

# ELADI

*Tamil Classic by*  
**GANIMEDHAIAR**



*translated by*  
**Dr. Prema Nandakumar**

சோலிஸ், ட்ராவிட, ட்ராவிட, திராவிட, சோலிஸ், ட்ராவிட, ட்ராவிட, சோலிஸ், ட்ராவிட, ட்ராவிட



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**DRAVIDIAN UNIVERSITY**

SRINIVASAVANAM, KUPPAM - 517 425, A.P.

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**ELADI** Tamil Classic by **Ganimedhaiar**

***Translated by:***

**Dr. Prema Nandakumar**

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# **PREFACE**

**Prof. G. Lakshminarayana**  
Vice-Chancellor



That the foundations of Indian culture were deeply imbedded in Dravidian culture is now an incontrovertible fact. Dravidian culture is one of the most ancient cultures of the world. Those cultures, slightly contemporaneous to one another, slowly started fading out. However, the primordial Dravidian culture continues to thrive without losing its quintessence despite the apparent changes in systems of dress and address.

Dravidian University was established in 1997 to mirror the real and rich picture of Dravidian culture not only in its linguistic, literary, cultural and philosophical facets but in science and technological angles also.

At a time when no special attention worth its name was paid by the Centre with regard to language, the Southern states except Kerala, had established all by themselves their own Universities - Telugu, Tamil and Kannada - to research on their languages and cultures.

The Government of Andhra Pradesh took a step ahead and started Dravidian University, with the co-operation of the sister states, to research and reflect on the inherent oneness of the cultures of the four states whose languages number up to 27. Its endeavour is to promote unity and amity in the family of several languages. The main objectives of Dravidian University are to augment the common weal and social well being of the communities of marginal languages and to build bridges among the Southern states. While working on each language separately in varied areas, it aims at a synthesis and a discovery of the common heritage through Comparative Studies.



**Prasaranga** and **Anusrjana** (Translation Bureau) are the two most significant wings of the University from out of its several on going progressive activities.

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The end of Sangam literary trend produced a surging ethical literature in Tamil. This includes the famous **Tirukkural**, **Naladiyar** and such other ethical literatures. The third part of **Tirukkural**, called **Kamatuppal**, of course, shows that there remains a continuity as kamatuppal is an extension and development of the Sangam literary theme, **Akham**. Otherwise Tirukkural would not have included Kamatuppal as an integral part of the text because the aim of Tirukkural was to write about ethics.

This surge of ethical literature on to the Tamil literary scene perhaps puts an end to the Sangam tradition and paves the way for the emergence of a different stage of literary tradition thereafter. This new tradition of literature characterized by some critics as a less significant one compared to the glorious tradition of Sangam literature is known to Tamil Students of literary history as **Kizhkanakku**.

**Eladi** belongs to this group of literary texts called Kizhkanakku and these are eighteen in number, the names of which are given by Prema Nandakumar in her Introduction to this book.

**Eladi** belongs to the Jain tradition of Tamil literature. This book contains largely aphorisms meant to be addressed to Jains; but they are of universal value to the entire human kind. Most of these verses use a second person method of addressing a woman called mahadumunnalai. Majority of these use this method of address to convey wise instructions. Over and above these precepts, two main ideas- 'Renunciation' and 'Realisation' predominate the theme of **Eladi**.

Dravidian University is grateful to Dr. Prema Nandakumar for her brilliant translation of an ancient Tamil ethical text with a lasting value. The other facet of ethics is culture. The modern world needs the practice of culture along with the preaching of ethics.



Vice-Chancellor

## *The Translator*

Dr. Prema Nandakumar obtained her Ph.D summa cum laude in 1961, at the age of 22, for her study of Sri Aurobindo's epic poem **Savitri**. Since the publication of these early research works, she has written and spoken to audiences the world over, about Indian culture, Tamil literature and Sri Aurobindo's writings and philosophy.

Dr. Prema Nandakumar's translation into English of **Manimekalai** (circa 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D.), the only Buddhist epic in Tamil was published by the Tamil University in Thanjavur. A well-known resource person and speaker at various national and international conferences, including the first two International conferences on Tamil Studies and the first International Conference on Buddhism and National Cultures, she has been the recipient of several awards for her work in Sanskrit, Tamil and English studies. In addition to several published books in the field of criticism, biography, translation, commentary and fiction, Dr. Prema Nandakumar is a regular contributor to various publications in India and abroad. She is a writer of fiction in both English and Tamil. She has also been a literary critic and book reviewer for the **Hindu** and **Deccan Herald** newspapers for more than four decades.

## FOREWORD

A very rich portion of Indian literature and culture comes from the Dravidian areas. Of the languages of South India, Tamil has the oldest extant literature going back to two thousand years and more. It is strange that this was not recognized widely even in the twentieth century. Take, for instance, the high-profile production **The Hinduism Omnibus** (O.U.P., 2003) which has no inputs regarding the religion and society of the Tamil area that has a rich, written tradition of literature and a history of two millennia. And yet, the four scholars in the omnibus present titles as if they speak of the entire Indian civilization: Nirad C. Chaudhuri (**Hinduism: A Religion to Live By**), Madeleine Biardeau (**Hinduism: The Anthropology of a Civilization**), D.F. Pocock (**Mind, Body and Wealth: A Study of Belief and Practice in an Indian Village**) and T.N. Madan (**Non-Renunciation: Themes and Interpretations of Hindu Culture**)... The only reference to South India by Nirad Chaudhuri is a misstatement!

“(the) control of the social, cultural, and religious life of the Hindus of the south, more especially in the Tamil country, remained in the hands of the Brahmins, who maintained it undisputed till the beginning of this century. The power of the Brahmins also meant the hold of the older and higher form of Hinduism, because of their knowledge of Sanskrit. Though the spoken and written mother tongue of the Brahmins was Tamil or some other language of the so-called Dravidian family, they had a knowledge of Sanskrit which was not surpassed in the north, and was often deeper. Secular life of the region remained wholly within the framework set by Hinduism.”<sup>1</sup>

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1. The Hinduism Omnibus, “Hinduism: A Religion to Live By”, pp. 130-1.

Now, in ancient Tamil land, the Arasar (kshatriya) came first in all enumerations and the most powerful were probably the Vaisyas who were in charge of the economy of the land. And honour always went to the farmers as Tiruvalluvar eulogized them in his **Tirukkural**. Fortunately, the same twentieth century that has produced **The Hinduism Omnibus** has also seen a tremendous interest in Dravidology. A classical language that has survived as a spoken medium for two thousand years and more is certainly an astonishing phenomenon. However, much yet remains to be done to introduce the ancient Tamil literature to the world. Here is significant material for reconstructing the history of South India in a big way and for introducing comparative studies for a better understanding of the Indian past that can illumine us to format our future. Translation of this sector of Indian literature is the only way in which it can be introduced to a widening readership.

I was very happy when Prof. G. Lakshminarayana, Vice-Chancellor of the Dravidian University and Sri Mohan Prasad, Director of the Translation Bureau, asked me to translate a Sangam work into English for the translation program of their University. To them I owe a special word of thanks. I have been no stranger to the art of translation, having experienced all the agonies and ecstasies of a translator for half a century! My first work in this sphere was **Bharati in English Verse (1958)** which contained selected poems of the great Tamil nationalist poet Subramania Bharati with an introduction. As for Sangam literature, I have been engaged in translating selected poems and passages and my translation of the ancient epic **Manimekalai** was published by the Tamil University, Thanjavur. It is a line by line translation of the entire poem which is constructed on a Buddhist theme. A very strenuous task, but one that brought me a sense of fulfilment.

For, while translating modern Tamil into English is not very difficult, despite the cultural barrier, attempting to render into English an ancient Tamil work seemed an impossible task. After all,

there lay 2000 years between me and the epic's author, Seethalai Sathanar. As I wrestled with the words, I seemed to be re-educating myself on my own past stretching back to generations. It was a matter of pride that this Buddhist epic had been written in beautiful Tamil that still dazzles us with its unforgettable phrases and sublime thoughts.

However, translating a narrative gives a certain elbow-room for the translator in the choice of phrases but a terse work on ethics leaves little room for manipulation. Ganimethaiyar, the author of **Eladi** sounds epigrammatic most of the time. At the same time, ethical advice is also universal. The ideal life is always a life of humanism and that is what **Eladi** teaches us. Ganimethaiyar wants us to care for our fellow-men and learn to welcome stern self-discipline, if we want to become achievers in life.

While more than a score of English translations can be found for **Tirukkural**, it is surprising that the other ethical texts of the Sangam period (**Naladiyar**, **Nan Mani Kadikai**, **Iniyavai Narpathu**, **Tirikadukam**, **Pazhamozhi Nanooru**, **Acara-k-kovai**, **Muthu Mozhi Kanchi**, **Innilai**, **Eladi** and **Sirupanchamoolam**) remain largely unknown to the outside world. Perhaps the perfect architectonics of **Tirukkural** has something to do with this popularity. It must also be mentioned here that till a few decades ago, verses from all these works that insist upon moral principles were quoted often in classrooms by the teachers, and the works were also prescribed. For all these works contain an abundance of quotable quotes, and it would be a pity if they went out of circulation. they are certainly unimpeachable textbooks for moral education in our schools and colleges.

I deem it a privilege that I was given the task of translating **Eladi** into English. So far there has only been one English translation. Sri S. Raman has rightly tried not to force himself to the four-lines of the original verses, for necessarily the translation of an ancient Tamil ethical text needs to be explicatory. I have done the same though I have followed my own methodology in giving

pauses to bring out the intention of the author. I would like to thank him for being the first in the field. I am grateful to the well-known scholar-translator Sekkizhar Adi-p-podi, Sri T.N. Ramachandran who encouraged me in taking up this translation. Nor should I fail to thank my husband, M.S. Nandakumar who helped me in various ways, throughout the period of my engagement with this work.

In no way would I consider mine a perfect translation for fifty years wrestling with the art has taught me that even the best translation can be no more than a poor second best. I take comfort from the words of Naomi Mitchison:

“In translating, there are difficulties both in ideas and language. Translation and communication of ideas are particularly important between East and West and across the iron and bamboo curtains... different verbal concepts are deep in people’s minds and when we translate we must be sure that we can shift our own thinking into someone else’s idiom. That means departing from word-to-word translation, especially with the heavily emotional words”.

One last word. Why did I take to translation at all? The answer is very simple. I had been an admirer of my father, Prof. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar from my childhood. When I graduated from the Andhra University in 1957, I wanted to become a writer like him and began to train myself consciously towards that goal. One of the facets of my father as a writer was his involvement with translation. He translated from Kannada, Tamil and Sanskrit. I began translating the Tamil nationalist poet Subramania Bharati and was guided step by step by my father and realised that this was an art that helped me much by expanding my horizons. So, as I complete my English version of *Eladi* in the golden jubilee year of my entry into the charmed world of translation, I bow in deep gratitude to my father for having made my life rich in every way.

**Prema Nandakumar**

## INTRODUCTION

Though a late-comer to Indology, Tamil literature has captured global attention in the very short period of a hundred years. Indology which had been Sanskrit-centric for a long time now took note of a literature that had an equally long history and a literature which had scaled great heights in poetry, grammar and ethics. What was even more astonishing for the scholars was that this language was very much a living experience in South India. First came the excited discoverers (for the west) of the Sangam literature like G.U. Pope and E.J. Robinson. They translated from Tamil and introduced the Tamil literature to a vast number of scholars who now began to speak of Tamilology and Dravidology. At the International Conference-Seminar on Tamil held at Malaysia in 1966, I could see the Western scholars in action. It was certainly heartening to watch eminent Dravidologists like. James Filliozat, M.B. Emeneau, Karl Menges, Brenda Beck, John Marr, Arno Lehmann, F.B.J. Kuiper and Albert Wezler present papers in the Conference.

