

Department of Employment and Training

TNPSC GROUP II MAINS - UNIT II

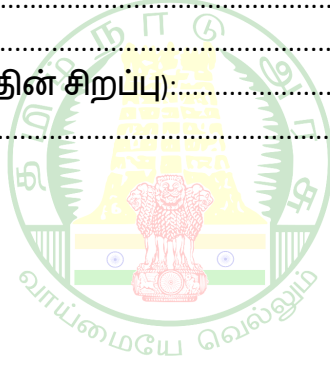
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Director,
Department of Employment and Training.

Thirukkural:

- **Thirukkural** is a classical Tamil literary masterpiece authored by **Thiruvalluvar**, a poet-philosopher of the Sangam period in ancient Tamil Nadu, India.
- It is celebrated as a universal ethical guide and has been translated into many languages worldwide.
- The text is renowned for its brevity, clarity, and depth, offering moral, social, and spiritual wisdom.

Structure of Thirukkural

- **Divisions:** The text comprises **133 chapters**, with **10 couplets per chapter**, totaling **1,330 couplets**.
- **Sections:**
 1. **Aram (Virtue):** Focuses on ethical living and righteousness.
 2. **Porul (Wealth):** Discusses governance, politics, and wealth management.
 3. **Inbam (Love):** Reflects on human emotions, love, and relationships.
- Each couplet adheres to the literary form **Kural Venba** (a classical Tamil poetic meter).

Secular Nature of Thirukkural

1. **Universal Ethics:**
 - Thirukkural transcends religious and cultural boundaries, promoting values applicable to all humanity.
 - It emphasizes principles like truth, non-violence, justice, and compassion, devoid of sectarian references.
2. **Absence of Religious Bias:**
 - The text does not align itself with any specific religion or deity.
 - It addresses moral and ethical issues from a rational perspective, making it accessible to people of all beliefs.
3. **Focus on Human Values:**
 - It celebrates human virtues like integrity, gratitude, and humility.
 - The work advocates a balanced approach to life, integrating material and spiritual well-being.
4. **Guidance for Governance:**
 - The **Porul** section provides insights into leadership, justice, and statecraft, applicable to rulers and administrators.
5. **Social Harmony:**
 - Thirukkural emphasizes equality, condemning caste and social discrimination.
 - It upholds the dignity of labor and stresses the importance of education for all.

Significance in Secular Literature

1. Timeless Relevance:

- Thirukkural remains relevant across ages due to its focus on universal human values.
- It addresses contemporary issues like governance, environmental ethics, and interpersonal relationships.

2. Global Appeal:

- Its translation into numerous languages has made it a global text, transcending cultural and linguistic barriers.

3. Practical Wisdom:

- Thirukkural provides practical guidelines for personal, social, and political life.
- It is a manual for ethical living, offering solutions to everyday challenges.

4. Cultural Identity:

- It serves as a cornerstone of Tamil culture and heritage while being embraced worldwide for its secular values.

Uniqueness of Thirukkural

Thirukkural is a universal masterpiece written in Tamil, yet it does not contain words like "Tamil," "Tamilians," or "Tamil Nadu." This highlights its global relevance and timeless appeal.

As Tamil scholar Thiru. V. Kalyanasundaram said:

"Thirukkural does not belong to a particular class, religion, race, language, or nation. It is universal."

This universality is why Thirukkural has been translated into numerous languages, becoming a revered text worldwide.

Thirukkural and Religion

Thiruvalluvar regarded all humanity as one family, with his teachings applicable to people of all religions and communities.

For example, in the verse:

"பிறப்பொக்கும் எல்லா உயிர்க்கும்"

(Pirappokkum ella uyirrkum)

"All are equal by birth,"

he emphasizes equality and universal brotherhood, promoting unity and inclusivity.

Thiruvalluvar's works reflect:

- Neutrality toward any specific religion.
- Teachings that transcend sectarian divisions and bring communities together.

