the worlds, He performs the same as a service with utmost humility as in ‘rāmo rājyam upāsitvā’. āal – represents patience and capability”. ValmIki bhagavAn has used the above phrase to indicate that the Emperuman, who doesn’t have anyone who is superior to Him, while ruling this world as Rama, observed great patience without showing his anger and making it appear as though He is not ruling this world, and ruling it as a service to the kingdom. It is worth noting that he hasn’t used phrase such as “rāmo rājyam sampracāsya”

Please note that PeriyavaccAn Pillai in his ‘irupattunAlAyirappadi’, blesses as “āalmikkāḻum – Since the fact that He is having sovereignty over all the worlds will make him inaccessible, He rules like one who is having no wealth. This is like, “‘rāmo rājyam upāsitvā’ and ‘amārgeṇāgatāṁ lakṣmīṁ prāpyevānvayavarjitaḥ’”.

In this, the first illustration shown by PeriyavaccAn Pillai (I have previously shown that SAkshAt Swami has also used the same illustration) is in samkśepa rāmāyaṇa (First sarga of BalakAnDam of Srimad RAmAyaNam).

The second illustration is what Lord Rama mentions in the Eighth chapter (sarga) of AraNya kAnDam of Srimad RAmAyaNam. He bids adieu from sage SutIkshNa in the early morning. He says, ‘we need to depart early. This is because if the sun rises and the temperature increases, he will scorch like a person who is not born in a good family and suddenly becomes rich by earning wealth in non-righteous means. We want to complete our journey before that’.

During the month of Chittirai around the year 1962 in the NAvalpAkkam brahmotsavam, people of that place had arranged for celebrating srimadaNNArya mahAdesikan vidvat sadas. They had taken great efforts to bring in all the scholars of our tradition to their village. Srimadabhinavadesika UttamUr Swamy and my father had made travel plans to participate in that. Srimadabhinavadesika Swami said, ‘we need to catch the night train from Chennai to Dindivanam and in the later part of the night itself, we need to catch the first bus to NAvalpAkkam and reach before sunrise. We need to complete our journey before the Sun starts to scorch’.

In those days our people were unable to afford to bring even such great scholars in air conditioned vehicles. The scholars also got used to leading a simple life without expecting such facilities. Even if one were to catch the first bus at 4 AM at Broadway, by the time one reaches the last leg of the journey to NAvalpAkkam it will be 9:00 AM and there will be scorching sun by that time. This was foreseen by Srimadabhinavadesika Swami and hence he insisted on leaving by the night train. At that time, my father mentioned that this was the philosophy of journey of Veeraraghava. For that Srimadabhinavadesika Swami with his inherent smile noded and relished that this is the quote blessed by that Veeraraghavan as,

aviṣahyātapo yāvat sūryo nātivirājate |

amārgeṇā''gatāṁ lakṣmīṁ prāpyevānvayavarjitaḥ ||

I was also present when these travel plans were getting finalized. At that time, I was having a long vacation after my tenth standard common examination. Hence, I was also added as an appendage in that journey. The travel had four people consisting of Srimadabhinavadesika Swami, my father, my father’s cousin Srimdubhayave Vidwan Pandalkudi VaradAcArya Swami and myself. Sriswami asked me if I understand the above poem. I placed my understanding as, “Similar to the person who is not born in good family gets wealth in non-righteous means he will scorch the people who go to him, the sun will scorch as it gets late during the day”. Swami appreciated my proficiency and asked me if anvayavarjitaḥ has any other meaning apart from the ‘person not born in a good family’. I replied, ‘anvayam can take a meaning of history as in “raghUnAm anvayam”. But that meaning doesn’t fit here. It also has a meaning of prose order. But that also doesn’t fit here’.

Swami graced the following words: “’anvayam’ has a meaning as ‘association’. Even if one is not born in a good family, if he has an association with good mentor (teacher/ acAryA), he will be having good qualities. It is customary to mention that one is associated with a particular AcAryA by mentioning that he has anvayam with that AcAryA”.

I remembered this incident which happened 48 years ago in Egmore Railway station and I referred to the commentary of Sri Govindarajar to check how this verse is interpreted. In that I found that this phrase is interpreted as ‘sAdhu samAgamam’ (association with sadAcAryA) only as explained by Swami.

The meaning mentioned by me is found in the commentary of Sri Maheswara TeertA. However, Sri Tilakar has shown both the interpretations.

I was fortunate to have such opportunities during my young age because I was born to Sri VillUr Swami. I was fortunate to share the same with you because of the compassion of PAdukA devi.

In the ‘IDu’ the example from the samkśepa rāmāyaṇa alone is shown while giving the commentary. However in the ‘Jeer arumpadavurai’ it is shown that the verse from AraNya kANDam has also been considered.