Inge Frykholm, a Swedish priest addressed the audience in Tamil as we cheered him. He told us how there were hardly half a dozen Swedish who knew Tamil and yet because there was once trade between Tranquelbar and Sweden, there were quite a few Tamil words used by them like Cattamaran and Injibhera (kattamaram, inji ver). He told us that he was engaged then in a Swedish translation of the **Tirukkural** and selections from Kamban's **Ramayanam** and Prince Ilango's **Silappadhikaram**.

Among the conference papers, Sangam poetry was to the fore; and C.A. Keller presented "A Literary Study of the Tirumurugatrupatai" offering keen insights into the origins of Saivism in Sangam literature.

In the first instance, western scholarship was obviously devoted to mastering Tamil for help in the spread of Christianity. There were grammar books, dictionaries, primers. Only in the nineteenth century did the West draw closer to the literature of the Tamil land. G.U. Pope's **Kural** came out in 1886 and **Tiruvacagam** in 1900. Ever since he learnt the Tamil alphabet when he was seventeen years old, he had become a votary of Sangam poetry and translated the four hundred verses of the ethical text **Naladiyar**. The love for the language exhibited by western scholars is brought out passionately by Edward Jewitt Robinson in his introduction to his **Tamil Wisdom** (1873):

"Tamil, the most fertile and extensive bough of the Dravidian branch of the Turanian tree of language, covering fifteen millions of people, subjects of the British Crown, is to be respected as having been the adopted or familiar tongue of such men as Beschi, Ziegenbalg, Schwartz, and Percival. It was the first of the languages of India acquired by missionaries, and probably Europeans have spoken and written more in it than in any other Eastern language."<sup>1</sup>

### **THE SANGAM AGE**

The age of Tamil language and literature can be gauged by a reference in a Purananooru stanza which speaks of an ancient Tamil Chera King, Perunchotru Udiyan Cheraladan as having fed both the Pandava and Kaurava armies in the Kurukshetra battle.

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1. Now reissued as *Tales and Poems of South India* (2000), p. 1.



“The hundred who had seized the land  
Of the five, having made them enemies,  
Met their death in the battlefield. There  
You distributed huge amounts of food  
Without stopping for the forces ...”<sup>2</sup>

Tradition also speaks of three Ages represented by three academies (sangams) and that what we now call as Sangam Age was nurtured in the time of the third academy. This academy is associated with the Dramila Sangha established by the monk Vajranandi in 470 A.D. By now, a sumptuous mass of great literature had already been garnered in anthologies. Though 2000 years old, internal dissensions, external deprivations and the white ants of Time had made assaults on the literature. Fortunately for us, not only were the Sangam writers honored by succeeding generations, but also a good deal of their work had been retrieved by 19<sup>th</sup> century thanks to the tireless services of eminent scholars like Dr. U.V. Swaminatha Ayyar.

The Tamil language, the oldest among the Dravidian languages and its earliest script could have formed the Brahmi inscriptions. Prof. Vaiyapuri Pillai marvels at the creative work by Tamilians in the first thousand years:

“Development in language, script and literature must have been going at a rapid pace. Powerful influences must have been at work during this period as evidenced by the Brahmi inscriptions themselves. The words Kutumbika, Ila and the circumstances in which the inscriptions were writ-

ten tell their own tale. Contact with Sanskrit and Prakrit languages and literature, with adjacent countries like Ceylon, and with the Buddhist and the Jaina religions must have been largely influential in shaping the Tamil mind. The continuous influx of people from the North also must have had its influence. The Tamil language must have received new tributaries in its stream. Thus the even tenor of the life of the ancient Tamilian was ruffled and invigorated, a desire was created in him to emulate the Sanskrit literature. The religious and moral side of the ancient Tamilian was given a new turn by the influences noted above.”<sup>3</sup>

There was no doubt some creative interaction between the South and North Indian cultures, but scholars like Prof. Vaiyapuri Pillai, R. Swaminatha Iyer and V. Gopala Iyer have not found any aggressive dominance of the North on Tamil life and literature. Even by the time of the Sangam Age, Sanskrit words and the Vedic way of life had been comfortably absorbed by the Tamils.

As we have it, the Sangam literature provides a wealth of historical and sociological details, unveiling a civilisation which continues to hold sway over the people of Tamil Nadu in the twenty-first century.

However, time does have its effect on language and life and so the Sangam literature is not readily understood. A good percentage of words and usages have become archaic in the course of the last two millennia. And yet, we are able to read and write about these poems, because Tamil Nadu nurtured a wonderful commentatorial tradition begin-

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3. History of Tamil Language and Literature (1956), pp. 22-3.

ning with Iraiyanar. P.N. Appuswami, a well-known scholar of Sangham poetry says:

“The authors of these ancient verses were born poets, who had developed fine and sensitive imaginations which responded to their environment. But they were controlled in their thinking and expression by the milieu in which they lived, and by the pressures of their needs. Their vocabulary was limited, and their language was agglutinative. Both these factors tended towards brevity and ambiguity, and gave the verses an elusive charm and grace, but also made them occasionally perplexing. So commentators, direct and indirect, of various kinds and grades kept stepping in at various periods to help ...”<sup>4</sup>

### ***THE EXTANT SANGAM LITERATURE***

The themes in Sangam literature are classified under two major heads: Aham, Puram. The former deals with the facets of love, the latter with man's external life including war and day-to-day domesticity. The literature itself is categorised into two sets of anthologies, **Ettutokai** and **Pathu-p-Pattu**. The third group, Pathinen Kizh Kanakku is mostly ethical in its subject matter.

#### **1. Ettutokai (A List of Eight)**

- i. **Nattrinai Nanooru** (Four hundred verses in the aham mode. The poets include the famous Kapilar)

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4. Tamil Verse in Translation (1987), p. x.

- ii. **Kuruntokai** (short verses in the aham mode)
- iii. **Ainkurunooru** (Five poets, Orambokiya, Ammuvar, Kapilar, Odalandaiya and Peyar have each authored one hundred verses in this anthology).
- iv. **Patitru-pattu** (An important historical document as it speaks of the kings of the Chera dynasty).
- v. **Paripadal** (Poems in praise of the Vaigai river, and the deities, Mayon (Vishnu) and Seyon (Subramania)).
- vi. **Kalittokai** (149 poems in the aham mode, each verse varying between 11 and 75 lines)
- vii. **Ahananooru** (Four hundred verses on the theme of love, written by various poets.)
- viii. **Purananooru** (The oldest among extant Sangam anthologies, the work has four hundred verses on the theme of war and society.)

## 2. **Pattu-p-Pattu** (The Ten Idylls)

- i. **Porunar-atruppadai** ("Atruppadai" is a poetic convention where a wayfarer instructs a stranger to go to a particular king or chieftain for he is sure to be received with warmth and given plentiful food and wealth. This gives a reason to eulogise his patron. Here the poet Mudathamakanniyar praises the Chola King Karikala, son of Ilam-chet-chenni)
- ii. **Perumpanatruppadai** (Contains beautiful nature poetry describing the five areas of Sangham poetic convention, Palai, Kurinji, Mullai, Marutham and Neytal)

- iii. **Pattinappalai** (The famous port city of Kaveri-poompattinam is described in 301 lines, and we learn about the heroism and goodness of King Tirumavalavan, of an early Chola dynasty.)
- iv. **Kurinjipattu** (Another masterly description of nature. The poet is Kapilar)
- v. **Malaipadukadam** (In praise of Nannan, the generous chief of the Velir clan)
- vi. **Madurai Kanji** (Considered valuable to reconstruct the history of ancient Tamil Nadu, the poem is in praise of the Pandyan King Nedunchezhan.)
- vii. **Nedunal Vaadai** (The title means the North Wind which signifies winter in Tamil Nadu. This is a time of austerity especially for the cities when the king of the land has gone out to wage a war.)
- vii. **Mullai Pattu** (An exquisite study of mood swings between the queen who is dreaming of her husband and the husband who is anxiously checking his war-preparations in a battle camp)
- viii. **Sirupanatrappadai** (An eulogy of the chieftain, Oymanattu Nalliakkodan.)
- ix. **Tiru-Murugatrappadai** (Written by Nakkirar, the poem stands out for its religious fervour hailing Subramania, among the usual secular poetry of Pattu-p-Pattu.)

### **3. Pathinen Kizh Kanakku**

The eighteen listed works under the heading are:

- i. **Naladiyar**
- ii. **Nanmani Katikai,**

- iii. **Inna Narpadhu,**
- iv. **Iniyavai Narpadhu,**
- v. **Kar Narpadhu,**
- vi. **Kalavazhi Narpadhu,**
- vii. **Aintinai Aimbaddhu,**
- viii. **Ainthinai Ezhupadhu,**
- ix. **Tinaimozhi Aimbaddhu,**
- x. **Tinai Malai Nutraimbaddhu,**
- xi. **Innilai-Kainnilai**
- xii. **Tirukkural,**
- xiii. **Tirukadukam,**
- xiv. **Acharakkovai,**
- xv. **Pazhamozhi Nanooru,**
- xvi. **Sirupanchamoolam,**
- xvii. **Mudhumozikkanji**
- xviii. **Eladi.**

The one work which is considered to be the most ancient extant Sangam text is **Tolkappiyam**. Tolkappiyar is the first (and only one) Sangam writer to use the term, 'Senthamizh' for the language spoken in the Madurai area. Apparently Madurai was already a very prosperous and cosmopolitan city thanks to foreign trade:

"Strangers began to settle within the city-limits. As a result the language of the capital became less and less determined by locality and became more and more the Tamil of the whole Tamilakam. As the prestige of the city grew, the Tamilians in general began to look upon its language as the Tamil par excellence which would be understood and

accepted everywhere in Tamil land. We know that learned men gathered together in the royal court of Pandyan and held discussions. They also, under the king's command, assessed the merits of literary and other works and compiled anthologies etc. This made scholars and poets look to Madurai for literary guidance. The language of Madurai became the norm."<sup>5</sup>

Two epics conclude the Sangam Age. The twin epics, **Silappadhikaram** and **Manimekalai**, with their perfect use of the Tamil language and insistence on high ethical conduct reveal to us the kind of severe mental self-discipline hailed by the ancient Tamilians. They were clear about the bases of life which are set down in the eighteen ethical texts. Of these, **Tirukkural** is well known thanks to its wonderful architectonics. The others have not had a wide currency outside Tamil Nadu. Yet, a study of these works reveal the mind of the ancient Tamilian and the Tamilian approach to the phenomenon of man.

### ***A CULTURE OF HUMANISM***

A study of ancient Tamil literature makes it clear that till we come to the epics, the Tamilians had no turn for miraculism in their life. It was man's way of living that assured him of good or evil, not an external set of demons and deities. Kaniyan Poongunranar has a poem in **Purananooru** which highlights this point about man's accountability to his actions:

"All countries are ours: all are kinsmen.

Good and evil come by themselves

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5. History of Tamil Language and Literature, pp. 74-5

And not from others; so too  
Pain and relief; death is nothing new.  
We have not considered living as hedonistic.  
Nor do we reject it as evil.  
We have understood from the writings  
Of the wise that our life  
Passes through fate like the raft  
Which sails on the rivers whose waters  
Agitate and roll the rocks.  
We do not honour the merely rich.  
Nor do we slander people who are poor.”<sup>6</sup>

Poogunranar makes it clear that in his time works of wisdom were a high priority in education. Theirs was a difficult life facing the uncertainties of nature stoically. The struggle for existence meant constant battles with fellow men and the strongest won in the end. But the Tamils had advanced leaps and bounds from mere tribal culture. Winning by brawn alone did not qualify the person to be an ideal man. The ethical texts tirelessly listed the do's and don'ts. Not victory over another in physical terms but conquering one's own self was emphasised repeatedly. The **Tirukkural** says:

“Taller than a mountain is the stature  
of one with stern self-control.