Thirukkural and the Concept of God

Thiruvalluvar refers to God as the **"One beyond all"** who is free from attachments and desires. This idea is beautifully captured in the following verse:

"பற்றுக் பற்றற்றான் பற்றினை அப்பற்றைப்
பற்றுக் பற்று விடற்கு"

(Patruga patratraan patrinai appattraip
Patruga pattru vidarku)

"Cling to the One who is free of attachments;
Detach yourself from all else to be truly free."

Here, Thiruvalluvar emphasizes that liberation comes by seeking the divine who is beyond worldly attachments.

Secularism in Thirukkural

Thirukkural is a secular text that respects all religions while remaining unbiased.

1. "அகர முதல எழுத்தெல்லாம் ஆதிபகவான்
முதற்றே உலகு"
(Agaram mudhala ezhuththellam aadhi bhagavan
Mudhatre ulagu)
"A begins the alphabet; so does God underlie the universe."
 - Just as 'A' is the root of all letters, God is the foundation of existence. This verse refers to God in a universal sense, without mentioning any specific deity.
2. "மலர்மிசை ஏகினான் மாணடி சேர்ந்தார்
நிலமிசை நீடுவாழ் வார்"
(Malarmisai yaeginan maadadi seerndhaar
Nilamisai needu vaazhvaar)
"Those who stand by the feet of Him who dwells in the flower of love
Shall live long, blessed on earth."
 - This signifies devotion to a compassionate God who transcends religious boundaries.
3. "வேண்டுதல் வேண்டாமை இலானடி சேர்ந்தார்க்கு
யாண்டும் இடும்பை இல"
(Venduthal vendaamai ilaanaadi seerndhaarkku
Yandum idumbai ila)
"To those who worship the feet of the unattached
No suffering will ever come."
 - Reverence for a desireless and impartial God ensures freedom from adversity.

Foundations for Success in Life

Aspirations with Higher Thoughts

To achieve success in life, having noble dreams and elevated thoughts is essential. Thiruvalluvar emphasizes this through the couplet:

"வெள்ளத்து அனைய நீர்மட்டம் மாந்தர்தம்
உள்ளது அனையது உயர்வு"

(As the water level rises in a tank, so does the height of the lotus. Similarly, a person's greatness depends on their aspirations.)

Additionally, he states:

"உள்ளுவதெல்லாம் உயர்வுள்ளல் மற்றது
தள்ளினும் தள்ளாமை தீர்த்து"

(Always think of elevated goals; even if they don't materialize, the effort will bring peace of mind.)

This signifies that keeping lofty aspirations leads to success and mental tranquility, even when outcomes may vary.

Setting Clear Goals

Defining and understanding the purpose of a goal is vital for success. Thiruvalluvar advises analyzing and planning before initiating any action:

"எண்ணித் துணிக கருமம் துணிந்தபின்
எண்ணுவம் என்பது இழுக்கு"

(Plan thoroughly before starting a task; analyzing mid-way leads to difficulties.)

Choosing the wrong objective or failing to act can result in failure, as highlighted by:

"செய்தக்க அல்ல செயக்கெடும் செய்தக்க
செய்யாமை யானும் கெடும்"

(Inappropriate actions fail, as does inaction in appropriate matters.)

Furthermore, discussing goals and plans with experienced individuals ensures clarity and direction, as noted by Thiruvalluvar.

Strategic Planning for Success

Success requires meticulous planning. Thiruvalluvar outlines five critical elements for achieving success:

"பொருள்கருவி காலம் வினையிடனொடு ஐந்தும்
இருள்தீர எண்ணிச் செயல்"

(Resources, tools, timing, methods, and place must be analyzed before undertaking any action.)

1. Resources and Tools

The first step in planning is to gather the necessary resources and tools.

"பொருள் இல்லார்க்கு இவ்வுலகம் இல்லாகி..."

(Without resources, one cannot thrive in this world.)

2. Assessing Capability

Evaluate personal strengths, weaknesses, and external factors before taking action.

"வினைவலியும் தன்வலியும் மாற்றான் வலியும்

துணைவலியும் தூக்கிச் செயல்"

(Analyze the strength of the task, oneself, allies, and opponents before proceeding.)

3. Right Timing

Choosing the appropriate time for action is crucial.

"காலம் கருதி இருப்பர் கலங்காது

ஞாலம் கருது பவர்"

(The wise await the right moment to act without hesitation.)

