



Thirukkural Payilvom
Let's Learn Thirukkural
(English)



Kashi Tamil Sangamam 5.0

“Thirukkural Payilvom – Thirukkural Abhyas Karen”

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Chapter 1 – Kashi and Tamil Nadu

Kashi and Tamil Nadu have shared a deep connection for a very long time. Tamil classical works mention Kashi, which is Varanasi. It turns up in the Kalittokai, Silappathikaram, Manimekalai, Neelakesi, Soolamani, Perungathai, Villibharatham, Thevaram, Periya Puranam, the Nalayira Divya Prabandham, Thirupugazh, Sivabogasaram, Thiruvilaiyadal Puranam, Kanchi Puranam, the Sivagnana Balaya Swamigal Kalambagam, Thiruvarutpa, the ballad of Veerapandiya Kattabomman, the poems of Bharathiyar and Kavimani's Malarum Malaiyum. Inscriptions and copper plates add further evidence. Several works were also composed about Kashi itself, including Kasi Kalambagam, Kasi Thundi Vinayagar Pathigam, Kasi Kandan, Kasi Ragasiyam, Kasi Yatrai, Kasi Mahatmiyam (or the story of Simhadhvajan), Kasi Viswanatha Satakam and Sri Kasi Yatra Deepam. Together they show how closely the two places have been tied across the centuries.

The Ministry of Education, Government of India, holds the Kashi Tamil Sangamam for many reasons: to rediscover historical connections; to bring two knowledge traditions together in one place; to share the links found between them; to reveal the cultural and civilizational continuity that has lasted so long; to promote national integration by making cultural traditions known under the idea of "One India – Supreme India"; to encourage the exchange of knowledge; to introduce the Tamil language and its classical literature across India; to connect young people with Indian cultural heritage; and to use technology to bring the linguistic links among Indian languages closer together.

The four earlier Sangamams explored the connection between Kashi and Tamil Nadu, the strengthening of knowledge-based and cultural relations, the contribution of Sage Agastya to the Indian knowledge tradition, and "Tamil Karkalam" (We Can Learn Tamil). Carrying that journey forward, Kashi Tamil Sangamam 5.0 takes place at Varanasi from 28.11.2026 to 12.12.2026, on the theme "Let Us Learn Thirukkural".

Kashi – Tamil Nadu: Historical Threads

Kashi sits on the banks of the Ganga, and Tamil Nadu on the banks of the Vaigai and Kaveri. Both are among India's oldest centres of learning. Here are some of the threads that have tied them together for centuries:

- **Kumaraguruparar (17th century):** He belonged to the Dharmapuram Adheenam, founded the Kumarasamy Mutt in Kashi and built the Kedareeswarar temple at Kedar Ghat. He composed the "Kasi Kalambagam" and attained the feet of God in Kashi itself.
- **The great poet Bharathiyar:** He lived at Hanuman Ghat in Kashi from 1898 to 1902. The house where he stayed was renovated as "Bharathi Illam" and opened on 11 December 2022. His line, "Let us make a device so that the speech of the poets of Kashi can be heard in Kanchi", expresses a dream of joining north and south.
- **Tenkasi and Sivakasi:** The very name "Southern Kashi" speaks of the connection. These temples are linked with the 15th-century Pandya king Parakrama Pandyan, and Athiveera Rama Pandyan of the Tenkasi Pandya line composed the "Kasi Kandan".
- **"All waters are the Ganga, all land is Kashi":** The Prime Minister quoted this saying from the Pandya tradition at the inaugural function of the 2023 Sangamam.

- **The Kashi–Rameswaram pilgrimage:** People have long believed that a pilgrimage to Kashi is complete only when you also visit Rameswaram. Even today, the “Kasi Yatra” is a part of the Tamil wedding ritual.
- **A bridge of learning:** On 11 September 2021, the hundredth death anniversary of Bharathiyar, the Honourable Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi announced that a “Subramania Bharati Chair for Tamil Studies” would be set up at Banaras Hindu University.