All need humility; more so the rich,  
For whom it's the truer wealth.

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6. Verse 192. Translated by Prema Nandakumar



Who – tortoise-like – controls the five senses  
Will harvest for seven lives.”<sup>7</sup>

Heroism in battle and charity at home were the major planks of this ideal man’s existence, for he believed that these two helped him gain lasting immortality. This is how apart from the names of great warriors, the Sangam Age has also recorded great philanthropists. The seven famous Vallals (Givers) were Ezhini, Kari, Ori, Nalli, Pari, Began and Malayan. They were so totally compassionate that Pari gave away his chariot to a creeper that had nothing to hold on to and Began covered a peacock in distress with his own rich garment. In short, the ideal man in Sangam Age was also the universal man.

The ancient Tamils considered the gift of food — *anna daana* — as the best of charities. All the ethical texts call upon people to feed the hungry. The way the rich found joy in feeding their poor guests is described by Rudran Kannanar realistically in **Perumbanatruppadaï**. Read on the manner in which the King of Kanchi dispenses food for the needy:

“Flesh of many kinds, chopped and minced, and full  
succulent,  
Cooked by the master cook whose hefty hand’s  
calloused,  
Wielding the chopper, and cooked rice in plenty,  
Unbroken, sifted by the hand, of the rich red paddy

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7 . Tirukkural, verses 124-126. Translated by K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar

Dried in the sheaf, and nectar-like dainties of divers  
kinds

All well covered and carefully guarded  
And served in silver dishes like stars in the sky.  
You will eat as he stands before you, eyeing each one  
With a mother's love, and pressing you with kind  
insistence.”<sup>8</sup>

Hunger was considered a disease by the ancient Tamils and a Sangam chief, Pannan is hailed as the Pasippini Maruththuvan (Physician of Hunger). The Chola king Killivalavan speaks of his own subject Pannan with great pride:

“Tired and hungry by walking long distances  
The singers ask: ‘Whither the Physician’s house  
Who gives medicine for hunger?  
Is it nearby or far away? Please tell us!’  
May Pannan live my years as well.  
O singers! Consider the poverty  
Of the relatives of this aspirant.  
Here sounds of eating are heard  
Loud as the birds chirping  
On a fruit-bearing tree.  
  
From here little boys walk away  
Carying balls of food in hands

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8. Translated by N. Raghunathan

Like serried lines of tiny ants  
Moving upland with their eggs  
In the never-failing season of rains.”<sup>9</sup>

The epic, **Manimekalai** was a child of this culture. The heroine Manimekalai and the character Aaputhran take great joy in feeding hungry people. Saint Aravana puts it succinctly:

“I shall speak to you of the One Law  
Which is common to man and gods; that is  
‘Curing the disease of hunger’; thus spake  
The venerable sage in words of wisdom.”

Nothing destroys a man’s personality as hunger and the goddess Dipatilakai enumerates the evils of hunger to Manimekalai:

“The evil that hunger is, it destroys noble birth.  
It kills the good nature of those high-born;  
Divorces them from the staff of knowledge,  
Makes them shameless and strangers to beauty.  
Drags them to the streets along with their wives;  
I have no words to praise the fame of those  
Good people who cause its destruction.....  
Charity to people who can pay back  
Is mere trade: the lives of only those  
Who save the helpless from hunger, are blessed.

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9. Purananooru, Verse 173. Translated by Prema Nandakumar

They who give nourishment to living beings  
In this world, give precious life itself.”<sup>10</sup>

*Undi koduthor uyir koduthore!* The Pandyan chief Ilam Perumvazhuthi says words which could sum up the essence of an ethical text like **Eladi**:

“This earth exists because of the presence  
Of those who will not eat by themselves  
Even nectar meant for Indra; they hate none.  
They do not escape from troubles  
That scares away others;  
They sacrifice their lives  
For the sake of fame;  
Nor will they agree to do a sinful deed  
Even if it means gaining this world.  
They are never tired or lazy.  
Because of these people of action  
Who never work for themselves  
This world continues to exist.”<sup>11</sup>

Though the ancient Tamils gave so much thought to the externalities of man’s ethical conduct, they also were keen to impress upon the common man the need to consider humanity in fraternal terms and not just as the ‘rich’ and the ‘poor’. Man must allow himself to be controlled by Dharma and gain lasting fame by walking on the righteous path. To get this idea firmly established in the psyche of the common man, the ancients came out with a variety of ethi-

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10. Translated by Prema Nandakumar

11. Purananooru, Verse 182. Translated by Prema Nandakumar

cal texts. these are part of the anthology, the **Pathinen Kiz Kanakku** group.

### **THE PATHINEN KIZ KANAKKU GROUP**

#### *Tirukkural (The Holy Couplets)*

Of the eighteen works listed in this anthology, Tirukkural is very well known.

The author, Tiruvalluvar, lived two millennia ago in Mylapore, near Chennai. Plenty of legends have grown around him. He seems to have been a weaver and led a meaningful and happy married life with his wife Vasuki. We have no idea about his religion though the Jains have claimed him as their own. As Prof. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar says,

“Whatever his (Tiruvalluvar’s) personal religion, at the high level from which he delivered his message, the great religions of his time – Vedic Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Judaism and perhaps early Christianity too – fused into a nectarean essence, and he was able to speak as the Bard of the exemplary life for all humanity.”<sup>12</sup>

Comprising 1330 couplets divided into 133 chapters each with ten couplets, the work is divided into three Books: Aram (Virtue), 38 chapters; Porul (Wealth), 70 chapters and Inbam (Love), 25 chapters. This categorisation of Virtue-Wealth-Inbam also goes with Veedu (Realisation), but the experience of Veedu is not dealt with by the Sangam poets (except for stray verses) as it is beyond human experience on earth. The four fold Aram-Porul-Inbam-Veedu division corresponds to the four Purusharthas: Dharma-Artha-Kama-Moksha.

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12 . Tiruvalluvar Tirukkural (1988), p.ix

In **Tirukkural** no aspect of life on earth is left out and Tiruvalluvar addresses all mankind on the ideal path one ought to tread in life. Thus the chapter on 'Fame':

"Fame triumphs out of the death of the flesh;  
Such fame win the wise alone.

Better a gloried actor of great fame;  
And failing that, quit the stage!"<sup>13</sup>

There have been innumerable commentaries on the work starting with the classic one by Parimelazhakar (thirteenth century A.D.). It may be pointed out here that but for this very strong commentatorial tradition nurtured by the Tamilians nearly a thousand years ago, large tracts of Sangam literature would have remained incomprehensible for our understanding.

### **Naladiyar (The Four-lined Verses)**

Said to be the product of the Dramila Sangha established in Madurai by Vajranandi in the 5<sup>th</sup> century A.D., the work contains four hundred quartrains in the venpa metre, contributed by anonymous poets. Pathumanar, the earliest commentator on Naladiyar divided the verses into forty chapters, each with ten verses. probably taking a cue from Tiruvalluvar. Thus we have Aram or Virtue (13 chapters), Porul or Wealth (26 chapters) and Kaamam or Love (1 chapter). The darker shades of life seem more prominent in this ethical text, as the authors try to imbue the listener with a practical and wise view of life. Here is a funeral shot:

"They march and then strike once. A little while they  
wait,  
Then strike a second time the drum. Behold, how  
brave!

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13 . verses 235-6. Translated by Prema Nandakumar

The third stroke sounds: they veil it, take the fire, go  
forth:

*The dying bear the dead.*"<sup>14</sup>

### **Nan Mani Kadikai (Four Gems on a Platter)**

With 106 verses, **Nan Mani Kadikai** by Vilambinaganar opens with a prayer to Vishnu. Wholesome advice is given to the listener and our attention is drawn to good and evil and that the former breeds further good that enriches humanity.

"From the rock the radiant gem is born;  
From the dear one's speech, high joys are born;  
From gentle kindness is virtuous action born;  
And everything from wealth is born."<sup>15</sup>

### **Kar Narpathu (Forty Verses on the Rainy Season)**

Written by Kannan Kuthanar of Madurai, **Kar Narpathu** is in the 'Aham' mode. Some of the verses report the pining of a lady-love and the words with which her friend offers comfort. Other verses record the words of the lover to his charioteer, to speed the vehicle towards the city of his lady-love.

"I had indicated to the innocent, shy girl  
That when the clouds that had drunk to the fill  
The oceanic waters, would begin to pour them  
On the western ghats, it would be time for me  
To return. Speed the chariot!"<sup>16</sup>

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14. verse 24. Translated by M.S. Purnalingam Pillai

15. verse 7. Translated by G.U.Pope

16. verse 32. Translated by Prema Nandakumar

**Kala Vazhi Narpathu (Forty Verses on the Battlefield)**

A historically significant work, *Kala Vazhi Narpathu* describes the battle of Kuzhumalam where the Chola King Chenganan defeated and imprisoned the Chera king, Kanaikkal Irumporai. The Chera poet laureate, Poykaiyar interceded with the Chola king for Irumporai's release. The request was granted but the Chera king had died of thirst in the prison. Poykaiyar's poem eulogising the Chola king has remained with Tamil literature as a sombre picture of a battlefield that has seen action.

"Chenganan's land has water sources that do not go dry;  
When the king who has the decorated war-drum battled  
And destroyed his enemies, the blemishless Mother Earth  
Became red as if she had veiled herself in a russet  
garment."<sup>17</sup>

**Iniavai Narpathu (Forty Verses that Sound Sweet)**

Attributed to Puthan Chenthanar, the anthology consists of quotable precepts. Reading it one can understand how ancient Tamil education was motivated by moral studies. Among the thoughts strewn with a prodigal hand by the author are the need to educate oneself even by begging, the need to have an understanding spouse for happy domesticity and to be blessed with healthy children.

"Right pleasant is life worth those who are at one;  
Pleasant to see the full moon in the wide fields of  
heaven;  
But to be unblameable in deed, and with a tender  
soul  
To be loving to all is truly sweet."<sup>18</sup>

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17. Verse 32. Translated by Prema Nandakumar

18. Verse 9. Translated by M.S. Pumalingam Pillai



**Inna Narpathu (Forty Verses on Things Unpleasant)**

The author, Kapilar, belonged to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. A prolific poet of the Sangam Age, Kapilar was a Brahmin friend of the generous Chieftain Vel Pari. When the Chieftain's fort was encircled by enemies, Kapilar trained parrots to get grains into the fort to feed Pari's army. Pari had two daughters. The Chera, Chola and Pandya kings wanted to marry them. As he was not willing, the three attacked him and he died on the battlefield. Kapilar took the daughters with him and handed them over in the safe custody of his friends and passed away mourning the loss of Pari. The other well-known work by him is *Kurinjippattu*. His verses are also found in the Sangam anthologies, *Nattrinai*, *Kuruntokai*, *Ainkurunooru*, *Paditruppaththu*, *Kalithokai*, *Akananooru*, and *Purananooru*. The forty verses in **Inna Narpathu** enumerate a list of what constitutes the disagreeable to civilised hearts.