4. Identifying the Right Place

Select the most suitable location to carry out the task.

"ஞாலம் கருதினும் கைகூடும் காலம்

கருதி இடத்தாற் செயின்"

(Even great ambitions succeed when acted upon at the right place and time.)

Life Begins with Family and Ends with Renunciation

Our life starts with the responsibilities of a family and ends with renunciation. Thiruvalluvar highlights the importance of leading a virtuous family life:

"அறத்தாற்றின் இல்வாழ்க்கை ஆற்றின் புறத்தாற்றில்

போஷ்ப் பெறுவ தெவன்"

(The family life lived virtuously fulfills all needs; no further renunciation is necessary.)

Family Life: The Foundation of Society

A family is not merely a home where husband, wife, and children live; it is a sacred space where virtues and responsibilities are nurtured.

Thiruvalluvar emphasizes living a life that is above reproach:

"அரவிந் எனப்பட்டதே இல்வாழ்க்கை அஃதும்
பிறன்பழிப்ப தில்லாயின் நன்று"
(Family life is noble as long as it remains free from blame by others.)

Parents and Children

Thiruvalluvar beautifully describes the joy parents derive from their children:

"அமிழ்தினும் ஆற்ற இனிதேதம் மக்கள்
சிறுகை அளாவிய கூழ்"
(The touch of their child's little hands and the food shared by them are sweeter than nectar.)

"மக்கள்மெய் தீண்டல் உடற்கின்பம் மற்றவர்
சொற்கேட்டல் இன்பம் செவிக்கு"
(The touch of one's children brings joy to the body; their words are music to the ears.)

Father and Son

A father's primary duty is to ensure that his son grows into a person of wisdom and respect:

"தந்தை மகற்காற்று நன்றி அவையத்து
முந்தி இருப்பச் செயல்"
(A father's duty is to guide his son to excel in society with leadership and wisdom.)

In turn, a son's responsibility is to make his father proud:

"மகன் தந்தைக்காற்றும் உதவி இவன் தந்தை
என்னோற்றான் கொல்எனும் சொல்"
(A son honors his father by his actions, answering the question, "What kind of man raised him?")

Mother and Son

A mother's joy is unmatched when her son becomes a virtuous person:

"ஈன்றாள் முகத்தேயும் இன்னாதால் என்மற்றுச்
சான்றோர் முகத்துக் களி"
(A mother's pride is greatest when her son earns respect from the wise.)

"ஈன்ற பொழுதின் பெரிதுவக்கும் தன்மகனைச்
சான்றோன் எனக்கேட்ட தாய்"
(A mother's happiness on hearing her son called a virtuous man exceeds her joy at his birth.)

The Ethics of Family Life

The foundation of family life rests on the character of the wife, as she ensures harmony, virtue, and prosperity:

"தற்காத்து தற்கொண்டான் பேணித் தகைசான்ற
சொற்காத்துச் சோர்விலாள் பெண்"

(The ideal wife safeguards her family's virtue, reputation, and resources.)

"மனைத்தக்க மாண்புடையள் ஆகித்தற் கொண்டான்
வளத்தக்காள் வாழ்க்கைத் துணை"

(A virtuous wife is the foundation of a successful family life.)

The Ultimate Message

Living a virtuous family life fulfills all spiritual and worldly needs. Thiruvalluvar's teachings remind us that family relationships are the bedrock of happiness, prosperity, and moral strength.

Through these profound verses, we understand that embracing family life with responsibility and virtue leads to fulfillment and negates the necessity for renunciation.

Culture (பண்பாடு):

Culture emerged when society began to recognize the importance of humanity and coexistence.

Thiruvalluvar emphasizes that a person who is filled with love and born in a good family is the one who possesses true culture.

"அன்புடைமை ஆன்ற குடிப்பிறத்தல் இவ்விரண்டும்
பண்புடைமை என்னும் வழக்கு"

Explanation:

Both love and noble birth are intertwined to form true culture. A cultured person carries these qualities, enhancing the society in which they live.