The Journey of the Kashi Tamil Sangamam

Kashi Tamil Sangamam 1.0 – The first Sangamam was held on the theme “The Connection between Kashi and Tamil Nadu” at the Banaras Hindu University campus, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, from 16.11.2022 to 15.12.2022.

Kashi Tamil Sangamam 2.0 – Held on the theme “Strengthening Knowledge-based and Cultural Relations” at Namohat, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, from 17.12.2023 to 30.12.2023.

Kashi Tamil Sangamam 3.0 – Held on the theme “The Contribution of Sage Agastya to the Indian Knowledge Tradition” at Namohat, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, from 15.02.2025 to 24.02.2025.

Kashi Tamil Sangamam 4.0 – Held on the theme “Tamil Karkalam” (Let’s Learn Tamil) at Namohat, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, from 02.12.2025 to 15.12.2025. The closing ceremony of the Sangamam was held at Rameswaram, Tamil Nadu, on 30.12.2025.

Kashi Tamil Sangamam 5.0 – Being held on the theme “Let’s Learn Thirukkural” at Namohat, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, from 28.11.2026 to 12.12.2026. What makes Kashi Tamil Sangamam 5.0 special is its focus on the Thirukkural. One student from each of 1,000 colleges and universities across India, 1,000 students in all, will be selected to learn the Thirukkural in their own mother tongue and then carry it back to their colleges.

The Thirukkural names no religion, king or country, and that is why everyone embraces it as their own. The Central Institute of Classical Tamil has published the work in 35 translations, and its multilingual app offers it in all twenty-two languages of the Eighth Schedule. So a student in Kashmir and a student in Kanyakumari can learn the same kural, in their own languages, on the same day.

Chapter 2 – The Life history of Thiruvalluvar

The one thing we know for certain about Thiruvalluvar is the 1,330 kurals he left us. Most of what is said about his birth, family and occupation is legend added by later tradition. Even so, the book itself paints a vivid picture of its author.

Name and Honorific Names

The name “Valluvan”, with the honorific “Thiru” added, became “Thiruvalluvar”. Tradition has given him many honorific names: **Nayanar, Devar, Deiva Pulavar, Mudharpavalar, Nanmuganar, Madhanubangi, Sennaappothar, Perunavalar, Poyyil Pulavar**. These names show how much Tamil society esteems him.

Timeline of Scholars’ Views

Scholars estimate the date of the Thirukkural in different ways, from 300 BCE to the 5th century CE. The Czech scholar Kamil Zvelebil placed it at 450–500 CE. The Encyclopedia Britannica mentions the 6th century, and notes that some take it to be the 1st century BCE. Tamil tradition places Valluvar in 31 BCE. On that reckoning, proposed by Maraimalai Adigal, the Government of Tamil Nadu published the “Thiruvalluvar Year” system in the Government Gazette in 1971, and it came into use from 1972. Valluvar Year = Common Era year + 31; from Thai 2026 the Thiruvalluvar Year is 2057.

Traditional Stories

Later miscellaneous verses and oral traditions have given us a few stories. There is no historical evidence for them, but they show how alive Valluvar is in people’s minds.

- A widespread tradition says he was born in Mylapore, Chennai, where he has a temple of his own.
- Tradition says he was a weaver and that his wife was Vasuki. One story tells how Vasuki let go of the rope she was using to draw water from the well the moment her husband called her. It is told as an example of love in domestic life.
- Another story says that when the work was presented at the Madurai Tamil Sangam, the Sangam plank made room only for the kural.
- The collection of fifty-five venba verses in praise of the work is the **Thiruvalluvamalai**. In it, Idaikkadar spoke of “piercing a mustard seed and pouring the seven seas into it”, and Avvaiyar made the image subtler still: “the kural, which pierced an atom, poured the seven seas into it, and condensed it”, meaning, vast in meaning, but short in form.