“The desire of the destitute to do benevolent deeds is  
vain;  
To dwell in a city of palaces to the poor man is nought.  
To feast upon the mere sight of a cookhouse is vain;  
Friendship of those who desert you in adversity is  
vain.”<sup>19</sup>

**Ainthinai Aimbathu (Fifty Verses on the Five Modes)**

Cast in the Aham mode, the fifty verses by Maran Poraiyanar delineate the moods and nature's changing shades according to Sangam physiographical division of

19. Verse 36. Translated by M.S. Purnalingam Pillai

Mullai, Marudam, Kurinji, Neythal and Palai. One comes across striking similes as when the friend announces the coming of the rainy season to the lady-in-love:

“Good lady! The clouds have gathered dark like the  
complexion

Of Krishna who destroyed the wrestlers; they shine  
brilliant

Like the lance of Muruga who wears the Kadamba garland;

They rise like the blossoms in the konrai garland of Shiva  
Who struck down the triple-fortress of iron, silver and  
gold.”<sup>20</sup>

### **Ainthinai Ezhupathu** (Seventy verses on the Five Modes)

Only sixty-six verses of Moovathiyar’s contribution are available and they give us amazingly attractive scenes of nature in the various regions of Tamil Nadu. For instance, we have a lady-in-love rejecting her friend’s advice to give up her young man who belongs to the hilly regions:

“He belongs to the region where the monkey eats  
The sweet pulp of the jackfruit, gets thirsty,  
Comes down from the tree and strokes the udder  
Of the wild cow. The cow streams milk as it would for  
its calf.

I shall never think of separation from him.”<sup>21</sup>

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20 . verse 1. Translated by Prema Nandakumar

21. Verse 4. Translated by Prema Nandakumar

**Tinai Malai Nootraimbadhu** (Garland of One Hundred Fifty verses on Nature)

The author of **Eladi**, Ganimedhaiyar, has another contribution in **Tinai Malai Nootraimbadhu**. Written in the Aham style, the work is all about the many facets of love like the anxieties of the wife when the husband frequents the homes of courtesans. The natures of the five different regions are limned with accuracy of detail and the evil of licensed promiscuousness gets noted quite often as in this verse where the wife says abrasively:

“The courtesans play water games in the streams  
That carry the mature paddy stalks along with red  
lotuses.

His heart has lodged itself on the lovely strings  
On the women’s breasts and beats in tune with her.  
It is best to have an affable separation  
And live apart in sorrow.”<sup>22</sup>

**Tinai Mozhi Aimbathu** (Fifty Jottings on Nature)

Kannan Sendhanar’s jottings describe the ways of the young man in love and the care with which the friend of the lady-in-love prevents anything untoward happening. The young man tries various ruses to meet his love as when he says that he has come in search of the elephant he had wounded though he had actually hoped for a tete-e-tete with

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22. Verse 128. . Translated by Prema Nandakumar

his beloved. The friend says:

“We are Kurava girls with bamboo-like shoulders  
Who live in mountainous regions rendered cool  
By an abundance of Vengai trees. No male  
elephant  
Dripping blood came this side. Look elsewhere!”<sup>23</sup>

### **Tirikadukam (Three Spices)**

Ancient Tamil Nadu had excelled in herbal medicines. The Siddha mystics were considered experts in the field. Tirikadukam is a concoction made of dry ginger, long pepper and black pepper. Each of the one hundred verses in this classic of Nallathanar has a medicine for overcoming the evils that confront man. Following the good precepts one attains happiness; flouting the moral ways one confronts disaster.

“**Making friends** with the illiterate, beating  
**One’s wife** with stick, inviting the lowly  
**To one’s house** are the three evils  
**That are born of one’s own ignorance.**”<sup>24</sup>

### **Pazhamozhi Nanooru (Four Hundred Proverbs)**

Manturai Araiyanar has chosen four hundred proverbs to use as the clinching line of as many quartrains full of worldly wisdom. The verses serve as excellent warnings helping us to look before we leap. The 134<sup>th</sup> proverb, for instance, reminds us of Shakespeare’s **Timon of Athens**:

23. Verse 5. Translated by Prema Nandakumar

24. Verse 3. Translated by Prema Nandakumar

Friend who wears a flower garland on the chest!  
When a man is rich, a thousand will come to eat  
food  
Cooked in his house; but when he is fallen on evil  
days  
None comes. *One who is grown poor has no  
friends.*"<sup>25</sup>

### **Achara-k-kovai (Hints for Cultured Living)**

The attention to detail given by Peruvayil Mulliyar in the 100 verses of Achara-k-kovai in formulating the rules for everyday living reveals the very cultured life attained by the Sangam people. Mulliyar leaves no area untouched and one learns good etiquette, excellent husbandry, the methodology of clean living, and the need for care in day-to-day life:

"One's body, wife, trust property  
And self against distress; these four  
Every one should care for like gold.  
Else permanent evil will accrue.".<sup>26</sup>

### **Siru Pancha Moolam (Five Roots of Ethics)**

The author is Kariyasan and once again an ancient medical term gives the name for a classic. The ancients had arrived at a concoction of kasthuri turmeric, black pep-

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25. Translated by Prema Nandakumar

26. Verse 95. Translated by M.S. Purnalingam Pillai

per, neem seeds, the skin of gallnut and myrobolan seeds ground together with cow's milk which was used for shampooing one's head. This was said to help avoid all types of sicknesses. Kariyasan's verses put forth sets of five to help avoid the sickness of the body and the sickness of the soul.

"The beauty of the eye is benevolence;  
 The beauty of the leg is firmness;  
 The beauty of calculation is correct number;  
 The beauty of music is the charm for the ear;  
 The beauty of the king is the prosperity of the  
 land."<sup>27</sup>

### **Muthu Mozhi Kanchi (Collection of Ancient Sayings)**

The racial experience of the Tamils has been put together in one hundred verses divided into ten sections by the author, Koodalur Kizhar of Madurai. The essence of good and happy living is underlined repeatedly:

"In this sea-girt world greater than knowledge  
 Is good character.  
 Greater than one's love for another  
 Is sorrowing when the other is sad.  
 Greater than scholarship  
 Is remembering what one has learnt.  
 Greater than being charitable  
 Is one's adherence to truth.  
 Greater than one's youth  
 Is a body free of sickness.  
 Greater than a handsome appearance

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27. Verse 9. . Translated by M.S. Pumalingam Pillai

Is remaining shy of wrong-doing.  
Greater than birth in a noble family  
Is gaining a good education.  
Greater than destroying enemies  
Is to become strong oneself.  
Greater than increase in one's wealth  
Is avoiding the erosion of existing riches."<sup>28</sup>

### **Innilai-Kainnilai**

There has been a major controversy regarding **Innilai**. Many scholars beginning with C.V. Damodaram Pillai have doubted its authenticity as a Sangam work but it has retained its currency. The work has forty five verses on the four Purusharthas. Unlike other works dealing with the four 'ends' of life, **Innilai** has some pointers regarding Veedu (Realisation):

"Those who perform tapasya that is faultless and illumed  
Recognise the state of Realisation that has no change.  
Those who give up desire, lust and anger and accept  
sorrow  
As good, will not return to the state of birth and  
death."<sup>29</sup>

The section, **Kainnilai** is in the Aham mode.

Now, there remains **Eladi** written by .Ganimedhaiar. Also known as Ganimedhaviyar, as his name indicates, he was considered a very wise scholar. He was a son of the

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28. The Greater Ten'. Translated by Prema Nandakumar

29 . verse 42. Translated by Prema Nandakumar

Madurai Academy Tamil teacher Makkayanar and no doubt received his education under him. His fellow-student was Kariansan, author of *Sirupanchamoolam*.

Eladi speaks of the glory of family life as well as the beauty of renunciation and insists upon seeking Realisation, whatever be one's state in earthly life. This could be an indication that Ganimedhai was a Jain.

The title means: "cardamom and the rest". It is a reference to an ancient medicine which was prepared with six ingredients;

Elam (cardamom)

Lavangam (clove)

Sirunavarpoo (ruddy black plum)

Milagu (black pepper)

Tippili (long pepper)

Chukku (dried ginger)

The medicine was a cure for cough, asthma and breathlessness and helped longevity. Each verse contains five or six points that help one be cured from the sickness of birth and by avoiding which one gains Realisation.



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ஏலாதி  
கணிமேதையார்

ELADI

Translation by Prema Nandakumar

சிறப்புப்பாயிரம்  
Overture

இல்லறநூல் ஏற்ற துறவறநூல் ஏயுங்கால்  
சொல்லறநூல் சோர்வின்றித் தொக்குரைத்து - நல்ல  
அணிமேதை யாம்நல்ல வீட்டு நெறியும்  
கணிமேதை செய்தான் கலந்து

Intelligent lady, listen.  
Ganimedhai indited this praiseworthy work  
By mastering the tomes on family life,  
Renunciation and the path of Realisation.

(The verses are cast in the form of a monologue. There is a listener whose facial expressions and gestures probably have an impact on the speaker's emphasis which helps him to move from one aspect to another of the moral world. Ganimedhai, referred to as Ganimedhaiyar or Ganimedhaviyar out of respect, has also authored **Tinai Malai Nootraimbadhu** (Garland of One Hundred Fifty verses on Nature). The poem delineates the various facets of love according to the Sangam aesthetics which associates certain moods with appropriate geographical areas, known as 'Tinai')

**கடவுள் வணக்கம்**  
**Prayer**

அறுநால்வர் ஆய்புகழ்ச் சேவடி யாற்றப்  
பெறுநால்வர் பேணிவழங்கிப் - பெறுநால்  
மறை புரிந்து வாழுமேல் மண்ணொழிந்து  
விண்ணோர்க்கு  
இறைபுரிந்து வாழ்தலியல்பு

If one worships the gracious, famed feet  
Of the Divine hailed by the Twenty-four  
And guarded and conveyed by the Four,  
The god revealed by the scriptures,  
One gains the love of the Lord of immortals  
On leaving earth and reaching heaven.

**(Twenty-Four:** the twenty-four Tirthankaras of the Jain pantheon. They are

1. Rishabhadeva
2. Ajithanatha
3. Sambhavanatha
4. Abhinandana
5. Sumatinatha
6. Padmanabha
7. Suparsvanatha
8. Chandraprabha
9. Pushpadanta
10. Seethalanatha
11. Sreyamsanatha
12. Vasupujya
13. Vimalanatha
14. Ananathanatha
15. Dharmanatha
16. Santinatha
17. Kuntunatha
18. Aranatha
19. Mallinata
20. Munisuvrata
21. Naminatha
22. Neminatha
23. Parsvanatha
24. Vardhamana Mahavira

**The Four:** Monks, Nuns, Sravaks, Sravikas. The monks and nuns renounce all desires and earthly possessions, follow the five mahavratas. These five noble vows are ahimsa (non-killing), aparigraha (non-possession), satya (truthfulness), brahmacharya (chastity) and asteya (non-stealing).

The sravaks and sravikas are men and women who are householder devotees and are expected to strive towards a pure life, by following Jain tenets regarding a blameless life.

**The Divine, god:** Jainism does not accept the presence of a creator god. The religion believes that the universe is eternal, and has neither a beginning nor an end. But Jainism speaks of as god a human being who destroys all his karmas. He then gains perfect knowledge (jnanam), vision (kaatchi), power (veeryam) and bliss (inbam). He now becomes ageless, has no hurdles, nameless, belongs to no group (gotra). He is then known as god (iraivan).

**The scriptures:** Jainism does not believe in the Vedas. Here 'marai' is used for the Jain scriptures like Mulasutras, Satkhandagama and Anuyoga.

**The Lord of Immortals:** Indra. Invoked often, Indra is said to have offered a golden robe to Mahavira and welcomed him into heaven.)