Furthermore, Thiruvalluvar states:

"பண்புடையார்ப் பட்டுண்டு உலகம் அதுஇன்றேல்
மண்புக்கு மாய்வது மண்"

Explanation:

The world thrives on the virtue of cultured people. Without them, the world would lose its structure and fall into chaos, like dust blown by the wind. The presence of cultured people ensures order and peace.

Wisdom (அறிவுடைமை):

Wisdom is a tool that prevents destruction and helps one see the truth. Thiruvalluvar defines wisdom as the ability to see the reality of things, distinguishing between what is true and false.

"அறிவுடையார் ஆவ தறிவார் அறிவிலார்
அஃதறி கல்லா தவர்"

Explanation:

A wise person understands the world with clarity. Those without wisdom, on the other hand, are like blind men, lost in the world. Wisdom is the key to navigating life and avoiding unnecessary suffering.

Thiruvalluvar further advises:

"அறிவினான் ஆகுவது உண்டோ? பிறிதின்றோய்
தம்மைப்போல் போற்றாக் கடை"

Explanation:

What use is knowledge if it doesn't benefit others? Wisdom should lead one to act selflessly, recognizing the pain of others as if it were one's own. The true value of wisdom lies in its ability to alleviate suffering.

Instability (நிலையாமை):

Nothing in the world is permanent. Life and circumstances change at every moment, and human experiences of joy and sorrow ebb and flow. Thiruvalluvar expresses this in his teachings:

"நெருநல் உளனொருவன் இன்றில்லை எனும்
பெருமை உடைத்துஇவ் வுலகு"

Explanation:

No situation is permanent, and no person's life remains the same. Everything is in constant flux. Recognizing this reality helps in accepting both joys and sorrows with balance.

Education (கல்வி):

Education is the process of uncovering and developing the potential and talents hidden within a person. Thiruvalluvar emphasizes that everyone should seek education, pursue it diligently, and live by its teachings.

"கற்க கசடற கற்பவை கற்றபின்
நிற்க அதற்குத் தக"

Explanation:

One must learn without flaw and, after acquiring knowledge, live by it. True education is not just about gaining knowledge but applying it in daily life to achieve success and righteousness.

Thiruvalluvar further states:

"கேடில் விழுச்செல்வம் கல்வி யொருவற்கு
மாடல்ல மற்றை யவை"

Explanation:

Unlike material wealth, which is confined to one's home or land, education brings wealth to a person wherever they go. Knowledge is a treasure that remains with you, regardless of location.

Thiruvalluvar also asserts:

"ஒருமைக்கண் தான்கற்ற கல்வி ஒருவற்கு
எழுமையும் ஏமாப் புடைத்து"

Education protects a person across all stages of life. Unlike fleeting youth, beauty, or wealth, knowledge remains constant and serves as a safeguard throughout one's life, even in future incarnations.

Thus, education is the ultimate asset that shapes an individual's future and preserves their well-being across lifetimes.

Ethics (ஒழுக்கம்):

Ethics is considered more valuable than life itself. Without ethics, there will be no progress in one's life, and therefore, one should live with ethics.

Kural:

- "ஒழுக்கம் விழுப்பம் தரலான் ஒழுக்கம்
உயிரினும் ஒம்பப் படும்"
- *"Ethics brings glory, and it is even more valuable than life itself."* (Kural 320)

Explanation: Good ethics support a prosperous life. They are the foundation for happiness, elevation, and well-being. Bad ethics always bring suffering, and without ethics, one cannot attain purity, happiness, or elevation.

Duties (கடமைகள்):

There is nothing greater than being able to bring good people into the world, and the mothers who bore figures like Gandhi, Abdul Kalam, and Kamarajar must be honored.

Kural:

- "தந்தை மகனுக்கு ஆற்றும் நன்றி அவையத்து
முந்தி இருப்பச் செயல்"

- *"The service a father performs for his son should be followed by the son's actions and good conduct."* (Kural 611)

Explanation: A parent's deeds and help should guide the child to grow with good virtues. Parents' qualities serve as guidance for their children.

Virtue of Scholars (சான்றோரின் சிறப்பு):

Scholars should possess five essential virtues: love, modesty, respect, insight, and truthfulness.

