

Thiruvalluvar's Life & Message to the World

" In Africa I learnt Tamil to read
the Original text of Thirukural "

—Mahathma Gandhi.

Author :

PANDIT V. NATESAN, B.A.,
Justice of Peace.

THIRUVALLUVAR'S LIFE and **Message to the World**

with a foreword by
Hon'ble Mr. Justice R. SADASIVAM,
High Court, Madras

Author:
Pandit V. NATESAN, B.A., J.P.
Editor, 'Mutamil'

*[Distributed to the Delegates of the
World Tamil Conference II, held in the City of
Madras, S. India]*

PUBLISHERS :
C. R. N. & SONS
1/8, Srinivasa Iyer St., MADRAS-1
3—1—1968

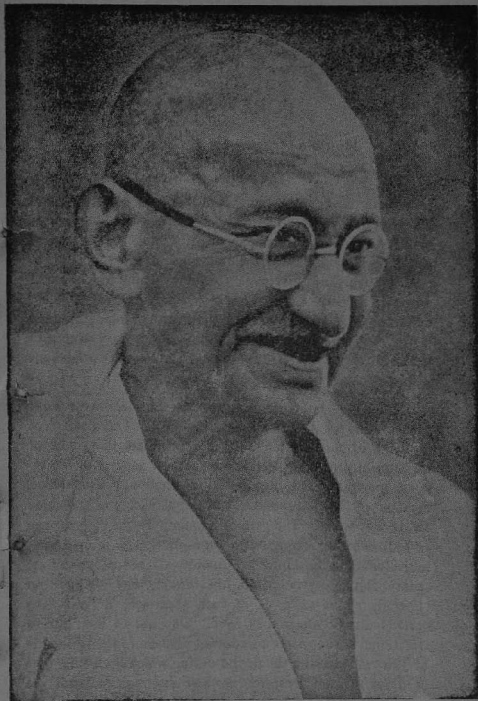
Rights reserved]



வாழ்க்கை

செந்தமிழ்

உலகப் பொது மறை தந்த பெரியார்
THIRUVALLUVAR



Dedicated to
Mahatma Gandhi, Student & Follower of Kural

FOREWORD

Hon'ble Mr. Justice R. Sadasivam,
High Court, Madras.

There is a poem in 'Nalvazhi' by Avvaiyar that Thirukural, Vedas, Devaram, Thiruvacakam, Thirumanthiram convey the same message. Unlike the other great works, it is possible for the followers of every religion to read thoughts of his religion in the Kural which has a universal appeal. Kural is not only a great literary work of extraordinary merit, but it is also the greatest book of universal ethics. It is significant to note that there is no reference to the word "Kadavul" (God) in Kural, though the work begins with the chapter on the worship of God.

Thiru V. Natesanar is a popular but learned lecturer who is doing good work in spreading the spiritual message of the saints of our holy land. It is appropriate that some of his thought-provoking lectures on several aspects of Thirukural are published during the International Conference, Seminar of Tamil Studies. The popular lectures give good food for thought. The garb of anonymity worn by greatmen of India—whether arising out of an aspiration to mingle their individuality in the Universal divinity or out of an innate sense of humility is one of the reasons why we have no materials about the lives of such greatmen, or even the periods during which they lived. One has to look up to traditional and popular anecdotes to have an idea of the life of Thiruvalluvar and the period during which he lived. The need for scientific research in these matters can hardly be

over emphasised. There is hope for such research now as large amounts have been set apart to carry on work of this kind in the universities of our state.

We try to commemorate Thiruvalluvar by drawing on our imagination and depicting him in portraits and statues. We do erudite research and talk learnedly about Kural but we will be really commemorating Thiruvalluvar and doing the greatest service to him by trying to practise his precepts in our every day life. The beautiful thought in the agaval, 'To us all towns are one, all men our kin' finds an echo in Valluvar's Kural:

“ யாதானும் நாடாமால் ஊராமால் என்ஞெருவன்
சாந்துணையும் கல்லாத வாறு.”

Translation :

“ Since all the learned whatever land or town could
deem their own

Why won't through out one's life time go on one
quite learning alone ?”

If put into practise, it will bring peace to our country,—
nay to the entire world.

R. Sadasivam,

3—1—'68

C. M. Rajakandaswamy
Vice - President,

Chennai Mutamizh Sangam,
"Raja Graha", Madras-7

3—1—68

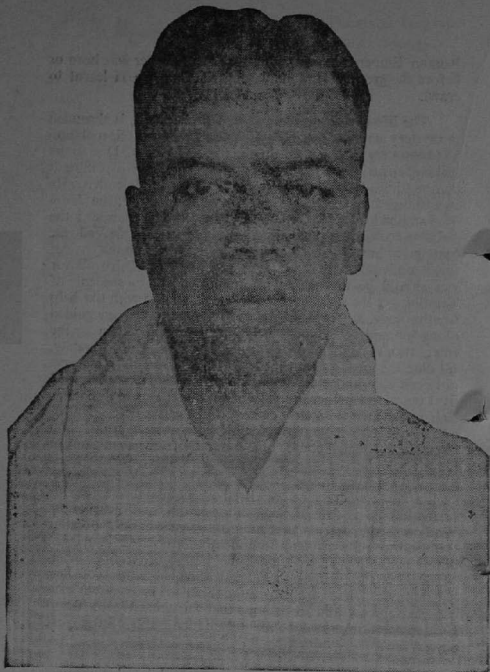
PREFACE

It gives me immense pleasure to be able to write this short preface to the book brought out by my good friend, Pandit V. Natesan B.A., J.P., on "Tiruvalluvar's life and message to the world". He is a scholar of repute whose life has been devoutly devoted to the service of Tamil and more particularly to religious literature. Thirukural has been his favourite reference book for he has to draw from its inexhaustible treasure inspiration for his daily life and lectures. This book is a collection of his speeches at different centres on various occasions and is meant to be a refresher to all who are already acquainted with Kural and a guide to those who have not come across the text so often. Being a collection of speeches on the same or allied subject relating to the 'sacred' Kural some thoughts are repeated in the course of these speeches but the readers will agree that there is no harm in repeating good and noble thoughts for, a discourse on Thirukural howsoever often it may be done cannot but be ennobling. If readers derive happy inspiration from this book as is intended by its author and by me it would have served a noble purpose and be in part, a fulfilment of the author's fervent ambition of having been of service to the Tamil-knowing World.