The Author as Seen in the Book

Valluvar knew every field of life: virtue, politics, economics, warfare, medicine and love. He measures a person by deeds rather than by birth. That is why so many traditions, whether Jain, Buddhist, Shaiva or Vaishnava, celebrate Valluvar as their own, and this shared claim is itself the best proof of his universality. Classical scholars see him as one voice of India’s common ethical tradition.

Memorials

- **Thiruvalluvar Day:** It falls on the 2nd day of the month of Thai, in the middle of the Pongal festival.
- **Valluvar Kottam, Chennai:** Opened in April 1976 by President Shri. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed and designed by V. Ganapathi Sthapati, it has all 1,330 kurals engraved in stone.
- **Valluvar statue:** A 133-foot statue of Thiruvalluvar stands at Kanyakumari, one foot for each of the 133 chapters. The 38-foot pedestal stands for the 38 chapters of the Section on Virtue (Aram), and the 95-foot statue for the 95 chapters of Wealth (Porul) and Love (Inbam). Opened on 01.01.2000 the statue withstood the 2004 tsunami. At the silver jubilee, on 30 December 2024, a 77-metre glass bridge linking the statue to the Vivekananda Rock was opened; the statue is also called the “Statue of Knowledge”.

Chapter 3 – The Structure and Distinctive Features of the Thirukkural

The Thirukkural has 1,330 kurals, arranged in groups of ten as 133 chapters and divided into three sections (paal): Virtue (Aram), Wealth (Porul) and Love (Inbam). Every kural is a Kural Venba: two lines, seven metrical feet.

The Three-Part Structure

The Three Sections (Mupaal): 133 chapters, 1,330 kurals (Chapter count according to Parimelazhagar's commentary)		
Aththuppaal(Virtue)	Porutpaal(Wealth)	Porutpaal(Wealth)
38chapters(1–38), 380 kurals	70chapters(39–108), 700 kurals	25chapters(109–133), 250 kurals
Preface:4chapters; Domestic life: 20 chapters; Ascetic life: 13 chapters; Fate: 1 chapter	Governance:25chapters; Sections of the state: 32 chapters; Miscellany: 13 chapters	Clandestinelove:7chapters; Wedded love: 18 chapters

Virtue (Aram)–38 chapters

The section on virtue deals with a person's inner life and family life.

- **Preface (1–4):** In praise of God; the greatness of rain; the greatness of ascetics; the assertion of virtue. Giving rain its own chapter right after the praise of God shows Valluvar's view that nature is the basis of life itself.
- **Domestic life (5–24):** It runs from household life, the worth of a wife and the gift of children, to love, hospitality, pleasant words, gratitude, impartiality, forbearance, knowing one's duty to society, giving and fame. Valluvar regards domestic life as equal to the ascetic life, and in some places as higher.
- **Ascetic life (25–37):** Compassion, avoiding meat, truthfulness, freedom from anger, not doing harm, not killing, impermanence, renunciation, realization of truth and cutting off desire. The kurals on non-violence (ahimsa) that have drawn so much attention from scholars around the world are in this part.
- **Fate (38):** A single chapter on the fruit of past action, which lies beyond human effort.

Wealth (Porul) – 70 chapters

Wealth makes up more than half the book. It covers politics, administration, economics, friendship and society.

- **Governance (39–63):** From the dignity of the ruler, learning, listening and wisdom, to just rule, espionage, persistent effort and not losing heart in adversity. The ruler's personal qualities and just governance are central here.
- **Parts of the state (64–95):** Ministers, power of speech, firmness in action, envoys, the country, fortresses, ways of earning wealth, the army, friendship, enmity and medicine. It examines the limbs of the state one by one.
- **Miscellany (96–108):** Noble birth, honour, dignity of character, courtesy, agriculture, poverty, begging and baseness. The qualities of citizens are discussed here.

Desire (Kamam) – 25 chapters

The section on love is a drama of love in the Sangam akam tradition. The kurals are set out as the words of the hero, the heroine and the heroine's friend. Following the Tolkappiyam rule that no one may be identified by name, no person's name appears, and that is why this love belongs to everyone.