1

சென்ற புகழ் செல்வம் மீக்கூற்றம் சேவகம்  
நின்ற நிலைகல்வி வள்ளன்மை - என்றும்  
வழிவந்தார் பூங்கோதாய் ஆறுமறையின்  
வழிவந்தார் கண்ணே வனப்பு

Damsel with flower-decorated tresses!  
Fame, wealth, words considered sensible by  
others,  
Heroism, education and charitable disposition  
Shine best in those who have a noble lineage  
And walk the pathway of the scriptures.

2

கொலைபுரியான், கொல்லான் புலால்மயங்கான் கூர்த்த  
அலைபுரியான் வஞ்சியான் யாதும் - லைதிரியான்  
மண்ணவர்க்கு அன்றி மதுமலிபூங் கோதாய்  
விண்ணவர்க்கு மேலாய் விடும்.

Damsel with honeyed blossoms in your tresses!  
He who detests murder and does not kill,  
Who does not get deluded to eat flesh,  
Who causes no pain to others,  
Whose character is not mean, who is firm:  
Such a person is not only greater than men  
But of gods as well.

3

தவமெளிது தானம் அரிதுதக் காரக்கேல்  
அவமரி தாதல் எளிதால் - அவமிலா  
இன்பம் பிறழின் இயைவு எளிது மற்றதன்  
துன்பம் துடைத்தல் அரிது.

Tapasya is easy but to be generous is difficult.  
It is hard for worthy persons to commit a wrong.  
It is easy for them to tread the righteous path.  
If Realisation is missed, rebirth comes easy.  
But very tough to eliminate the sorrow of rebirth.

## 4

இடர்தீர்த்தல் எள்ளாமை கீழினம் சேராமை  
படர்தீர்த்தல் யார்க்கும் பழிப்பின் - நடை தீர்த்தல்  
கண்டவர் காழுறுஞ்சொல் காணின் கல்வியின் கண்  
விண்டவர்நூல் வேண்டா விடும்.

Removing the problems of other people,  
Avoiding the itch to speak in scorn of others,  
Staying away from lowly persons,  
Removing the pangs of people's hunger,  
Steering clear of ways rejected by elders,  
Speaking good words to associates:  
Such a person has no use for ethical texts  
Written by the wise who are renunciates.

தனக்கென்றும் ஓர்பாங்கற் பொய்யான்மெய்யாக்கும்  
எனக்கென்று இயையான்யா தான்றும்-புனக்கொன்றை  
போலும் இழையார்சொல்தேறான் களியானேல்  
சாலும் பிறநூலின் சார்பு

Not to tell a lie to help oneself  
Or to benefit an associate,  
Being truthful, ever desireless,  
Not accepting as truth the statements  
Of women who wear jewels like konrai,  
The flowers found in the Mullai land,  
Never succumbing to pride: if a person  
Is like this, he will be automatically enriched  
By what is found in ethical texts.

(**Konrai:** Indian laburnum.

**Mullai land:** In the Sangam Age, the poets had set up an elaborate science of aesthetics. So much were the people in tune with nature that their aesthetic theory itself became a visual, a very real experience. Over the centuries they perfected their perception of nature as a grammar of the interaction between man and nature, categorising both under four heads and assigned them particular landscapes.

1. **Mullai.** It is the name of a particular variety of jasmine; Forest areas form the landscape. Characteristics: Rains, evening.
2. **Kurinji.** A flower that blossoms once in twelve years in mountainous areas. The landscape is mountainous region. Characteristics: Frost, midnight.
3. **Marudam.** A tree that lines streams. The landscape assigned is pastoral. Characteristics: Dawn.
4. **Neytal.** A water flower. The land is sandy sea-shore. Characteristics: Sunset.

Since there are no deserts in Tamil Nadu, any place that has been parched by summer was referred to as **Palai** (desert). Palai is also an ever-green tree that can survive any drought. Characteristics: Summer, midday.

He will be automatically enriched: He need not study ethical texts but is endowed by nature with a noble character.)

6

நிறையுடைமை நீர்மை உடைமை கொடையே

பொறையுடைமை பொய்ம்மை புலால்கண் -

மறையுடைமை

வேயன்ன தோளாய் இவையுடையான் பல்லுயிர்க்கும்

தாயன்னன் என்னத் தகும்.

Damsel with bamboo-like shoulders!  
Self-control, good nature, a charitable heart,  
Patience when others act unpleasantly,  
Refusing to tell an untruth, rejecting meat:  
A person with such qualities  
Can be hailed as mother to all lives.

7

இன்சொல் அளா வல் இடமினிதூண் யாவர்க்கும்  
வன்சொல் களைந்து வகுப்பானேல் - மென்சொல்  
முருந்தேய்க்கும் முட்போல் எயிற்றினாய் நாளும்  
விருந்தேற்பர் விண்ணோர் விரைந்து.

Damsel with sharp teeth as the base  
Of a peacock feather! He who offers his guests  
Pleasant enquiries, hearty friendship,  
A place to stay, garments, food and soft words  
Will be chosen as a guest of the gods.



உடன்படான் கொல்லான் உடன்றார் நோய்தீர்த்து  
மடம்படான் மாண்டார்நூல் மாண்ட - இடம்பட  
நோக்கும்வாய் நோக்கி நுழைவானேல் மற்றவனை  
யாக்குவமவர் யாக்கும் அணைந்து.

He does not like others to kill;  
He will not kill either; he gives relief  
To the sick by offering medicines;  
He studies well the wisdom in scholarly works  
And lives accordingly; When one has him  
As his friend, these good qualities  
Brush off him as well.

## 9

கற்றாரைக் கற்ற துணரார் எனமதியார்  
 உற்றாரை யன்னணம் ஓராமல் - அற்றார்க்கு  
 உண்டி யுறையுள் உடுக்கை இவைவந்தார்  
 பண்டிதராய் வாழ்வார் பயின்று

They who do not reject the wise scholars  
 As a pack of ignoramuses,  
 Nor have status-consciousness  
 When dealing with relatives and friends,  
 Give food, garments and a place to rest  
 For renunciates; such persons are hailed  
 As wise by all and do not have enemies.

செங்கோலான் கீழ்க்குடிகள் செல்வமும் சீரிலா  
வெங்கோலான் கீழ்க்குடிகள் வீந்துடகவும் -  
வெங்கோல்  
அமைச்சர் தொழிலும் அறியலம் ஒன்றாற்ற  
எனைத்தும் அறியாமை யான்.

The righteous king, his citizenry  
And his riches; the unrighteous king,  
His people and the ministers  
Who caused this state of affairs;  
All of them get destroyed.  
Why so? We have no clue either.

## 11

அவாவறுக்கல் உற்றான் தளரானவ் வைந்தின்  
 அவாவறுப்பி னாற்ற அமையும் - அவாவுறான்  
 ஆகு மவனாயி னைங்களிற்றி னாட்டுண்டு  
 போகும் புழையுள் புலந்து

One who has decided to cut off desires  
 Must remain firm, and control the craving  
 That moves in through the five senses.  
 Then his ambition will be fulfilled.  
 But if he is unable to control his longing,  
 He will fall victim to the elephant  
 Of the five senses, plunge into its hellish hole  
 And sink in sorrow.

கொலைக்களம் வார்த்துத் குதாடு மெல்லை  
அலைக்களம் போர்யானை யாக்கும் - நிலைக்களம்  
முச்சா ரிகையொதுங்கு மோரிடத்தும் இன்னவை  
நச்சாமை நோக்காமை நன்று.

It is best not to visit the place where hanging  
Is done, the area where streams flood,  
A gambling den, a prison, the grounds  
Where killer-elephants are trained  
And the path where elephants, chariots  
And horses try to learn speedy movement.

விளையாமை உண்ணாமை ஆடாமை யாற்ற  
 உளையாமை உட்குடைத்தா வென்று - களையாமை  
 நூற்பட்டார் பூங்கோதாய் நோக்கின் இவையாறும்  
 பாற்பாட்டார் கொண்டொழுகும் பண்பு.

Damsel with tresses twined with garlands!  
 These be the six disciplines for monks:  
 Not to grow crops, not to eat, nor speak idly,  
 Not be pained by sorrows caused by others,  
 Overcoming habits that are shameful,  
 And rigidly keeping to these disciplines.

பெய்யான் புலாலொடு கள்போக்கித் தீயன  
செய்யான் சிறியார் இனஞ்சேரான்ஷ - வையான்  
கயலியலுண் கண்ணாய் கருதுங்கால் என்றும்  
அயல அயல ஆம்நூல்.

Damsel with fish-like eyes, collyrium-touched!  
He never tells a lie, avoids eating meat  
And quaffing toddy, avoids doing evil action,  
Turns away from lowly people and never does he  
Accuse others. For such a person  
Where is the need to study ethical texts?

காண்போல்வார்க் காயாமை கற்றாரினஞ் சேர்தல்  
பண்போல் கிளவியார்ப் பற்றாமை - பண்போலும்  
சொல்லார்க்கு அருமறைசோ ராமை சிறிதுஎனினும்  
இல்லார்க்கிடர் தீர்த்தல் நன்று.

Not getting angry when a friend commits wrong,  
Always seeking company of the wise,  
Never pursuing women with lute-like speech,  
Never revealing scriptures to women  
Who have musical voices, giving at least a little  
To the needy to help them in distress,  
These are good disciplines in life.



துறந்தார்கண் துன்னித் துறவார்க்கு இடுதல்  
இறந்தார்க் கினிய இசைத்தல் - இறந்தார்  
மறுதலை சுற்றம் மதித்தோம்பு வானேல்  
இறுதலில் வாழ்வே யினிது.

Remaining non-attached as a renunciate,  
Giving charity to those who have not renounced,  
Speaking wise words to educated people,  
Helping relatives and those who die friendless,  
And even those who have done evil to him:  
For such a person domestic life is the best way.

குடியோம்பல் வன்கண்மை நூல்வன்மை கூடம்  
 மடியோம்பும் ஆற்றல் உடைமை - முடியோம்பி  
 நாற்றஞ் சுவைகேள்வி நல்லார் இனஞ்சேர்தல்  
 தேற்றானேல் தேறு மமைச்சு.

Protecting one's people, a briskness in action,  
 An intelligence unaddled by reading scholarly  
 tomes,  
 Not to succumb to cunning and laziness;  
 Not caring for scents, rich food and women:  
 One who has these attributes  
 Is worthy of being a minister.

போகம் பொருள்கேடு மான் வேட்டம்

பொல்லாக்கள்

சோகம் படுஞ்சுதே சொல்வன்மை - சோகக்  
கடுங்கதத்துத் தண்டம் அடங்காமை காப்பின்  
அடுங்கதமில் ஏனை யரசு.

The king who has no truck with dalliance,  
Does not lose his wealth, does not drink,  
Nor indulges in gambling that leads to sorrow,  
Or speaks harsh words and proceeds to war  
Full of rage, will have no enemies attacking him.

கொல்லான் கொலைபுரியான் பொய்யான் பிறர்  
மனைமேல்  
செல்லான் சிறியார் இனம் சேரான் - சொல்லும்  
மறையில் செவியிலன் தீச்சொற்கண் மூங்கை  
இறையிற் பெரியாற் கிவை.

He does not kill, nor likes others to kill,  
Never tells a lie, nor does direct amorous looks  
At the wives of other men; avoids low company;  
He has no use for scriptures expounded  
In secret chambers, and becomes quite dumb  
When he has to speak evil. These indeed  
Are the excellent qualities of a leader.

மின்னே ரிடையர்சொற் றேறான் விழைவோரான்  
கொன்னே வெகுளான் கொலை புரியான் -

பொன்னே

உறுப்பறுத் தன்ன கொடையுவுப்பான் தன்னின்  
வெறுப்பறுத்தான் விண்ணகத்து மில்.