* Tamil is the Gift of Shiva to the world. Its speech or sound came from the Thamaruka of the Lord*. These statements are made before Tamil pupils by the teachers. It is hard to believe such words but the substratum of truth is that Tamil is as old or ancient as the world which God created and the land of the Tamils is the oldest spot of inhabitable earth as adjudged by geographers. That its origin and growth should be dated far beyond the Sangam age is undisputable. Thirukkural is dated back to the 3rd Sangam period. It was written probably before Emperor Asoka ruled this earth or Confucius came into being or before the first

Roman Emperor Augustus's great grand father was born or before the greatest Han Emperor of China Wu Ti learnt to crawl.

The life of this supreme sage, Thiruvalluvar, is shrouded in mystery as most other Tamil Poets' lives are. Speculation has been very rampant on the details of his birth. Due to the brilliance shed by this intellectual giant people of different communities, religions and sects claim him as their own. He is acclaimed by the weaver caste as their ancestor; the Jains of Tamilnad own him as one of their religious order; the Vellalas acclaim him as their ancient kinsman and the Valluvar caste gives him the pride of place in their community. All this is understandable. To determine who sage Thiruvalluvar was should be the subject of ardent research by students of Tamilology, the new branch of oriental studies with the help of ethnology, archeology, philology and anthropology guided along by modern scientific technique to be ushered in by the International Association of Tamil Research. Unfortunately, till date the great and glorified savants of Tamil literature have not been able to delve deep into the past and to throw real light on as to whether the Sage of Malliorfha or Mylapore as Thiruvalluvar is popularly claimed to be was a descendent of a family of great potentates, for his work abounds in wisdom in state craft which could come naturally from generations of kings; whether he was a Jain philosppher, for there is plentiful evidence in the "divine" Kural to lend support to such a view; whether he had lived a connubial life for his Kamathuppal is full of such information and instruction. Who were the parents of this great master-mind? Popular tradition would ascribe to him birth by inter-caste marriage; did he live in the ancient maritime village of Madras or in Madurai of the Pandyas or Kanchi when it was seat of Jain hagemony? These are worthy doubts to be cleared with conclusive proof and let us hope that this great World Tamil Conference brings back to life the hidden truth of the past ages.



‘முத்தமிழ்’ ஆசிரியர்
பண்டித நலேசனார்
(Pandit NATESAN)

Introduction

Tamizh classics and epics have been retained as the proud possessions of the Tamils and lovers of the Tamizh language and its literature. They should translate them into other languages, Eastern and Western. Tamilians' patriotism and love for mother tongue should manifest into regarding and practising the 'Thirukural way of living'. Thirukural is the greatest ethical classic of South India. It is a great pity that such a valuable treasure should have been confined for so many ages only to one single race in Hindustan and Pakistan. The Govt. of India should spread this 'Life—Guide' by translating in Indian languages and place it in the hands of all the Ministers and administrators of India. Every Indian should be thankful to the United Nations Organisation for its undertaking the work of translating the Kural in many languages of the world.

The author of Thirukural, Thiruvalluvar wants every human being should know the correct meaning of Puru-shartha—Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha (அறம், பொருள், இன்பம், வீடு). In Sanskrit 'Muppal' is called 'Trivarga'. Thiruvalluvar's Thirukural is an original work in Tamizh.

I am thankful to my friends, M/s. C. N. Tanigal Vel, C. M. Raja Kandaswami, B.A., and Sri. M. Arumugam, Proprietor, Paramount Printers, Mount Road, Madras-2 for bringing out this book on time and distributing it among the delegates of the World Tamizh Conference II, held in the city of Madras, South India and am grateful to the Hon'ble Mr. Justice R. Sadasivam, High Court, Madras for his foreward.

Natesa Nagar, }
Madras-7, S. India }
3—1—1968 }

Pandit NATESAN

Thiruvalluvar

[On 14-8-1967 at 3 p.m. at -St Joseph's Anglo-Indian Boys' High School, Vepery, Madras-7 the author spoke on "Thiruvalluvar" with the Rev. Fr. S. Arullappa, M.A., D.T., in the chair.]

Each generation is inclined to think it is wiser than all that have gone before, and in some respects the claim can be deemed good, but the more we know of the earliest ages of civilization, the more surprised we are at the wisdom, energy, mental power and elevation of spirit displayed in them. No age has lacked great men.

Some periods are but dimly known and their greatest figures only appear mistily, but we know from the effects they produced that these men must have been great in mind and soul. They so impressed their fellow-men that they survive in memory as legendary heroes.

Here we are about to notice some of those varied figures from a past that lies close to the horizon of history. They cover a wide range of time-more than 2000 years and belong to many centuries. Their thought and activity leave a

deep impression that powerful human personality has always been appearing and will always appear. That is one of the World's great sustaining hopes.

In the case of no Tamil poet is Dr. Caldwell's dictum more true than it is with Thiruvalluvar, the author of THIRUKURAL. "Tamil writers, like the Hindu writers in general, hide their individuality in the shade of their writings. They seem to have regarded individual existence as worthless and absorption into the universal spirit of the classical literature of their country as the highest good to which their compositions could aspire". Bharathi said, "By bestowing Thiruvalluvar to the Universe Tamil Nad has achieved highest renown".

“வள்ளுவன் தன்னை உலகினுக்கே தந்து
வான் புகழ் கொண்ட தமிழ் நாடு”—Barathi

Thiruvalluvar gave out the sacred KURAL, the finest of Tamil compositions, replete with ethical and poetical aphorisms (short pithy maxims) and read and re-read by all mankind without distinction of caste, colour or creed and without any prejudice or carping (faultfinding). The undying fame of this immortal work has secured translations of it in more than one language both Asian and European. The Rev. Father Beschi rendered it in Latin and his annotations exhibit his depth of knowledge and acuteness of understanding. Versions of KURAL by Taylor,

Ellis, Ward, Percival and G. U. Pope testify to their individual, earnest and unflinching labour in the field of foreign culture.