Sri Parasara Bhattar has shown the following meaning in the 38th verse in the uttara shatakam of Sri Rangaraja Stavam. “Lower deities such as Indra take pride of being equivalent to the EmperumAn just by possessing a small wealth of Him. However, the EmperumAn who is having boundless wealth doesn’t consider that as a great thing. This is not surprising. EmperumAn is all pervading. Similarly, his wealth is also all pervading. In that is it possible to tell which is the highest and which is the lowest? If so, how will he become greater by possessing that wealth (or Lordship)? Hence, for Him alone it is possible to rule with such a state. To put it in simple words, the pot is big and it is full of water. In that case will that water spill?”. The full verse is given below:

āghrāyaiśvaragandhamīśasadṛśaṁmanyāstavendrādayaḥ

muhyanti tvamanāvilo niravadherbhūmnaḥ kaṇehatya yat |

citrīyemahi nātra raṅgarasika tvaṁ tvanmahimnaḥparaḥ

vaipulyānmahitaḥ svabhāva iti vā kiṁ nāma sātmyaṁ na te ||

This verse has also been illustrated in the ‘Jeer arumpadavurai’.

I am giving all these things to show that though the EmperumAn is the supreme being (and the controller of everything else) it is his nature that even the order to his devotees will look like a request because of his forbearance or patience (āal). The verse graced by the grandfather in pratibimbalahari for the ‘vīirundu’ verse also clearly indicates that the word āal has come in the meaning of patience. That verse is as follows:

utkarṣādupaviśya saptabhuvane svājñāvaśe satguṇaṁ

pādāraṁ kṣamayā vidhāritahayakrūrānanaṁ svāminam |

uktvā maṅgaḻamityutañjalikaraṁ saṁsevya vācā srajaṁ

satbhāgyasya samarpaṇe kimaparaṁ saptasvido janmasu ||

Hence, it is not wrong to interpret that Vedattāzhwan keeps on singing His praise since EmperumAn keeps requesting, i.e. he is made as ‘nāthitaḥ’ and make him to sing His praise. Some friends may ask, ’while your imaginary Vedattāzhwan may say like that. How can we say that with our mouth. Isn’t it wrong?’. If we are compelled like this can we recite the phrases such as ‘nAciyArudaiy magimaiyilI’? Can we even touch the phrase such as ‘kaliyanudaiya vAznte pOm’ with our mind?

Can we recite the following verse blessed by Tirumangai AzwAr which states that the Lord Amaruvi appan offers obeisance with folded hands to him, who is parakAla nAyaki?

vañci maruṅgal iḍai nva maṇandu nina kanavagattu en

neñcu niaiyak kai kūppi ninār nina ūrplum

pañci anna mellaḍi napāvaimārgaḻ āḍagattin

añcilambin ārppvā aṇiyār vīdi azundūrġ

In the explanation of this verse, PeriyavAccAn Pillai doesn’t explain the phrase ‘kai kūppi’ separately. However, the ‘arumpada uraikarar’ while explaining this phrase mentions it as, ‘He folded his hands to remove the sin of marrying her while causing pain’. In his commentary, MahAmahimopAdyAya AnnangarAcArya Swami, shows a grammatical rule by name ‘eccat tiribu’. By using this he explains that ‘kai kūppi‘ is the modification of ‘kai kūppa‘ and thus the phrase is interpreted as ‘Azwar with folded hands while Amaruvi Appan is standing’. This meaning is shown by SrimadannagarAcArya Swami for the people who cannot accept the fact that Peruman offered obeisance with folded hands to parakAla pirAtti by using the grammar rule ‘eccat tiribu’ in the same way as the commentator of Vedas using the ‘kartari ktaH’ rule for the term ‘nāthitaḥ’.

Swami Desika graces that the Lord solicited obeisance from the gopika ladies as ‘a~njalim yAcamAna:’. Abhinavadesika UttamUr Swami in his book ‘prabanda rakshai’ agrees with the meaning given in the ‘arumpada urai’ and explains that it is very appropriate that such Lord offered obeisance to parakAla nAyaki with folded hands.

Hence there is nothing wrong to interpret ‘nāthitaḥ’ as ‘I, who has been requested by the Lord’. It is an appropriate meaning.

The English translation of Arthur Berriedale Keith for this mantra is:

‘Him whose is that, which breatheth, which winketh, which moveth whose alone is that which has been born and being born

Agni I praise; I invoke seeking aid

May He relieve us from tribulation’

In this, if we change the word ‘Agni’ into ‘Azhagar’ or ‘Arangan’ and change ‘I invoke seeking aid’ to ‘I invoke as per His wishes’ then we can relish Veda becoming Vedattāzhwan.

1. Lord Krishna resides in my heart forever saying, “Serve me alone all the time”. He has taken me as his own. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. If you are my master at all times residing within me, then I would not ask for anything else. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)