Golden girl! He who sets no faith  
In the words of lightning-waisted damsels,  
Who cares not for their company,  
Never gives way to causeless anger,  
Never kills, and is so generous in charity  
As if he would give away a portion of himself,  
And has no one that hates him -  
Such a person is not found even in heaven.

21

இளமை கழியும் பிணிமூப்பு இயையும்  
வளமை வலிகிவை வாடும் - உளநாளால்  
பாடேபுரியாது பால்போலும் சொல்லினாய்  
வீடே புரிதல் விதி.

Lady who lisps milk-sweet words!  
Youth is fleeting. Sickness and old age  
Catch up. Riches and bodily strength  
Grow weak. Avoiding evil acts in the days  
Given to one's life, one should hold on  
To the blameless path for Realisation.

வாள் அஞ்சான் வன்கண்மை அஞ்சான் வனப்பு  
அஞ்சான்  
ஆள் அஞ்சான் ஆம்பொருள் தானஞ்சான் -  
நாள் எஞ்சாக்  
காலன் வரஓழிதல் காணின்வீ டெய்திய  
பாலின்நூல் எய்தப் படும்.

He may not be afraid of the enemy's sword;  
Nor of a lack of pity in others. Nor terrified  
By a heroic stature. Nor administrative dictat.  
Nor of the rich. Yet if he wants to watch Yama  
Withdraw, he must gain a high character  
That is taught by scriptures graciously  
To gain Realisation.

## 23

குணநோக்கான் கூழ் நோக்கான் கோலமும்  
 நோக்கான்  
 மண நோக்கான் மங்கலமும் நோக்கான் - கண  
 நோக்கான்  
 கால்காப்பு வேண்டான் பெரியார்நூல் காலற்கு  
 வாய்காப்புக் கோடல் வனப்பு.

He who would avoid shackling family life,  
 Should learn not to care for worldly values,  
 For riches, for ornaments, for marriage,  
 For good works and not care for relations.  
 He must learn the ancient scriptures  
 That are the guardians of the gate to Yama.



பிணிபிறப்பு மூப்போடு சாக்காடு துன்பம்  
தணிவில் நிரப்பிவை தாழா - அணியின்  
அரங்கின்மேல் ஆடுநர்போல் ஆகாமல்

நன்றாம்

நிரம்புமேல் வீட்டு நெறி.

One easily gets sick; easily obtains birth,  
Old age, death, and the struggle to gain  
Riches, and poverty that robs one of peace.  
Hence, instead of being born repeatedly on earth  
As actors changing dresses, one must renounce  
To gain Realisation.

பாடகம் சாராமை பாத்திலார் தாம்விழையும்  
 நாடகம் சாராமை நாடுங்கால் - நாடகம்  
 சேர்ந்தால் பகைபழி தீச்சொல்லே சாக்காடே  
 தீர்ந்தால்போல் தீரா வரும்.

Give up going to music soirees by public women.  
 Avoid watching the plays they enact.  
 If we go to such places, we but gain enmity.  
 Blame, harsh words and death line-up for us  
 Continuously as if from nowhere.

மாண்டமைத்து ஆராய்ந்த மதிவனப்பே

வன்கண்மை

ஆண்டமைந்த கல்வியே சொல்லாற்றல் -

பூண்டமைந்த

காலம் அறிதல் கருதுங்கால் தூதுவர்க்கு

ஞாலம் அறிந்த புகழ்.

Disciplined character, scholarship,  
A handsome appearance, fearlessness  
When among enemies, intelligence gained  
By good education, mastery of speech,  
An ability to gauge appropriate timing:  
These bring global fame to ambassadors.

அஃகுநீ செய்யல் என அறிந்து ஆராய்ந்தும்  
 வெஃகல் வெகுடலே தீக்காட்சி - வெஃகுமால்  
 கள்ளத்த அல்ல கருதின் இவைமூன்றும்  
 உள்ளத்த ஆக உரை.

Give up stealing the riches of others.  
 Say good-bye to anger. Avoid evil sights.  
 If one knows these precepts by reading  
 The books of the wise, yet desires them,  
 It is a proof that these evils are not absent  
 By avoidance, but exist deep in the heart.

மையேர் தடங்கண் மயிலன்னாய் சாயலே  
மெய்யே உணர்ந்தார் மிகஉரைப்பர் - பொய்யே  
குறளை கடுஞ்சொல் பயனிலசொல் நான்கும்  
மறலையின் வாயினவாம் மற்று.

Damsel with collyrium-lined eyes,  
Who looks as a peacock! Wise elders  
Praise noble words and truth. Only the base  
Speak lies, carry tales, utter harsh words  
And chat purposelessly.

## 29

நிலையளவில் நின்ற நெடியவர்தாம் நேரா  
 கொலை களவு காமத்தீ வாழ்க்கை - அலையளவி  
 மையெனநீள் கண்ணாய் மறுதலைய இம்மூன்றும்  
 மெய்யள வாக விதி.

Damsel with dark eyes that are ever in motion!  
 Noble ones who act according to their status  
 Are not stained by murder, stealing  
 And despicable lust. Know their triple  
 contraries  
 Form the bases of truthful life.

(their triple contraries: non-killing, non-  
 stealing and love)

மாண்டவர் மாண்ட அறிவினால் மக்களைப்  
பூண்டவர்ப் போற்றிப் புரக்குங்கால் - பூண்ட  
ஒளரதனே கேத்திரசன் கானீனன் கூடன்  
கிரிதன்பெள நற்பவன் பேர்.

Noble persons renowned for their good deeds  
And character brought up their children  
With the help of their intelligence.

These children are known as Aurata, Khetraja,  
Kaaneena, Gudothpanna, Giridha  
And Paunarbhava.

(Aurata: (Sanskrit Aurasa) born of oneself, a legitimate child.

Khetraja: (Sanskrit Kshetrajah): the offspring of a wife by a kinsman duly appointed to raise up issue to the husband.

Kaneena (Sanskrit Kaaneenah): son of an unmarried woman.

Gudothpanna (Sanskrit Gudothpannah): a son born secretly of a woman, when her husband is absent, the real father being unknown

Kiritha: (Sanskrit Kritah) a son purchased from his natural parents

Paunarbhava: (Sanskrit Paunarbhavah) the son of a widow who has remarried.

The verse indicates that our ancients did not suffer from any narrow-minded exclusivity.)

மத்தமயிலன்ன சாயலாய் மன்னிய சீர்த்  
 தத்தன் சகோடன் கிருத்திரமன் புத்திரி  
 புத்ரப வித்தனொடு பொய்யில் உபகிருதன்  
 இத்திறந்த எஞ்சினோர் பேர்.

Damsel with a complexion rivaling  
 A happy peacock! The names of the rest are:  
 The famed Datta, Sakota, Krithrima,  
 Daughter's son, Apavidhha  
 And truthful Swayamdatta

(Datta: (Sanskrit Datta): A son given away in adoption by the parents.

Sakota: (Sanskrit Sahodajah) the son of a woman pregnant at marriage

Krithrima: (Sanskrit Krithrimah) a grown up son adopted without the consent of his natural parents.

Apavidhha: (Sanskrit Apaviddhah) A son who is abandoned by the father or mother or by both, and adopted by a stranger.

Swayamdatta (Sanskrit Swayamdattah) a boy who has given himself to be adopted by his adoptive parents)



32

உரையான் குலன்முடிமை ஊனம் பிறரை  
உரையான் பொருளொடுவாழ்வு ஆயு-உரையானாய்ப்  
பூவாதி வண்டுதோர்ந்து உண்குழலாய் ஈத்துண்பான்  
தேவாதி தேவனாத் தேறு.

Damsel with flowers in tresses circled by bees!  
One who does not brag about his family's fame  
And the importance of noble lineage,  
Who does not speak ill of persons who have  
neither,  
Who does not reveal his own riches or style,  
But feeds the poor always is the lord of gods.

33

பொய்யுரையான் வையான் புறங்கூறான் யாவரையும்  
மெய்யுரையான் உள்ளனவும் விட்டுரையான் -

எய்யுரையான்

கூவந்தல் மயிலன்னாய் குழீஇயவான்

விண்ணோர்க்கு

வேந்தனாம் இவ்வுலகம் விட்டு.

Damsel whose tresses rival peacock's feathers!  
One who speaks no untruth, does not curse,  
Nor indulges in backbiting, nor tells the truth  
So as to save one from evil, nor reveals  
His wealth or speaks of his poverty to friends;  
When such a person leaves the earth,  
He becomes Indra, the lord of gods.

**(nor tells the truth:** While speaking the truth is dharma, there are times when one has to keep silent out of compassion so as to save someone from sorrow. Such compassion is pleasing to the gods and will not be construed a sin.)

சிதையுரையான் செற்றம் உரையான் சீறில்லான்  
இயல்புரையான் ஈனம் உரையான் - நசையவர்க்குக்  
கூடுவது ஈவானைக் கொவ்வைபோல் செவ்வாயாய்  
நாடுவர் விண்ணோர் நயந்து.

Damsel with lips red like kovai fruit!  
He speaks nothing mean, nor inimical;  
Never gets angry with others; does not indulge  
In self-praise; does not speak of crimes  
Committed by others; gives what he can  
To those who seek his help; One like him  
Is dear to gods.

(**kovai**: a creeper whose fruits turn to a deep  
red. Botanical name: coccinia indica.)

35

துறந்தார் துறவாதார் துப்பிலார் தொன்றது  
இறந்தார் ஈடற்றார் இளையர் - சிறந்தவர்க்கும்  
பண்ணாரும் சொல்லாய் பழியில்ஊண்  
பாற்படுத்தான்  
மண்ணாளும் மன்னனாய் மற்று.

Lady with a musical voice! He who gives  
Good food to abandoned people, to guests,  
To the poor, to the dead who are invisible,  
To the helpless, to unguarded children  
And to elders becomes a king  
In his future birth.  
(to the dead who are invisible: the manes)

காலில்லார் கண்ணில்லார் நாவில்லார் யாரையும்  
பாலில்லார் பற்றிய நூலில்லார் - சாலவும்  
ஆழப் படும்ஊண் அமைத்தார் இமையவரால்  
வீழப் படுவார் விரைந்து.

Those who cook food and offer it liberally  
To the lame, the blind, the dumb,  
People who have none to guard them,  
And people with little education:  
Such persons are the beloved of gods.

37

அழப்போகான் அஞ்சான் அலறினால் கேளான்  
 எழப்போகான் ஈடற்றார் என்றும் - தொழப்போகான்  
 என்னேஇக் காலன்ஈடு ஓரான் தவமுயலான்  
 கொன்னே யிருத்தல் குறை.

Yama is not moved by weeping lives,  
 Nor afraid of heroes; he has no ear for laments,  
 Nor is he moved by a warm welcome.  
 He does not go away because the other is  
 weak,  
 Or he is saluted; alas, why do not people  
 Perform tapasya, realizing Yama's glory?  
 It is wrong to give up tapasya.

எழுத்தினால் நீங்காதுஎண் ணாலொழியாது ஏத்தி  
வழுத்தினால் மாறாது மாண்ட - ஒழுக்கினால்  
நேராமை சால உணர்வார் பெருந்தவம்  
போகாமை சாலப் புலை.

It is shameful for scholars to give up reciting  
The mantric syllables memorized by them,  
Their meditation and prayers. Also avoiding  
The premier discipline of renunciation  
And forfeit tapasya.