- **Clandestine love (109–115):** From the heroine's beauty overwhelming her lover to the spreading of gossip. This is love before marriage.
- **Wedded love (116–133):** From being unable to bear separation to the joy of lovers' quarrels. It covers the separation, longing, quarrels and reunions of married couples.

In Valluvar's view, wealth without virtue, domestic life without wealth, and pleasure without love are all incomplete. The Valluvam names virtue, wealth, pleasure and liberation as the four aims of human life. Valluvar sang of the first three at length and included liberation in the section on the ascetic life and in the chapter on the realization of truth. This shared framework is what makes the Thirukkural feel familiar to readers in any part of India.

The Metre of the Kural

Venba

- **Lines:** Two. The first line has four feet and the last has three, seven feet in all.
- **Linkage:** Venba linkage. The last foot ends in one of the patterns called Naal, Malar, Kaasu or Pirappu.
- **Division into feet – Kural 1:** Agara | mudhala | ezhuththellaam | aadhi

Bhagavan |mudhatre |ulagu.

This brevity is the kural's strength. Avvaiyar said it is like "piercing an atom and pouring the seven seas into it". The form is easy to remember and translate, and today it is just as easy to share on social media.

Special Names of the Thirukkural

Mupaal, Uttharaveda, Deiva Nool, Poyyamozi, Vaayurai Vaazhthu and Podhumarai are all special names for the Thirukkural. "Podhumarai" (the universal scripture) comes from the content of the work itself. As the French translator E. S. Ariel put it, Valluvar speaks "to the whole of humankind, regardless of caste, people or creed".

Chapter 4 – Commentators and the History of Editions

Between the tenth and thirteenth centuries, ten commentators wrote commentaries on the Thirukkural: Dharumar, Manakkudavar, Thamathar, Nachchar, Paridhiyar, Parimelazhagar, Thirumalaiyar, Mallar, Paripperumal and Kalingar. The commentaries of Manakkudavar, Paridhiyar, Kalingar, Paripperumal and Parimelazhagar survive in full, and those of Dharumar, Thamathar and Nachchar in part. The commentaries of Thirumalaiyar and Mallar are no longer available. It is this commentarial tradition that protected the Thirukkural over so many centuries and handed it down to today's generation.

Modern Commentaries

In the 19th and 20th centuries, Kavirajapandithar, U. V. Swaminatha Iyer, K. Vadivelu Chettiar, Ayothidasar, V. O. Chidambaranar, Thiru. Vi. Ka., Namakkal Kavignar, Bharathidasan and others wrote commentaries on the Thirukkural. The tradition of the simple explanatory commentary began in 1949 with M. Varadharajanar's "Thirukkural Thelivurai", and new commentaries are still being written today.

From Palm Leaf to Print

For centuries the Thirukkural was copied and preserved on palm-leaf manuscripts. In 1812, Gnanaprakasara of Thanjavur published the first printed edition, together with the Naladiyar and the Thiruvalluvamalai. Hundreds of editions have appeared since.

The Digital Age

Today the whole Thirukkural is available on the internet and on smartphones, in new forms such as multilingual apps and audio books.

Chapter 5 – The Universal Scripture of Valluvam

This chapter introduces the central themes of the Thirukkural's 108 chapters under twenty-three headings.

5.1. Love and Virtue in the Thirukkural

The Thirukkural is honoured as the universal scripture. It is a book about living, and it sets out the basic values of human life with great concentration and depth. Thiruvalluvar explains not only how a person should live but in what frame of mind, and love and virtue sit at the centre of his thinking. In the Thirukkural, love shows up as an integral part of virtue, and virtue as love put into practice.

Love: The Foundation of Human Life

Thiruvalluvar does not treat love as a mere emotion. For him it is the basic quality that lifts a person from self-interest towards the common good.

அன்பிலார் எல்லாம் தமக்குரியர் அன்புடையார்
என்பும் உரியர் பிறர்க்கு. (குறள் 72)

aṇpilār ellām tamakkuriyar aṇṇṇaiyār
eