

Department of Employment and Training

TNPSC GROUP II MAINS - UNIT II

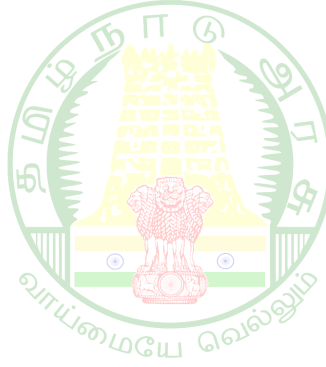
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Topic : Philosophical thoughts laid down by Thirukkural for betterment and integration of the whole of humanity

Table of Content

Thirukkural for betterment and integration of the whole of humanity.....	2
The Impact on Humanity:.....	3
Timeless Human Values.....	5
The Principle of Love in Thirukkural.....	8
Mercy and Life:.....	10
Practice Questions:.....	10



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Director,
Department of Employment and Training.

Thirukkural for betterment and integration of the whole of humanity

Thirukkural, a masterpiece of Tamil literature, is a treasure trove of ethical and philosophical wisdom. It addresses the various dimensions of life, offering universal values, principles, and ideals. In the growth of human society, the influence of humanity and its timeless values play a vital role in shaping individual thought processes and driving collective progress.

Impact on Humanity

Righteousness and Ethics

ஒழுக்கம் விழுப்பந் தரலான் ஒழுக்கம்
உயிரினும் ஒம்பப் படும் (Kural 131)

Righteousness and ethics form the foundation of humanity. When individuals act with integrity, their actions inspire trust and responsibility in others. Values that promote unity and harmony are universally applicable, ensuring that one's actions positively influence the well-being of others.

Philosophy for Social Welfare

"அன்பும் அறனும் உடைத்தாயின் இல்வாழ்க்கை
பண்பும் பயனும் அது." (Kural 45)

Higher qualities like love, compassion, justice, and patience uplift society. As individuals live within a community, their interactions with others must be marked by goodwill and moral conduct. This fosters equality and fraternity, reinforcing unity and collective welfare in society.

The Essence of Thirukkural

"அன்பின் வழியது உயிர்நிலை அஃதிலார்க்கு
என்புதோல் போர்த்த உடம்பு. (Kural 80)

Thirukkural emphasizes love and righteousness as the cornerstones of human existence. The unity and harmony arising from humanity's influence are essential for societal progress. It directs individuals to uphold virtuous qualities and ensures that moral order prevails in collective living.

A life based on love, compassion, justice, patience, and righteousness is always elevated. These values remain as central philosophies for humanity, no matter how much time passes. They transcend time and remain as high ideals that are relevant in all eras.

1. Love and Compassion:

Love is an eternal and unchanging value in human life. Love not only strengthens relationships but also involves considering the well-being of others in one's actions. Compassion is an expression of love. It involves standing up to help others and taking an active interest in their welfare.

2. Honesty and Justice:

Honesty is an essential value that reflects the inner consciousness of an individual. Those who lead a life of honesty are elevated in society. Such people speak the truth, oppose injustice, and promote good deeds.

Justice holds significant importance in the structure of society. Based on justice, people can fulfill their rights and duties fairly and equally.

3. Patience and Public Welfare:

Patience is one of the most admirable qualities in human actions. It provides the ability to act calmly in any situation and make decisions with resolve. Without patience, it becomes difficult to resolve the issues that arise in society.

A strong commitment to public welfare, which reflects such noble human values, is a foundational element that contributes to the progress of society.

4. Moral Life:

Dharma (righteousness) is a timeless and universal value that holds significance in any society. Living according to dharma is the most important principle in a person's life. When one follows dharma, every aspect of their life will be enriched. This not only benefits their personal well-being but also has a profound impact on the welfare of society as a whole.

The Impact on Humanity:

Humanity refers to the essence of the human race, signifying a life rooted in compassion, ethics, and virtue. The manifestation of this essence is seen through qualities like compassion, morality, love, and duty. The impact of humanity is evident in the changes brought about in society through human ethics, ways of life, and actions. These changes, which are driven by human values, reflect the true nature of human existence and its ongoing evolution.

Thirukkural focuses on how **values** such as **virtue**, **compassion**, **justice**, **love**, and **patience** are key to building a meaningful and prosperous life for individuals and society as a whole. Through these principles, **Thirukkural** emphasizes the importance of maintaining moral integrity, serving others, and contributing to the collective good.

Philosophies for Social Welfare:

- **Human Virtues:** The virtues of love, compassion, justice, and patience, when widely practiced in a society, elevate the quality of life for all people.
- **Living in Harmony:** Humans, while living in a community, should interact with others harmoniously and with good qualities. This fosters social unity through mutual respect for equality and brotherhood.

- **Impact on Society:** When these virtues are implemented, they help ensure equality, unity, and the well-being of the community as a whole.

3. Social Order and Democracy:

- **Social Order:** Social order is influenced by the actions of individuals in fulfilling their responsibilities. When individuals act responsibly, it leads to a well-ordered society.
- **Curbing Injustice:** People must work together to prevent crime, injustice, and immorality, choosing peaceful coexistence over violence.
- **Democratic Governance:** Democratic systems are vital for human progress. People place their trust in self-governance, and maintain social order based on principles of fairness, justice, and integrity.
- **Role of the People:** A well-functioning democracy ensures that people remain honest and responsible in their political actions.

4. Environmental Impact on Humanity:

- **Environmental Degradation:** Human activities, such as excessive technological use, deforestation, and destruction of green spaces, severely harm the environment.
- **Consequences:** These actions not only damage the ecosystem but also negatively impact human health and contribute to poverty.
- **Environmental Awareness:** There is a growing emphasis on environmental conservation and awareness to protect both the environment and humanity's well-being.

Timeless Human Values

Human life, built upon values like **love, compassion, justice, patience,** and **virtue**, is always elevated. These values remain central to human philosophy, untouched by time, and stand as guiding principles in all eras. They transcend generations, becoming eternal ideals that continue to influence society across ages.

Love and Compassion:

Love is a timeless and unchanging value in human life. It not only strengthens relationships but also fosters a sense of empathy, where one's actions take into account the well-being of others. Compassion, as an extension of love, involves being considerate of others' suffering and standing ready to help. It is the willingness to act for the welfare of others, showing deep concern and support.

Integrity and Justice:

Integrity is a crucial value reflecting one's inner sense of right and wrong. It is the foundation of honesty and moral uprightness. People who live with integrity are admired in society because they uphold the truth, resist injustice, and promote good deeds. Justice, similarly, plays a pivotal role in the structure of

any society. It ensures that people are able to fulfill their rights and responsibilities, providing a balanced and fair foundation for all. Through justice, individuals and communities can live harmoniously, with a clear sense of moral duty and entitlement.

These timeless human values continue to guide individuals toward virtuous living and ensure that society progresses with fairness and compassion, regardless of the age or era.

Patience and Public Welfare:

- **Patience as a Virtue:** Patience is one of the finest virtues in human behavior. It enables individuals to make decisions calmly and act with purpose in any situation.
- **Role in Problem-Solving:** Without patience, it is impossible to resolve conflicts or challenges within a society.
- **Commitment to Public Welfare:** A strong commitment to public welfare, rooted in such human virtues, is a foundational aspect of community development.

Moral Life:

- **Dharma (Righteousness):** Dharma represents the highest values that can sustain a community. Living according to dharma serves as the most important guiding principle in a person's life.
- **Benefits of Dharma:** A person who follows dharma experiences benefits in every aspect of life. This not only improves their individual well-being but also positively impacts the welfare of society as a whole.

The *Thirukkural* is one of the most revered texts in Tamil literature. It is essentially a guide to life, covering essential aspects of human existence, such as *Aram* (virtue or righteousness), *Porul* (wealth), and *Inbam* (pleasure or desire). This classical text offers profound insights into human life, which can be explored through its teachings.

A Life Free from Reproach (Kural 44)

பழியஞ்சிப் பாத்தூண் உடைத்தாயின் வாழ்க்கை
வழியெஞ்சல்எஞ்ஞான்றும் இல்.

English Translation:

"A noble life is one that avoids reproach and lives in fear of wrongdoing. One should live in accordance with virtue, earning wealth without causing harm to others. By sharing this wealth with others, the life will always remain in harmony and free from decay."

The Life of Hospitality (Kural 83)

வருவிருந்து வைகலும் ஓம்புவான் வாழ்க்கை
பருவந்து பாழ்படுதல் இன்று.

English Translation:

"A life that honors and nurtures guests daily will never face destruction or suffering. Such a life is blessed with prosperity and peace."

Life of the Wicked (Kural 330)

உயிர் உடம்பின் நீக்கியார் என்ப செயிர் உடம்பின்
செல்லாதீ வாழ்க்கை யவர்.

English Translation:

"Those who live with illness and poverty, afflicted by their own past misdeeds, are believed to have taken lives in previous births. This life is filled with suffering and misery."

Guard Against Impending Trouble (Kural 435)

வருமுன்னர்க் காவாதான் வாழ்க்கை எரிமுன்னர்-
வைத்தூறு போலக் கெடும்

English Translation:

"One who does not guard against impending harm, before it happens, will see their life perish, like straw placed near a fire, soon to be destroyed."

Life Without Moderation (Kural 479)

அளவறிந்து வாழாதான் வாழ்க்கை உளபோல
இல்லாகித் தோன்றக் கெடும்.

"One who does not live in moderation, understanding the nature of their resources, will see their life become barren, even though it may initially appear prosperous."

Life Without Social Engagement (Kural 523)

அளவளா வில்லாதான் வாழ்க்கை குளவளாக்
கோடின்றி நீர் நிறைந்தற்று.

"The life of one who does not engage socially is like a pond without a shore, filled with water but without any purpose, wasted and unfruitful."

The Life of Conflict (Kural 856)

இகலின் மிகல் இனிது என்பவன் வாழ்க்கை
தவலும் கெடலும் நணித்து.

"Those who believe that victory through conflict with others is sweet will soon see their life destroyed. Their success will be short-lived, and their downfall inevitable."

Life Without Harmony (Kural 890)

உடம்பாடு இலாதவர் வாழ்க்கை குடங்கருள்
பாம்போடு உடனுறைந் தற்று.

"Living a life without understanding or harmony is like dwelling with a venomous snake in a hut. Such a life is filled with danger and peril."

Life Guided by the Wise (Kural 897)

வகைமாண்ட வாழ்க்கையும் வான்பொருளும் என்னாம்
தகைமாண்ட தக்கார் செறிந்.

"What use is there to a person of great qualities, who has an esteemed life and great wealth, if they are scorned or disrespected?"

Life in Times of Crisis (Kural 968)

மருந்தோமற்று ஊன்ஓம்பும் வாழ்க்கை பெருந்தகைமை
பீடழிய வந்த இடத்து.

"A life that offers care and wisdom in times of crisis acts as medicine to a sick soul. Such a life brings great compassion and kindness, preserving the person's dignity."

The Principle of Love in Thirukkural

In his *Thirukkural*, Thiruvalluvar emphasizes the significance of love in various aspects of life, including family life, relationships, societal benefits, and more. He teaches that love is the foundation of a good life, and through it, one finds happiness, social harmony, and fulfillment.

The Expression of Love:

Love can be seen both in joy and in sorrow. It is reflected in the eyes of others, in their smiles, and in their actions. It is impossible to isolate love or confine it to one place. As Thiruvalluvar says:

"அன்பிற்கும் உண்டோ அடைக்குந்தாழ் ஆர்வலர்
புன்கணீர் பூசல் தரும்"

("Is there a roof for love? The true lover will never hide it. His tears will bring fragrance.") - Kural 71

This verse illustrates that love cannot be hidden; it is expressed openly through actions and emotions.

Human Life and Love:

Thiruvalluvar points out that love is the bond that connects human beings to one another and to society. A person who lacks love will see everything as belonging only to them, whereas a person with love is willing to give their very life for others. He expresses this idea in the following:

"அன்பிலார் எல்லாம் தமக்குரியர் அன்புடையார்
என்பும் உரியர் பிறர்க்கு"

("The one without love considers everything as his own; the one with love considers the rights of others.")

- Kural 72

In this verse, Thiruvalluvar explains that love leads to selflessness and understanding, where a person sees beyond their own needs and respects the rights of others.

Love and Righteousness:

Some people believe that love is only a companion to righteousness, but Thiruvalluvar states that love not only supports righteousness but also guides people in the protection of their country, language, and culture. He illustrates this through the verse:

"அறத்திற்கே அன்புசார் பென்ப அறியார்
மறத்திற்கும் அஃதே துணை"

("Those who seek righteousness through love are the true ones. Love is also the force behind all noble endeavors.") - Kural 76

This verse shows that love is a powerful and universal force that transcends individual morality and supports the greater good of society.