About twenty centuries ago, probably before the birth of CHRIST or a little after, there came into the literary horizon of TAMILNAD a great personage called "THIRUVALLUVAR". He was a moralist, philosopher and poet rolled into one. The prefix "THIRU," as you may be aware, is added to denote the sanctity of the person. Tamilnad is generally said to be rich in Archeological inscriptions and historical writings, but in many respects, especially in details regarding the name or birth or nativity or life or demise of sages and savants, poets, philosophers and kings, it is sadly lacking. This is more true in the case of sage Thiruvalluvar, one of the doyens of Tamil literature. Therefore, when we want to know anything about the life and anecdotes of his (Thiruvalluvar's) career, we have very scanty original sources and therefore are forced to look up to tradition for this information.

Thiruvalluvar's father was the Morning Star of Reformation. Thiruvalluvar is said to have been born of a mixed-caste marriage, for his father "Baghavan" (பகவன்) is said to have been born of a Brahmin and his mother "Adi" (ஆதி) of a Pariah or a low caste or born of a low caste. Some

scholars argue that Thiruvalluvar was born at Mylapore, Madras. For your information, I have to tell you that our City of Madras had no existence before 1640. The Greeks called Mylapore as "Malliarfha". You can find this Malliarfha in the Greek geography written by Ptolemy about 2000 years ago. When Thiruvalluvar lived, Mylapore was only a small fishing settlement in the East Coast or Coramandel Coast. About the same time as Thiruvalluvar walked this earth, St. Thomas also probably landed in Mylapore. Our Bishop is also known as the "Bishop of Mylapore" and not "Bishop of Madras," because Mylapore is more ancient than Madras and so too the Bishopric. About 2500 years back, Thiruvannamalai (திருவான்மியூர்), Thirumylapore (திருமயிலாப்பூர்), Thiru Allikkeni (திரு அல்லிக்கேணி), and Thiruvottriyur (திருவொற்றியூர்) were fine cities noted for education and culture. Indeed, Thiruvottriyur had Sanskrit and Tamil Universities like Nalanda in North India.

The Mylapore-Brahmin, "Baghavan" and his wife "Adi" had seven children - 3 boys and 4 girls. The sons were called; "Valluvan," "Athigaman," and "Kabilan" and the girls, "Avvai," "Uppai," "Uruvai" and "Valli". Tradition has something to say about the literary ancestry of Valluvar. His father, Baghavan,

while marrying Adi (Thiruvalluvar's mother), had stipulated that her life would be a roving one and that whenever she delivered a child, it had to be left to be cared for by somebody or abandoned to proceed on their endless journey. In this manner the seven children born and gifted with unique features and endowed with extraordinary poetic talents, were left to fend for themselves. How far one can give full credence to this tale is left unsolved, because this is a strongly accepted tradition and no concrete evidence has been quoted against this belief.

The Tamils love to tell a lot of traditions and anecdotes about Thiruvalluvar's married life with Vasuki to show that artless simplicity and unquestioning obedience to the husband are the first qualities that Tamilnad requires in the wife. Thiruvalluvar is said to have tested his wife by asking her to fry iron bits into peas. She did so without any query. One day as he and the guest were seated at their meal of cold rice and curd Thiruvalluvar called his wife who was drawing water at the well. She left the water pot hanging in mid air and hurried to her husband who asked her to fan the cold rice. When she was fanning, water vapour rose from the curd-bhath. Another day Thiruvalluvar when he was at the hand loom, in day light, dropped the shuttle on the floor and

called his wife to bring a lighted lamp to search for it. Vasuki did so without reasoning about it.

By reading books, one can understand the mind of the authors too. Through his finest work KURAL, we can understand that Thiruvalluvar was leading a simple and humble life. He married a peasant woman of "Kaveripoompatinam," the famous "Pughar" of historical importance. This Pughar was submerged under the sea many centuries ago due probably to geological changes. The excavations carried on now at Pughar can be seen at an Exhibition to be held at No. 60/10, Edward Elliotts Road, Mylapore, shortly, as the "Archeological Exhibits of POOMPUGHAR". Well, that is by the way. The wife of Thiruvalluvar "VASUKI" hailed from this famous port of PUGHAR. Vasuki is described as the model of an ideal wife. There are interesting anecdotes about Thiruvalluvar's married life, about the artless simplicity and implicit obedience of Vasuki. I like to say that Thiruvalluvar was a small King (herald) and ruled Valluvanad, (வள்ளுவ நாடு) Tamilgham, for he was an adept in state craft.

The fame of Thirukural and the magnificence of his teachings spread far and wide and people from all parts of the country drawn from all classes of society thronged to Mylapore. It is said that even foreigners from far-off countries flocked

to him on account of his wide range of ideas and universality of his teachings.

After he had composed the KURAL, he had to get it approved by the Madurai Tamil Board of Studies or Madurai Thamizh Sangham, as it was called. It is now known as "Kadai Sangham". "UKKIRAPERU VAZHUTHI was the then king of Pandiyanadu. Madurai Sangam consisted of numerous Tamil Scholars of high repute, who were arrogant and green-eyed literary monsters. It was a Herculean task for any poet of mediocre or even high ability to get recognition from these scholars. Near the Golden Lotus Tank or "Pottramarai Kulam" at madurai, there was a float (Theppam) on to which the members of the board would climb to test the literary work. Any work not worthy of the recognition of the Sangham, when kept on the float, will fall into the water; otherwise it will stay-put on the float. In like-manner, the great KURAL had also to undergo this crucial test. When the KURAL was put on the FLOAT, the entire float shrank to the size of the work - KURAL, thereby throwing over-board all the Sangham poets into the water and showing that they (the Sangham Scholars) did not have the scholarship to evaluate the merits of this great work. Under these dramatic circumstances recognition was accor-

ded to the KURAL. Of course time has proved, beyond doubt, the greatness of this work - KURAL - which also sounded the death-knell to the learned fraternity of Madurai and the final wreck and dissolution of these men of letters.

The sacred volume comprises of 1330 couplets in 133 chapters on: (i) Virtue, (ii) Wealth and (iii) Love. Virtue is (a) Ascetic and (b) Domestic. The second on wealth is more a treatise on Political Economy. The third is on love. The KURAL is different from Manu, Chanakiyam and Kamanthigam. Shakespeare, Bacon and Dr. Samuel Smiles, we know, are great in many ways, but none can claim equality with Thiruvalluvar.

Thiruvalluvar's work, as the whole world knows about the immortal KURAL contains 133 chapters. Thiruvalluvar treats of all the aspects of human life, which are divided into four great themes: 1. "ARAM" (virtue), 2. "PORUL" (wealth), 3. "INBAM" (pleasure) and 4. "VEEDU" (heaven). The word "KURAL" is derived from the "Kural-Metre" in which the composition of the poetry is set. All Classical Tamil Poetry is made up of two popular metres viz. "Venba" and "Virutham". Thirukural is composed of "Kural-Venba," a composition of two lines consisting of the tetra-metric first line and tri-metric second line.

The subject matter of KURAL touches all the facets of human existences like: eating, sleeping and drinking. Above all these, the most important is the art of State Craft which dilates on all aspects of this subject. On the moral code of our life, we cannot get any better advice than from the KURAL. I do not hereby decry other moral codes or the Scriptures for each has its own importance. For the purpose of our meeting, suffice it to say, that Thirukural is noted for the purity of its language, the richness of its diction, the lofty tone of its morality, the unsectarian nature of its theology and the endless variety of its topics. I am not going to confuse you with superlative praise of this great Classic without giving you concrete examples of what I mean.

I. Purity of its Tamil:

“ அகர முதல எழுத்து எல்லாம் ஆதி
பகவன் முதற்றே உலகு ”.

“ All the letters have their origin as “ A ” but this world has God as the origin ”. Simple Tamil words are used for conveying Universal Truths viz. meaning that even as the basic sound “ Ah ” begins the alphabets in any language, so the world owes its origin to God. The seven words of this couplet are simple to understand and to memorise and contain lofty ideas. This is but a sample.

2. Richness of its diction :

“ பொய்யாமை பொய்யாமை ஆற்றின் அறம்பிற
செய்யாமை செய்யாமை நன்று ”.

“ துப்பார்க்குத் துப்பாய துப்பாக்கீத் துப்பார்க்குத்
துப்பாய தூயஉம் மழை ”.

3. Lofty ideals : Our Lord said that if a man

slaps you on one cheek, do not retaliate, but show him the other cheek for him to slap again. This idea, expressed in lucid language, brings out with full force the divinity of the quality to forgive and to forget. In this context, now let us examine how our great Tamil poet has expressed this idea.

“ இன்னு செய்தாரை ஒறுத்தல் அவர் நாண
நன்னயம் செய்து விடல் ”.

To people who did you harm, do not pay them in the same coin (retaliate) but do him some positive good (for him to repent and reform).

“ நல்லாறு எனினும் கொளல்தீது மேலுலகம்
இல்லெனினும் ஈதலே நன்று ”.

People generally say that by doing charity you are purchasing a ticket to the kingdom of God (heaven). But our sage, Valluvar went a step further and said that even granting that there was no heaven, charity is good for its own sake.

“ வறியார்க்கு ஒன்று ஈவதே ஈகை மற்றெல்லாம்
குறியெதிர்ப்பை நீரதுடைத்து ”.

Gift to the poor alone is true charity, while everything else is of the nature of a barter.

Trirukural, the Common Gospel

No details of the birth and life of the great Gnostic poet, Valluvar is available to the World today, but it is true that he was born and lived in Mylapore, Tamilnad. He lived a life of holy matrimony and he was an enchanted poet and composed the greatest Tamil work, Thirukural. Therefore to honour him in any manner is very fitting and proper. Now let us see what we should honour—whether it is the country of his birth or the great man or the greatest work that should be honoured. Undoubtedly it is the work that deserves all credit because it is not only useful to the land of his birth or to his kith and kin but to the entire world at large.

The Tamils and Tamilnad may rightly be proud of this great scholar but no one can limit his glory only to Tamilnad, for it will be a sin to do so. Poets are born to benefit the whole world and not their birth place only. Poets are the uncrowned kings of the world.

Thirukural consists of three parts viz.
1. treating of virtue, 2. treating of wealth

3. treating of love. These three are the qualities or aspects of life of the whole world and not of Tamilnad alone. The book itself in words is denoting the universe and not only his land. Therefore one can rightly and fittingly call Kural, the Common Gospel or the World-guide.

At the time when Thiruvalluvar is said to have lived, Tamilnad had no connection with the world as it has today but it was almost an isolated country—but how is it that he came to think of the world and not about his land only?

Millions of years ago the world was a ball of fire, emitting hot gas. It cooled off slowly and the first place to get so cooled was Tamilnad. Life was made possible for the first time only in Tamilnad. Therefore we see that Tamilnad also developed the earliest culture. It is not difficult to see from this that the highest culture had its birth in this land of the Tamils. From this it follows that a World-guide could also evolve in this country. Thus Tamil culture is an ancient culture. We can trace the central theme in this work and that is the maxim—the world is a community. This maxim, it is not hard to find, was generated in the early culture of the Tamils.

This central idea or thought developed into great gospel that is Kural to-day. One can say

that this very idea came to pervade scientific Marxism and developed into modern Ghandhism. This has become a unifying force for the world today. If our countrymen realise its importance the whole world would be benefited.

That the whole world should become a community is easy to say but to put it into effect or practice is a hard job, indeed. Is there any individual to kindle such thoughts in the human minds? The answer is, "yes"; and that is love. Love all. Serve all. Love and service can make the whole world a big family. This is the same idea expressed by Thiruvalluvar.

“அன்பின் வழியது உயிர்நிலை; அஃதிலார்
என்புதோல் போர்த்த உடம்பு”.

Translation :

“Bodies of loveless men are bony frame-
work clad with skin
Then is the body seat of life, when love
resides within”.