39

சாவது எளிதுஅரிது சான்றாண்மை நல்லது  
மேவல் எளிதுஅரிது மெய்ப்போற்றல் - ஆவதன்கண்  
சேறல் எளிது நிலைஅரிது தெள்ளியராய்  
வேறல் எளிதுஅரிது சொல்.

It is easy to die but hard to practice  
What one has learnt through studies. It is easy  
To marry but difficult to remain true  
To the dharma of domesticity. Easy to renounce  
But tough to stay put in renunciation.  
It is easy to say anything but hard to do it  
With a clear intelligence.



**40**

உலையாமை உற்றதற்கு ஓடி உயிரை  
அலையாமை ஐயப் படாமை - நிலையாமை  
தீர்க்கும்வாய் தேர்ந்து பசியுண்டு நீக்குவான்  
நோக்கும்வாய் விண்ணின் உயர்வு.

Not running around seeking relief  
From troubles, nor torturing other lives,  
Nor doubting rebirth, rejecting sense-impelled  
Desires and objects of enjoyment,  
Understanding the holy path that cuts down  
The cycle of rebirth, a person reaches heaven.

41

குறுகான் சிறியாரைக் கொள்ளான் புலால்பொய்  
மறுகான் பிறர்பொருள் வெளவான்-இறுகானாய்  
ஈடுஅற் றவர்க்குஈவா னாயின் நெறிநூல்கள்  
பாடிறப்ப பன்னும் இடத்து.

He will have nought to do with base persons.  
He avoids meat, does not engage in lies,  
Never thinks of robbing others but is generous  
In giving away his wealth. For such a person,  
Where is the use for ethical texts?

கொல்லான் உடன்படான் கொல்வார் இனஞ்சேரான்  
புல்லான் பிறப்பான் புலால்மயங்கல் - செல்லான்  
குடிப்படுத்துக் கூழாந்தான் கொல்யானை ஏறி  
அடிப்படுப்பான் மண் ஆண்டு அரசு.

He never kills, nor concurs with murder.  
Has no truck with homicidal gangs; nor will he  
Mingle with strangers, or consume meat.  
Along with his family he gives food to others.  
Such a person rules over the earth, and riding  
A war-elephant, defeats enemies.

43

சூதுஉவவான் பேரான் கலாவு உரையான் யார்  
 திறத்தும்  
 வாதுஉவவான் மாதரார் சொல்தேறான் - காதுதாழ்  
 வான்மகர் வார்குழையாய் மாதவர்க்கு ஊண்டந்தான்  
 தான்மகர வாய்மாடத் தான்.

Damsel with fish-shaped ear-rings!  
 He avoids gambling, will not stray from virtue,  
 Avoids words that hurt others, shuns arguments,  
 Holds no trust with words spoken by women,  
 Gives food to the renunciates. Such a person  
 Resides in a palace that has gates huge as  
 sharks.

பொய்யான் பொய் மேவான் புலால் உண்ணான்  
யாவரையும்  
வையான் வழிசீத்து வால்அடிசில் - நையாதே  
ஈத்துண்பான் ஆகும் இருங்கடல் சூழ் மண்ணரசாய்ப்  
பாத்துண்பான் ஏத்துண்பான் பாடு.

He never lies; nor permits others to lie;  
Eats no meat; does not mock others;  
Keeps everything in place for his guests  
And distributes wholesome food before eating.  
Such a person will become a ruler of the world  
And enjoy good life and gain fame.

45

இழுக்கான் இயல்நெறி இன்னாத வெஃகான்  
வழுக்கான் மனைபொருள் வெளவான்-ஒழுக்கத்தால்  
செல்வான் செயிரில்ஊன் ஈவான் அரசாண்டு  
வெல்வான் விடுப்பான் விரைந்து.

He does not go astray from his ideals;  
Never brings sorrow to others; ever honest  
Of his marriage vows; nor has a longing  
For the wealth of others. A sterling character,  
He gives wholesome food to guests.  
Such a person prevails over his enemies.

களியான்கள் ஞண்ணான் களிப்பாரைக் காணான்  
ஒளியான் விருந்திற்கு உலையான் - எளியாரை  
எள்ளாளனீத் துண்பானேல் ஏதமில் மண்ணாண்டு  
கொள்வான் குடிவாழ்வான் கூர்ந்து.

If one is never arrogant, eschews drinks,  
Has no liking for drunkards; does not hide  
Things from one's guests, does not fail  
In good behaviour, avoids speaking derisively  
Of the poor; and eats only after feeding others,  
He will be a ruler with a large circle of retainers.

47

பெரியார்சொல் பேணிப் பிறழாது நின்று  
பரியா அடியார்ப் பறியான் - கரியார் சொல்  
தேறான் இறையான் தெளிந்தடிசில் ஈத்துண்பான்  
மாறான்மண் ஆளுமாம் மபற்று.

He who follows unfailingly the commandments  
Of his elders, does not favour a servant nor  
reject him,  
Places no faith in the words of the wily,  
Meditates upon the ends of life and gains  
A clear intelligence, offers food to guests  
And then eats himself. He will surely be a ruler.



வேற்றரவம் சேரான் விருந்தொளியான் தன்இல்லுள்  
சோற்றரவம் சொல்லிஉண் பானாயின் மாற்றரவம்  
கேளான் கிளைஓம்பின் கேடில் அரசனாய்  
வாளால்மண் ணாண்டு வரும்.

He who speaks no evil, will not hide things  
From guests, eats only after inviting others  
With sweet words to come and have food,  
Protects his relations rejecting the words  
Of enemies against them: such a person  
Will live as an indestructible king, sword-strong.

யானை குதிரைபொன் கன்னியே ஆனிரையோடு  
ஏனை ஒழித்த இவையெல்லாம் - ஆன்நெய்யால்  
எண்ணனாய் மாதவர்க்கு ஊண்டிந்தான் வைசிர  
வண்ணனாய் வாழ்வான் வகுத்து.

He who thoughtfully gives elephants, horses, gold,  
Virgins, herds of cows and the rest to those persons  
Who are not engaged in tapasya, and gives people  
Engaged in intense askesis wholesome food with  
ghee,  
Will live long hailed as Kubera.

50

எள்ளேபருத்தியே எண்ணைய் உடுத்தாடை  
வள்ளே துணியே இவற்றோடு - கொள்ளென  
அன்புற்று அசனம் கொடுத்தான் துணையினோடு  
இன்புற்று வாழ்வான் இயைந்து.

One who lovingly gives to others sesame,  
Cotton thread, oil, dressing garments,  
Money and shawl as also food to eat saying  
With love, 'please take them' will certainly live  
With his wife and relatives in great joy.

51

உண்ணீர் வளம்குளம் கூவல் வழிப்புரை  
தண்ணீரை அம்பலம்தான் பாற்படுத்தான் - பண்ணீர்  
பாடலோடு ஆடல் பயின்றுயர் செல்வனாய்க்  
கூடலோடு ஊடலுளான் கூர்ந்து.

He is rich who constructs water sources, ponds,  
Wells, rest houses for wayfarers, water-stalls,  
Mandapas. He will enjoy for long songs set to  
music  
And dance, have pleasurable company of women  
Who love and tease him no end.

இல்லிழந்தார் கண்ணிழந்தார் ஈண்டியசெல்வம்  
இழந்தார்  
நெல்லிழந்தார் ஆனிரை தான்இந்தார்க்கு -  
எல்உழந்து  
பண்ணியூண் ஈந்தவர் பல்யானை மனனராய்  
எண்ணிஊண் ஆர்வார் இயைந்து.

Those who earn money by working day and night  
And dispense food to the shelterless, the blind,  
The poor, those who have lost their store of paddy,  
And those who have lost their cattle –  
They will live long eating food with their relatives,  
As kings possessing countless elephants.

## 53

கடம்பட்டார் காப்பில்லார் கைத்தில்லார் தங்கால்  
முடம்பட்டார் மூத்தார்மூப் பில்லார்க்கு - உடம்பட்டு  
உடையராய் இல்லுள்ஊணாத்துண்பார் மண்மேல்  
படையராய் வாழ்வார் பயின்று.

Those who cook food at home and give it willingly  
With love to debtors, those who have no guardians,  
The poverty-stricken, the lame, the aged and orphans,  
And then eat, will become kings with huge armies  
And live for long.

**54**

பார்ப்பார் பசித்தார் தவசிகள் பாலர்கள்  
கார்ப்பார் தமையாதும் காப்பிலார்- தூப்பால  
நிண்டாரால் எண்ணாது நீத்தவர் மண்ணாண்டு  
பண்டாரம் பற்றவாழ் வார்.

Those who do not expect recompense when engaged  
In eradicating the sorrows of Brahmins, the hungry,  
Renunciates, children, those who have no protection,  
And persons engaged in the crystalline path of askesis,  
Will be rulers on earth and live happily  
Surrounded by riches.

55

ஈன்றார்ஈன் கால்தளர்வார் சூலார் குழவிகள்  
 மான்றார் வலியால் மயங்கினார்க்கு - ஆனார் என்று  
 ஊண்டய்த்து உறுநோய் களைந்தார் பெருஞ்செல்வம்  
 காண்டய்த்து வாழ்வார் கலந்து.

Those who give food and chase away the sorrows  
 Of women who have given birth, women in labour,  
 Pregnant ladies, children, those who have lost their  
 senses,  
 They will live happily surrounded by relations,  
 And dispense wealth for the needy.



56

தளையாளர் தாப்பாளர் தாழ்ந்தவர் பெண்டிர்  
உளையாளர் ஊண் ஒன்றும் இல்லார் - கிளைஞராய்  
மாவலந்த நோக்கினாய் ஊண்டாய்ந்தார் மாக்கடல்கூழ்  
நாவலம்தீவு ஆள்வாரே நன்கு.

Damsel with eyes that rival that of a doe!  
Those who give food to shackled persons,  
The marginalized, persons fallen on evil days,  
Women, the sickly and the hungry will rule  
Over all this earth girt by the oceans.

57

கருஞ்சிரங்கு வெண்தொழுநோய் கல்வளி காயும்  
பெருஞ்சிரங்கு பேர்வயிற்றுத் தீயார்க்கு  
ஆற்றிஊண் ஈத்துஅவை தீர்த்தார் அரசராய்ப்  
போற்றிஊண் உண்பார் புரந்து.

Those who render help and sustenance  
To people suffering from severe pustules,  
Leprosy, kidney stones, palsy, and gangrene  
That are terrifying are good Samaritans  
Who will be born as rulers of kingdoms  
Praised by everyone.

காமாடார் காமியார் கல்லார் இனம்சேரார்  
ஆமாடார் ஆயந்தார் நெறிநின்று - தாமாடாது  
ஏற்றாரை இன்புற ஈயந்தார்முன் இம்மையான்  
மாற்றாரை மாற்றிவாழ் வார்.

Those who avoid sex, do not covet the wealth  
Of others, avoid the company of illiterates,  
Steer clear of water sports, follow the path  
Mapped by elders and give charity, are born  
As kings who overcome enemies.

59

வணங்கி வழியொழுகி மாண்டார்

சொல்கொண்டு

நுணங்கியநூல் நோக்கி நுழையா-இணங்கிய  
பால்நோக்கி வாழ்வான் பழிஇல்லா மன்னனாய்  
நூல்நோக்கி வாழ்வான் நுனித்து.

If one reveres elders, walks the noble path,  
Listens to the advice of wise and upright  
persons,  
Studies good books with care and lives  
According to the wisdom-ways found therein,  
He will be born as a blameless ruler  
And live well, engaged in studies.

60

பெருமைபுகழ் அறம் பேணாமை சீற்றம்  
அருமைநூல் சால்பில்லார் சாரின் இருமைக்கும்  
பாவம் பழிபகை சாக்காடே கேடச்சம்  
சாபம்போல் சாரும் சலித்து.