Kural:

- "அன்புநாண் ஒப்புரவு கண்ணோட்டம் வாய்மையொடு ஐந்துசால் ஊன்றிய தூண்"
 - *"The five virtues of a scholar are: love, modesty, respect, insight, and truthfulness, which form the foundation of their character."* (Kural 631)

Explanation: These five qualities are the hallmark of true scholars, reflecting their high moral and intellectual stature.

Importance of Righteousness (அறத்தின் சிறப்பு):

A righteous life is not deceiving, not rejecting, and avoids greed, anger, and bad speech. Righteousness ensures life and protects the individual.

Kural:

- "அழுக்காறு அவாவெகுளி இன்னாச்சொல் நான்கும் இழுக்கா இயன்றது அறம்"
 - *"Righteousness is the quality that avoids greed, anger, bad speech, and deceit."* (Kural 230)

Explanation: Living a righteous life helps avoid harmful emotions and actions. Righteousness is the foundation of a virtuous life and ensures the protection of one's soul.

Sweet Words (இனிய சொல்):

One should use sweet words, as they bring joy and happiness, while harsh words harm the listener.

Kural:

- "இனிய உளவாக இன்னாத கூறல் கனியிருப்ப காய் கவர்ந்தற்று"

- "One should speak sweet words that bring happiness, just like picking ripe fruits." (Kural 1263)

Explanation: Sweet words soothe the heart and bring joy, while harsh words should be avoided. Good words can elevate the spirit and promote positivity.

Women's Virtue (பெண்களின் சிறப்பு):

Women should manage their own lives and contribute to dharma (righteousness) by maintaining good conduct and virtue.

Kural:

- "தற்காத்துத் தற்கொண்டாற் பேணித் தகைசான்ற
சொற்காத்துச் சோர்விலாள் பெண்"
○ "A woman should manage her own life and care for herself while maintaining
righteousness and good conduct." (Kural 1156)

Explanation: Women should focus on self-care, manage their responsibilities, and live virtuously, ensuring the dignity and peace of their lives.

Hospitality (விருந்தோம்பல்):

Hospitality is an important virtue. Welcoming guests and offering them joy is a sign of good character.

Kural:

- "அகமனம் மருந்து செய்யுள் உறையும் முகனமர்ந்து
நல்விருந்து ஓம்புவான் இல்"
○ "Hospitality is a remedy for the heart, and the host who welcomes guests with joy is
superior." (Kural 1181)

Explanation: Hosting guests with love and generosity brings happiness to both the host and the guest, demonstrating the host's good nature.

Wealth and Education (கல்வி)

- "கேடில் விழுச்செல்வம் கல்வி யொருவற்கு
மாடல்ல மற்றை யவை"
○ "Education is wealth that yields success wherever you go, unlike material wealth that is
confined to a place." (Kural 397)

Explanation: While material wealth may be limited, education is a wealth that benefits you wherever you go and throughout your life.

The Protective Power of Education (கல்வி):

Education is not only a means of intellectual growth but also a shield that protects an individual throughout life, beyond youth, beauty, and wealth.

Kural:

- "ஒருமைக்கண் தான்கற்ற கல்வி ஒருவற்கு
எழுமையும் ஏமாப் புடைத்து"
 - "The education that one acquires will act as a shield and protect through all phases of life, beyond youth, beauty, and wealth." (Kural 398)

Explanation: Education is the lasting armor that protects an individual, unlike physical attributes or wealth that may fade away.

Conclusion:

The *Thirukkural* is a timeless guide to righteous living, offering wisdom on various aspects of life. Through these verses, Thiruvalluvar provides clear instructions on how to live virtuously, communicate kindly, and navigate life's challenges. His teachings encourage us to embrace love, wisdom, and impermanence while avoiding the pitfalls of greed, vengeance, and inappropriate desires. Thus, the *Thirukkural* remains a fundamental text for guiding human behavior in all walks of life.

Practice Questions:

- 1.How does the secular nature of Thirukkural contribute to its universal appeal and relevance across cultures and religions?
 - 2.How does Thiruvalluvar emphasize the importance of strategic planning and ethical family life in achieving personal and societal success?
- tamil translation