Love expands first only in the human mind. That is why man is considered to be the highest creation of God. If love does not develop in the human mind life loses its purpose. Human life should be based on love and service; otherwise it loses its value. To lead a life of love and service is itself an art. The art of life is the home of all

other arts. Love is the art of the heart. Ancient intellectuals like Aristotle, Manu and Thiruvalluvar have contributed the art of living to the world.

Love all. Serve all. Love and Serve can be a good motto in life. There is no bolt to fasten one's love. Love-less men live for themselves and the loving ones live for others and for doing good turns only. Only out of love does kindness to animals and birds spring. The happiness of heaven is but the fruit of good life rooted in love. Loving-kindness is the ally of virtue and defence against evil too. There is no use in bodily beauty when there is no love at heart. The skin and bones become alive when love lives at the heart.

Thiruvalluvar has called a pure mind as the all-pervading goodness. In other words virtue is the absence of jealousy, greed, rage and rude-words. To put it short, according to Thiruvalluvar purity of mind is all virtue.

“ மனத்துக்கண் மாசுஇலனாதல் அனைத்து அறன் ஆகுல நீர பிற ”.

Translation :

“ Be pure in mind. That is Dharma. All else is but pompuous show ”.

Now how does love start. It starts in the family life and in its environments. Love becomes the instrument to purify the dirt of the

mind. The religion of Thiruvalluvar can be said to be the practice of virtue born out of love. Thirukural is a mine which is capable of yielding all materials required by people of different ages and climes. From this great mine people have dug out only a few gems so far. There are countless other gems in Thirukural which have not even been touched.

Thiruvalluvar's Message to the World

There is no genius so dear to the heart of humanity as Thiruvalluvar who at the touch of his pen had suddenly turned a dull and melancholy world into a treasure-chamber or 'Amutha Surabi' or 'Porkizhi'. When Thiruvalluvar was born at Mylapore, Madras, a small fishing-village in Tamilnad, men felt that the old moulds in which human life had long been cast were broken for evermore. Life was to begin again. All was fresh and free and new. Everyone treated oneself as a traveller to cross the ocean of birth and death. They had to think out a new idea about God, nature and the human life. Thus they had to build up a new World of thought, to furnish their mind with notions no man hitherto had known.

Thiruvalluvar realised as none other has ever realised the immense power of the spiritual nature. Men are measured by what they accomplish with their hands and legs; but Thiruvalluvar contemplated what he could accomplish with his spirit.

His thoughts were occupied with the idea of God. His soul held only one thought that there

is only one God who is invisible but omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient like the particles of sound or 'Ah'. He believed in earthly and heavenly pleasures. He understood God's eternity and power. He realised the insignificance of everything else. He felt within himself the force and strength of immortality. The feeling that he was one with God illumined his soul. He was so sure of God and had faith in the greatest religion which has no name, as God has no name of His own. Common to all mankind in the whole world, clear before him lay the road. He gave fine messages for the happiness of men in the world.

Thiruvalluvar knew how men were struggling and labouring to wring happiness and pleasures from the world and were wearying themselves in an effort to attain religious perfection. He knew how people were searching old gospels and scriptures to discover the key to the riddle of life. Thiruvalluvar came into the ways of men, with such gracious and perfect messages that the whole world acknowledged them gladly. Indeed, the 'Mylapore-Weaver's and Nazareth Carpenter's' messages are Universal even this day.

Thiruvalluvar began to pen and preach his messages to the world as an ordinary man and as the Weaver of Mylapore. This gnostic poet who had altered the whole course of civilization, whose

character will always be adored by the greatest and best of mankind, whose teachings and messages will last as long as human history exists, began his illumination of the world as a weaver in a small fishing village, Mylapore. The wise men of East and West flocked to hear him. Greeks were at "Malliarfha" (Madras) then. Confucius of China might have heard the teachings and messages of Thiruvalluvar. Indeed, in Mylapore he was a "fisher of men." His messages changed the face of the globe. None of the words now used about him had passed into men's mind then.

The simple message of Thiruvalluvar to the world is a single phrase: Be pure in mind. "Thought, word and deed should be pure," he said. This phrase, so familiar to us, was a new light in the world. Men live on thoughts and hopes only. All things lie in the heart of man. Thus he said, "the first and foremost Dharma is purity of mind".

“மனத்துக் கண் மாசிலனாதல் அனைத்தறன்
ஆகுல நீர பிற”.

Translation :

“Be pure in mind. That is Dharma. All else is but pompous show.”

He is at peace when his heart is quiet. Even Lord Jesus Christ endorsed that the Kingdom of

Heaven is within man. No doubt, the pure heart makes heaven and bad heart hell in the mind. Thiruvalluvar's work, the history of human race is to be accomplished by humble and simple men. The noblest message is to put the foe to the blush by our acts of kindness.

“இன்னு செய்தாரை ஒறுத்தல் அவர்நாண
நன்னயம் செய்து விடல்”.

Translation :

“To punish with kindly benefits the doer's play; Thus shame their souls; but pass the ill unheeded by”.

Thiruvalluvar changed the whole thoughts of his age. He wrote that every one should resist not evil. The way to overcome evil is by goodness. It may mean a mean thing but it is cast upon the light of love. What good do we do to man by repaying him by the same coin - evil with evil? Do we make him better? Do we change his heart or mind? To change the enemy to be our friend we have to love him and do a good turn to him. Thiruvalluvar wants that man should become master of his body and master of pleasures and not slave to the body and the pleasures and tastes.

To hate any enemy might be natural but it showed that a man's soul was carried away by animal passion. Evil for evil and tooth for tooth

may be human or inhuman but to excuse the wrong doer is divine ; so Thiruvalluvar said, "The noblest revenge is to put the foe to the blush by our acts of kindness".

“ ஒறுத்தார்க்கு ஒருநாளை இன்பம்
பொறுத்தார்க்கும்
பொன்றும் துணையும் புகழ் ”.

Translation :

The delight of the avenger is for a day. The joy of the forbearer lasts till the end of his death and his name and fame last will till the end of the earth.