If one draws close to people who have no status,  
Fame or dharma, people who get annoyed,  
Have no desire for excellent books nor generosity,  
One will be accursed on earth and in the beyond,  
And be subject to sin, dishonour, enmity,  
Death and poverty.

61

ஆர்வமே செற்றம் கதமே அறையுங்கால்  
ஓர்வமே செய்யும் உலோபமே - சீர்சாலா  
மானமே மாயஉயிர்க்கு ஊனம் என்னுமே  
ஊனமே தீர்ந்தவர் ஒத்து.

The tomes of sterling scholars say:  
They who nurse desires, foster enmity,  
Promote anger, indulge in shameful escapades,  
Miserliness and self-promotion  
Actually injure their own persons  
Caught in the coils of mortality.

கூத்தும் விழவும் மணமும் கொலைக் களமும்  
ஆர்த்த முனையுள்ளும் வேறிடத்தும் - ஒத்தும்  
ஒழுக்கம் உடையவர் செல்லாரே செல்லின்  
இழுக்கம் இழவும் தரும்.

Those who are learned and are wise  
Do not go to arenas where dancing goes on,  
Weddings take place, where murderers are hung,  
Battlefields and such. If they persist in going,  
They will suffer and lose their wealth as well.

63

ஊனொடு கூறை எழுத்தாணிபுத்தகம்  
பேனொடும் எண்ணும் எழுத்திவை மானொடு  
கேட்டெழுதி ஓதிவாழ் வார்க்கு ஈயந்தார்  
இம்மையான்  
வேட்டெழுத வாழ்வார் விரிந்து.

Those who have a prosperous existence  
In this birth and have poets come forward  
To write about them, must have possessed virtues  
In the past, given food, garments, quills  
And palm leaves to students who read and write  
Taking lessons in mathematics and grammar.



64

உயர்ந்தான் தலைவனென்று ஒப்புடைத்தான் நோக்கி  
உயர்ந்தான் நூல்ஓதி ஒடுங்கி - உயர்ந்தான்  
அருந்தவம் ஆற்றச் செயின்வீடாம் என்றார்  
பெருந்தவம் செய்தார் பெரிது.

The wise who excel in askesis say:  
If one realizes that God is supreme, studies well  
The scriptures of wisdom granted by him,  
Gets absorbed in them and performs tapasya  
Meditating on the supreme, he gets Realisation.

65

காலனார் ஈடறுத்தல் காண்குறின் முற்றுணர்ந்த  
பாலனார் நூலமர்ந்து பாராது - வாலிதா  
ஊறுபாடு இல்லா உயர்தவம் தான்புரியின்  
ஏறுமோ மேலுலகம் ஓர்ந்து.

If one hopes to overcome Yama's might,  
One should study works on the all-knowing  
Divine,  
And perform askesis pure and blameless,  
Without caring for the difficulties.  
One can then gain the very heavens.

66

பொய்தீர் புலவர் பொருள்புரிந்து ஆராய்ந்த  
மைதீர் உயர்கதியின் மாண்புரைப்பின் - மைதீர்  
சுடரின்று சொல்லின்று மாறின்று சோர்வின்று  
இடரின்று இனிதுயிலும் இன்று.

The truthful poets who have analysed  
The nature of Realisation say: in that state  
There is no sun to chase darkness away.  
There is no speech. Nor a state of change.  
No tiredness nor sorrow. Nor sweet sleep.

67

கூரம்பு வெம்மண்ணல் ஈர்மணி தூங்கலும்  
ஈரும் புகையிரு ளோடு இருள்நூல் - ஆராய்ந்து  
அழிகதி இம்முறையான் ஆன்றார் அறைந்தார்  
இழிகதி இம்முறையான்ஏழு.

The wise speak of seven hells which they have  
Escaped: the space where sharp arrows are aimed,  
Where spreads burning sand, where lie gem stones  
Cool to touch, where one feels a constant drowse,  
Where it is dark and where smoke smothers lives.

சாதல்பொருள்கொடுத்தல் இன்சொல் புணர்வு  
உவுத்தல்

நோதல் பிரிவில் கவறலே - ஓதலின்  
அன்புடையார் உள்ளன ஆறு குணமாக  
மென்புடையார் வைத்தார் விரித்து.

The gentle poets have extolled in verse even thus  
What the wise men say: real friends give up their life  
When losing their friends, help when they are in need,  
Speak sweetly to them, desire their company,  
And sorrow when the friends are sad,  
Getting disturbed when they have to leave.

69

எடுத்தல் முடக்கல் நிமிர்த்தல் நிலையே  
படுத்தலோடு ஆடல் பகரின் - அடுத்துயிர்  
ஆறு தொழிலென்று அறைந்தார் உயர்ந்தவர்  
வேறு தொழிலாய் விரித்து

The wise speak of living beings with a body  
As engaged in six different modes  
Of employment; stretching the limbs,  
Folding them up, straightening them,  
Standing, lying down, and moving.

70

ஐயமே பிச்சை அருந்தவர்க்கு ஊண்ஆடை  
ஐயமேஇன்றி அறிந்து ஈந்தான் - வையமும்  
வானும் வரிசையால் தானாளும் நாளுமே  
ஈனமே இன்றி இனிது.

Giving charity, alms, food and dress to people  
Who are engaged in tapasya after learning  
Of their true nature with no doubts nagging him,  
Results in the giver assuredly ruling the earth  
And the heavens too at all times.

(aiyam,pichai: Though both the words indicate giving charity, 'aiyam' is when plentiful gifts are given to worthy people, and 'pichai' is giving what is needed for subsistence to young students and renunciates.)

71

நடப்பார்க்கு ஊண் நல்ல பொறைதாங்கினார்க்கு  
 ஊண்  
 கிடப்பார்க்கு ஊண் கேளிர்க்கு ஊண் கேடின்று  
 உடல்சார்ந்த  
 வானகத்தார்க்கு ஊணே மறுதலையார்க்கு  
 ஊண் அமைத்தான்  
 தானகத்தே வாழ்வான் தக.

One assuredly gains the good life in his home  
 When he gives food to wayfarers, to those  
 Who carry heavy burdens, to sick persons  
 And relations, his ancestors in the beyond  
 And visitors from foreign lands.



உணராமை யால்குற்றம் ஒத்தான் வினையாம்  
உணரான் வினைப்பிறப்புச் செய்யும் - உணராத  
தொண்டுஇருந் துன்பம் தொடரும் பிறப்பினால்  
மண்டிலமும் ஆகும் மதி.

Ignorance breeds evil. Studies help in performing  
Good works. One who engages himself in action  
Without gaining wisdom from books invites rebirth.  
Birth cycles bind one to the nine attachments unknowingly  
And fixes him in the cycle. Ponder over this.

[nine attachments:

1. jeeva (life)
2. ajiva (matter)
3. punya (results of good deeds)
4. paapa (results of bad deeds)
5. asrava (continuations through births)
6. bandha (shackles due to wrong understanding)
7. samvara (ability to move beyond likes and dislikes)
8. nirjara (ability to destroy all karmas through tapasya and good discipline)
9. moksha (Realisation of the supreme knowledge)]

**73**

மனைவாழ்க்கை மாதவம் என்றிரண்டும் மாண்ட  
வினைவாழ்க்கை யாக விழைய-மனைவாழ்க்கை  
பற்றுதல் இன்றி விடுதல்முன் சொல்லுமேல்  
பற்றுதல் பாத்தில் தவம்.

The wise consider the life of a householder  
As well as that of an ascetic as of equal merit  
To gain punya. The way of the householder  
Rivets on attachment to life. Renunciation  
Calls for giving up all desires and live  
Seeking to gain realization.

இடைவனப்படும் தோள்வனப்படும் ஈடில் வனப்படும்  
நடைவனப்படும் நாணின் வனப்படும் - புடைசால்  
கழுத்தின் வனப்படும் வனப்பல்ல எண்ணோடு  
எழுத்தின் வனப்பே வனப்பு.

A handsome hip, beautiful shoulders, an attractive  
Well-structured body, gait that moves with grace,  
The charm of shyness, a perfectly formed neck;  
These do not mark genuine beauty. Real beauty  
Comes with a knowledge of mathematics  
And rich literature.

75

அறுவர்தம் நூலும் அறிந்துணர்வு பற்றி  
 மறுவரவு மாறான நீக்கி - மறுவரவின்  
 மாசா ரியனா மறுதலைச்சொல் மாற்றுதலே  
 ஆசா ரியனது அமைவு.

The duties of a spiritual teacher are:  
 Study well the scriptures of the six religions,  
 Gain illumination by understanding them,  
 Remove thoughts that are antithetical,  
 Live a blameless life of sterling character  
 And reject words that are inimical to Good.

ஒல்லுவ நல்ல உருவவேற் கண்ணினாய்  
வல்லுவ நாடி வகையினால் - சொல்லின்  
கொடையினார் போகம் சுவர்க்கம் தவத்தால்  
அடையாத் தவத்தினால் வீடு.

Damsel with eyes that are identical in lance-like  
Beauty! By performing charity after understanding  
Scholarly tomes on the subject, one gains happiness  
On earth; by tapasya one gains the heavens;  
By the askesis of detachment, Realisation

நாற்கதியும் துன்ப நவைதீர்த்தல் வேண்டுவான்  
 பாற்கதியின் பாற்பட ஆராய்ந்து நாற்கதியின்  
 எல்லை உயர்த்தார் தவமுயலின் மூன்று ஐந்துஏழ்  
 வல்லை வீடுஆகும் வகு.

He who would remove the sorrows of life  
 In the four states must understand the nature  
 Of the states well and perform tapasya as indicated  
 In scriptures and followed by sages. He will then gain  
 Release in his third, fifth or seventh birth.

(**four states:** Deva gati, Naraka gati, vilangu (animal) gati and makkaL (human) gati. In all these four states one gains nothing but sorrow. To overcome sorrow, one must analyse the causes of sorrow in these states and perform tapasya of sages. Such a person will gain Realisation either in his third, fifth or seventh birth.)

தாயிழந்த பிள்ளை. தலையிழந்த பெண்டாட்டி  
வாயிழந்த வாழ்வினார் வாணிகம் - போயிழந்தார்  
கைத்தூண் பொருளிழந்தார் கண்ணிலவர்க்கு ஈந்தார்  
வைத்து வழங்கி வாழ் வார்.

They would earn riches, share it with others  
And enjoy it if they help a child that is motherless,  
A wife who has lost her husband, a dumb person,  
A trader who has lost his principal, a person who has lost  
His meal, and one who has lost his eyesight.

79

சாக்காடு கேடு பகைதுன்பம் இன்பமே  
நாக்காடு நாட்டறை போக்குமென - நாக்காட்ட  
நட்டார்க்கு இயையின் தமைக்கியைந்த கூறுஉடம்  
பட்டார்வாய்ப் பட்டது பண்பு.

Death, disaster, enmity, sorrow,  
Joy and accusation uttered by a friend –  
If these happen to a friend, and his companion  
Accepts them as having happened to himself,  
That is a virtue.



புலையாளார் புண்பட்டார் கண்கெட்டார் போக்கில்  
நிலையாளர் நீர்மை இழந்தார் - தலையாளர்க்கு  
ஊண்கொடுத்து ஊற்றாய் உதவினார் மன்னராய்  
காண்கொடுத்து வாழ்வார் கலந்து.

Those who offer food to help the marginalized,  
The wounded, the blind, the wayfarers on the move,  
The dispossessed and those who are virtuous,  
Are bound to live as kings surrounded by relatives  
Happily, dispensing charity to the poor.

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