Love in Relationships:

Thiruvalluvar stresses that love is the cornerstone of a happy married life. A husband and wife must treat each other with deep affection. When love and righteousness are followed in their actions, it leads to a prosperous family life. He describes this in the following:

"அன்பும் அறனும் உடைத்தாயின் இல்வாழ்க்கை
பண்பும் பயனும் அது"

("When love and righteousness unite, family life becomes prosperous, bringing both virtue and benefit.") - Kural 45

In this verse, Thiruvalluvar emphasizes that a balanced life of love and righteousness leads to a fulfilling and successful family life.

Love as the Source of Joy:

Love is seen as the source of all joy. It is intimately connected with the well-being of both the body and soul. Thiruvalluvar states:

"அன்பின் வழியது உயிர்நிலை அஃதிலார்க்கு
என்புதோல் போர்த்த உடம்பு"

("Without love, the body is nothing but a shell, devoid of life and purpose.") - Kural 80

This verse underscores the importance of love, equating it to the very essence of life itself. Without love, human existence is reduced to mere survival, devoid of meaning.

Family and Love:

In a family, the head should uphold righteousness, and the wife should be the embodiment of love. Together, they create a stable and prosperous home. Thiruvalluvar likens a family to a palace, which needs a strong foundation to support it, and love plays this role. He states:

"வையத்துள் வாழ்வாங்கு வாழ்பவன் வானுறையும்
தெய்வத்துள் வைக்கப் படும்"

("The one who lives a righteous and loving life will be honored in both the earthly and divine realms.") -
Kural 50

This verse conveys that those who live with love and righteousness will find fulfillment and honor both in this life and beyond.

Love as Leadership:

In leadership, Thiruvalluvar teaches that a person with true love for their family and others will lead with wisdom and grace. Love allows the leader to act with fairness and concern for the well-being of others, without self-interest. The verse:

"வழுத்தினாள் தும்மினேன் ஆக அழித்தழுதாள்
யாருள்ளித் தும்மினீர் என்று"

("When my wife pushes me, I will fall, but when she supports me, who else can make me fall?") - Kural
1317

This verse reflects the power of love in leadership and relationships, where love serves as a guiding force, preventing harm and fostering strength.

Mercy and Life:

"மன்னுயிர் ஓம்பி அருளாள்வார்க்கு இல்லென்ப என்னுயிர் என்றும் அன்பு"

This verse emphasizes that those who work towards creating a better world for future generations, without fear for their own life, are the true bearers of mercy. The verse conveys a sense of humanitarianism, encouraging individuals to work for the well-being of all, reflecting the importance of selflessness and compassion in creating a sustainable environment.

The United Nations has set 17 goals to achieve "sustainable development" by 2030, as mentioned in the verse, which highlights the necessity of working for the collective welfare without selfish interests.

"அல்லல் அருளாள்வார்க்கு இல்லை வளிவழங்கும் மல்லன்மா ஞாலங் கரி"

The verse further states that those who possess grace and compassion face no harm, and a nation filled with love and compassion will certainly prosper. It stresses the importance of spreading grace and compassion to ensure the flourishing of both individuals and society.

Valluvar also touches on the theme of fear and actions taken in darkness (metaphorically or literally). He emphasizes the importance of overcoming challenges through effort and hard work.

"வறியார்க்கு ஒன்று ஈவதே ஈகை"

Although fear and obstacles may come one's way, one should strive to work through adversity. Valluvar insists that while temporary setbacks are natural, consistent effort leads to growth and success, eventually overcoming hardship. He emphasizes working through difficulties to remove poverty and establish a prosperous state.

Conclusion:

In Valluvar's teachings, compassion, love, and mercy are interconnected. They are the building blocks of a prosperous society. Developing compassion towards all living beings leads to a higher form of mercy and contributes to both individual and collective welfare. By following the principles of non-violence and kindness, one can attain a state of grace that promotes human welfare and societal well-being.

Practice Questions:

- 1.How does Thirukkural define the essence of humanity, and how can its teachings on compassion, ethics, and righteousness help in fostering a more harmonious and progressive society?
- 2.How do the principles of love, compassion, honesty, and justice, as emphasized in Thirukkural, contribute to the overall well-being of society and the individual?