To forgive is sublime ; to seek vengeance is merely animalism. A man is not an animal with four legs. He is for love and not for hatred. Hatred begets hatred only. He must be too serene to hate, too great to feel anger or annoyance. Self-mastery is the first qualification to be the real man in spirit. This discipline is important to a divine and spiritual life. Thiruvalluvar saw that this brief and fleeting life is only a moment in the vast eternity of God. The religion makes a man of himself.

In all the religions on earth we see that the object is to make men better. But the great distinction of the ethics taught by Thiruvalluvar lies in the plan he laid down for achieving this purpose. Religions teach men who wish to become holy to

live by themselves, to pray continuously and to be always thinking of God; but Thiruvalluvar said that man should love and serve men, birds of the air, and beasts of the forest. Men should live like fruitful trees (Palmyra) on the wayside and at the centre of the village. Thiruvalluvar never taught anything that was not useful and practical.

He did not say love God and leave the matter there. He said that to love God is to love our fellowmen and all His creations. To love and serve all is the highest order. Religion lies in walk of life and not in talk or printing tracts. All other forms of worship make for selfishness.

To love one's neighbour means a complete forgetfulness of one's self. One should sacrifice one's own comforts for others' sake. Real religion bids men to think continually of others only. To express or exhibit one's love to mankind is to serve them all. Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man is spun and interwoven by Thiruvalluvar's own life.

God lives in the heart. Thiruvalluvar said that the necessity of heart's goodness is distinct from hand's goodness. To keep our hands from picking up a purse is a small matter; to keep our hearts from wishing to pick-up or steal is a great matter. The great thing is to become good, not merely to

abstain from wicked things. Thiruvalluvar declared that hatred is as sinful as murder.

“ தன்னெஞ்சு அறிவது பொய்யற்க பொய்த்தபின்
தன்னெஞ்சே தன்னைச் சுடும் ”.

Translation :

“ Let none utter a falsehood against his conscience lest it should torment him ”.

“ உள்ளத்தால் பொய்யாது ஒழுகின் உலகத்தார்
உள்ளத்துள் எல்லாம் உளன் ”.

Translation :

“ One sits high in the hearts of all who is true to oneself ”.

All the scriptures and gospels say that there is no virtue greater than truth. Truth is God; God is Truth. Thiruvalluvar said that though one may find his own mother starving for days together, one should not do anything to feed her by getting a bread out of the way which would be condemned by the great. Thus he wants men to be pure in thought, word and deed.

Words are the strangest things we know. They are stranger than all the visible things of nature. They have extraordinary powers over our minds and hearts. Few words bring mystery more simply to our minds than the great word

‘Dharma’. It has come down the long ages of man’s history.

Charity or Dharma is one of the many words of generous breadth which have been constantly extending their meaning. Its range of meaning is as wonderful as the human spirit itself. That meaning of charity includes all the other good meanings of the world. It is like the trunk of a tree and of the elephant. Branches depend upon the trunk. Charity is the trunk. It is a power uniting man to his race. It brings human beings into harmony. Charity is vague to many minds. In practical action it branches off into various forms. The great end of life is not knowledge but action. It is good heartedness.

Dharma wishes everyone well. It is a reservoir of natural goodness to which more active love is necessary. Dharma does not advocate that selfishness is the universal foundation of human character. There is an intellectual branch of charity comprising liberality of view and toleration. A charitable man will not think of evil to those who differ from him and he suffers long from those who differ from him.

Charity is noble when the gifts are given to the poor without being puffed up with pride. Charities are doled out in kind with kindness. The giver of

aims should be humble but the receiver may go with pride. Charity done without the divine spirit of love blesses neither the giver nor the receiver, but it leaves both demoralised, one by loss of self-respect and the other by the meanest sort of pride.

“ ஒல்லும் வகையான் அறிவினை ஓவாதே
சொல்லும் வாயெல்லாம் செயல் ”.

Translation :

“ Avail yourself of all opportunities. Do not cease from practising Dharma on all possible occasions to the best of your ability ”.

Dharma means duty also. In the epic, Mahabaratha, Kurushetra reminds us of the word ‘duty’ only. Duty is the greatest word in Gita and the noblest thing in Indian character. High idea of duty has grown with us. It is one of the ideals. Our daily life is now entirely governed by the faith that those about us will do their duty. The higher the creature the greater he exalts the demands of duty. Duty assures us a great place in the galaxy of nations and nationals.

Duty means something that is due. To whom it is due should be understood. Duties to parents and children, to employers and employees, to teachers and the taught and to neighbours and strangers are there. We owe it to our ourselves to be careful of our health and wealth. It is our

duty to be prudent. Above all we have our duty to God and the charitable institutions. Duty means that our souls must always be growing in truth, goodness and beauty. Each man's first and final duty is to do his best and be his best. If we care for this duty all 'other duties' will take care of themselves. All men have the right and duty to work, because work is necessary for the individual and for the nation.

Religion consists in our recognising all our duties as divine commands. 'Duty' is a word from the word 'due'. From the prince down to the peasant, all have a due to give. Then alone will the world continue and prosper. There is nothing higher in life than duty; it secures glory and wealth. To forget duty is wrought with the greatest evil. One should do his or her duty with the best of ability. Do not delay duty. Do it then and there, for it will be a never-failing friend at death. Joy springs only from the satisfaction of having fulfilled one's duty. To do good duty must be the law of our being.

“ அகர முதல எழுத்தெல்லாம் ஆதி
பகவன் முதற்றே உலகு ”.

Translation :

“ All the letters have the letter 'Ah' as their origin; this world has God as its origin.”

Religion is necessary for man because justice, gratitude and order demand it. Acceptance and acknowledgment of God's dominion and right over us is the first point of religion and the moral law is the best insurance for peace and justice and plenty and prosperity in the world. Religion is reverence and love for the ethical ideals and practising them to become the ideal in life.

Belief in God is a necessary foundation for any religion. Faith in God alone gives us the courage to face life's trials and tribulations as a dog has faith in the master nearby when it attacks a mastiff on the roadside, though he himself is under a chain. Thiruvalluvar wanted that every one should have faith in God and worship Him and remember Him to run a godly race on earth.

Every religion consists of a Higher and a Lower religion. Many minds so, many religions. Higher religion is for the wise and lower for the unlettered mass. Just to cater to the two classes of religionists Thiruvalluvar has written his first Thirukkural for the first-rate devotees and depicts God to them as the emporium of wisdom and the embodiment of wisdom or jnanam. This form of God is 'Aroopam' or formless. The higher religionists worship Him as formless God only. This worship of God is for a class and not for

the mass. In the first Kural the author gives us the truth that God exists. He is the First in the world. From Him only the world came out.

Generally we know that there is one skilled artisan to build a palace, an engineer to assemble a machine, a painter to paint a fine picture and a puller to pull the string tied to a doll to make it dance : so also we see the wonders of nature and conclude that there is an infinitely intelligent being (வாலறிவன் 'Valarivan') who has made the Universe. Thiruvalluvar conceives God as an embodiment of pure wisdom. One can worship him through one's intelligence. The conception of God as given by Thiruvalluvar has not yet been conceived by the founders of other religions. The physical and moral laws are there to govern all and bind them to do good and avoid evil. Mahatma Gandhi was a reader of Thiruvalluvar in Tamil and he came to the conclusion that God is Truth and Truth is God. We can also keep fit for our search after truth by practising humility, prayer and a good moral life.

We should know only the truth, that nothing good ever dies. Thiruvalluvar had a deep and burning consciousness of the majesty of God. He felt that there must be one true religion, true for men of all races, essential for the happi-

ness of mankind. Thiruvalluvar taught compassion; that all men are equal and prayer and vow are simply communion of the soul with God.

According to Thiruvalluvar's conception God is immaculate wisdom. This world has God as its Head. He is the Alpha and Omega. He is like the vocal letter or literal sound of 'Ah' in the alphabets. It is no use learning when the scholar fails to adore and worship God who lives in every one's heart. The teachers never die. The devotees live for ever; they will be rid of all troubles; they will become stoic in life; they will conquer the five senses and walk in truth and do the right only. They can shake off anxiety. Men and women should cling to the feet of God which are like life-boats to cross the sea of troubles. Every one should bow before Him. God has eight attributes. Those who gain the feet of God cross the great ocean of birth and death.

MORALITY:

“ஒழுக்கம் விழுப்பம் தரலான் ஒழுக்கம்
உயிரினும் ஒம்பப்படும்”

Translation :

“Right conduct exalts one, so it must be valued and prized above one's life or soul”.

One should strive hard to walk in the path of righteousness. Morality ennobles one's family. Immorality makes one sink in esteem. The preacher or priest may learn the scripture which he forgot, but he is lost when he has no moral life. Morality advances one to prosperity. It will not shrink from virtue. Men of right conduct are crowned with glory. Moral life is the spring of happiness. The moral men will not tell untruth even unconsciously.

Thiruvalluvar said that morality is the vertebral column of religion. Morality is religion in practice; religion is morality in principle. There is no religion without morality and no morality without religion. Piety and morality are but the same spirit. Piety is religion with its face towards God and morality—towards the world.

All sects are different because they come from men; morality is everywhere, the same because it comes from God. That is why Thiruvalluvar said that one should guard morality as one's life or soul, for it gives greatness and eternity or everlasting life. He compared morality with life! Nay, above life; greater than life; more valuable than life itself. Scientists may bring a dead man back to life but no immoral life can be rectified. Once lost, it cannot be achieved again.

There can be no high civility without deep morality. Men would do well to remember that all successful business stands on the foundation of morality. In matters of prudence last thoughts are best, in matters of morality, first thoughts:

Thirukural, the Life-Guide

Our ancestors have divided Art into 64 branches. Even in "SILAPATHIGARAM" one of the five Tamil epics, written about 1800 years ago, a reference is found to this effect. Arts are true media to shape the human life. Among all the branches of arts, the Art of Living is the first and foremost. The man who is good at the art of living is considered to be the best of mankind.

Wisdom is the instrument to make life an art. But the natural instinct in the man alone cannot make life an art. A guide which defines what to do and what not to do is required by man. Books of the authors who understood the real values of life are the good guides to teach one to make life an art.

Zoroaster, Confucius, Lord Buddha, Lord Jesus Christ and Prophet Mohammed are the good guides of the world. These are the holy men who were born to teach the people the way of living. Though the fundamental teachings of these religious teachers are universal, yet

they create a difference of religion among men. But Thirukural, written over 2000 years ago, is a book, the contents of which are universal, irrespective of caste, creed, colour or religion. The credit of having written such a universal book goes to Thiruvalluvar and his work is a companion and guide to men.

A doubt may arise whether a book over 2000 years old can be a good companion to the man, today. The customs and manners, modes of living, political thoughts, civilizations and cultures have undergone radical changes during the last 2000 years. Yet, the above work of Thiruvalluvar is well suited to the modern world, for the reason that the basic truths of life can never change with the lapse of time. In the first century itself Thiruvalluvar declared that all men are born equal. Now, we find its echo in the American Declaration of Independence. Thirukural is the work of a master mind with a perception into eternity.

Thiruvalluvar has adopted in his work, Thirukural, only such of the fundamental truths of life that can remain unchanged with the passing of time. That is why, Thirukural is considered to be a good companion in life by the entire world and for all ages. Science has proved that a small

atom is capable of destroying the whole world, but how many have understood that each distich of Thirukural contains the indisputable truths that can save the whole world from disaster and destruction.

The tenets of life as expounded in the Kural are meant for the entire mankind and not for a few. However great and extolable asceticism may be it can never be attained by all. Therefore what cannot be achieved need not be regretted. If one leads a pure and chaste domestic life one can reap the same benefits as the ascetic does. Nay, the family-man is even greater than the ascetic.

“ அகத்தாற்றின் இல்வாழ்க்கை ஆற்றின் ”
புறத்தாற்றின் போலும் பெறுவது எவன் ”?

Translation :

“ If a man in active household life a virtuous soul retain what fruit from other modes of virtue can he gain ”?

Indeed, there is no need for a man to leave the home, wife and children and to go to the forest to do penance for his selfish ends to attain his salvation. One may leave one's home to roam about, but his home will find an abode in his heart and he would be thinking of his own home in the garb of a monk. Domestic life is a selfless one and it is for the benefit of the world at large.

The family-man sacrifices his comforts for the sake of others. In short, he lives and dies for the sake of others only. Is he not a godly man on earth? What will he gain by becoming an ascetic when he lives virtuously in the domestic state? When a man fulfils rightly the duties of the householder there is no need for him to take up other duties. No religion advocates all men to become ascetics on earth.

“இயல்பினால் இல்வாழ்க்கை வாழ்பவன் என்பான் முயல்வாரூள் எல்லாம் தலை”.

Translation :

“In nature's way he who spends his calm domestic days 'Mid all that strike for 'Virtuous' crown hath foremost place”

“ஆற்றின் ஒழுக்கிஅறன் இழுக்கா இல்வாழ்க்கை நோற்பாரின் நோன்மை உடைத்து”

Translation :

“Others it sets upon their way, itself from virtue ne'er declines; Than stern ascetics' pairs such life domestic brighter shines”.

The family-man is a greater saint than the religious saint who takes to a life of fasting and prayer, for he is the feeder of ascetics too, and himself leads a godly and virtuous life.

Contrary to the popular saying one can not serve two masters,—GOD and mammon—Thiruvalluvar asked the people to earn money ; amass wealth and hoard up treasure, for money is quite essential to man on earth. “ Love of money is a hindrance to enter the Kingdom of God,” said many, but Thiruvalluvar opposed them, for money is a medium to purchase pleasure and other earthly honours in this world. No man can do without money. One has to earn money to enjoy earthly pleasures. Without money the whole world will come to naught ; human life cannot exist and the whole world will not move smoothly. Money is, therefore, a very important instrument to mankind.

“ அருள் இல்லார்க்கு அவ்வுலகம் இல்லை ;
பொருள் இல்லார்க்கு
இவ்வுலகம் இல்லாகி யாங்கு ”.

Translation :

“ As to impoverished men this present world is not ; The ‘ graceless ’ in your world have neither part nor lot ”.

Nothing exists ; save wealth which can change men of naught to worthy ones. All men despise the poor and praise the rich. Money is the unfailing lamp. The owner of this light disperses the darkness of far off lands. The imperishable

light of wealth kills the enmity at any corner of the world.

“ அருள் என்னும் அன்பீன்குழவி, பொருள்என்னும் செல்வச் செவிலியால் உண்டு”.

Translation :

“It is love that kindness as off-spring bears;
And wealth as bounteous nurse the infant rears.”

Indeed, one should abandon the ill-gotten wealth. The wealth acquired with a knowledge of proper means and without foul practices will yield virtue and happiness. The child “mercy” which is born of love grows under the care of the rich nurse of wealth. The lines of Shakespeare: “the quality of mercy is twice blessed; it blesseth him that gives and him that takes” may bring the import of Valluvar’s ideal. Thiruvalluvar wanted that every man should earn money and his livelihood which should be shared by others also. This Prince of Moralists wanted that we should divide the money earned by us into six parts and one portion of that, must be given to the king to run the government.

“ அறன் ஈனும் இன்பமும் ஈனும் திறன் அறிந்து தீதின்றி வந்த பொருள்”.

Translation ;

“Their wealth who blameless means can use
a right is source of Virtue and of choice delight”.

Time changes; civilization changes and administration changes. We see a lot of transformations in the world in a short period. Monarchy is changed into Democracy. Imperialistic governments become republican governments in no time. Thirukural was written by Thiruvalluvar when Tamilnad was ruled by a king, but it is so useful now to the members of the republican government. The codes intended for a monarchy are applicable to the President and the ministers of the republican or democratic government.

“காட்சிக்கு எளியன் கடுஞ்சொல்லன் அல்லனேல்
மீக்கூறும் மன்னன் நிலம்”.

Translation:

“The whole world will exalt the country of the King who is easy of access and who is free from harsh words.”

“இயற்றலும் ஈட்டலும் காத்தலும் காத்த
வகுத்தலும் வல்லது அரசு”.

Translation:

“He is a King who is able to acquire his wealth by fair methods to lay it up, to guard and distribute it righteously and wisely.

“செவி கைப்பச் சொல் பொறுக்கும் பண்புடை
வேந்தன்
கவிகைக் கீழ்த் தங்கும் உலகு”.

Translation :

“The whole World will dwell under the umbrella the King who can bear the words that embitter his ear”.

Thus Thiruvalluvar presents an ideal monarchy. It is portrayed by this Prince of Moralists and citizen of the World within the limits of practicability and at the same time outdoing the Republic of Plato and others.

“GANAPATHI POOJA ARAICHI”

BY
PANDIT V. NATESAN

Published by
SENNAI MUTHAMIL SANGAM,
‘Arumuga Vilas’, Vepeery, Madras. As. 2

In this pamphlet running to ten pages, the author discusses the Worship of Sri Ganesa throughout the World. Tibet, Burma, Mangolia, Combodia, China, Japan, Siam, Indo-China and far off Mexico are mentioned as the places where Vinayaka Worship was extant and in some of these places, He is even today worshiped in different forms and with different names. It is said that Buddha was a Ganapathi Upasaka and he taught the Ganapathi Mantra to his disciple, Ananda. The different names by which the Hindus call their Ganapathi are taken up for discussion and attempts are made to explain their meanings. Some of the explanations seem to be ingenious. It is said that the God's Vakradanta is an imitation of the plough and that He is really a god of the harvest. He is called Siddhithathar and that Sidham means the alphabet and therefore He is god of learning. It is stated (P. 4) the *Ganesa Gita* is nothing but *Bhagavad Gita*, the word *Ganesa* inserted is the place of Sri Krishna in the text. The *Mooshaka Vahanam* of the deity is also explained as a representation of the God's interest in the agriculture of the land and his hand in the destruction of pests. The name, *Piliayar* is a translation of the Sanskrit word, *Ekathantha* where *Pallu* the Tamil word for *Dantha*, gave rise to the God's name. Even with these ingenious and interesting interpretations and explanations, the essay is valuable for the Wealth of Knowledge presented on the Vinayaka cult.—V.”

“The Hindu” dtd. 24—1—1954.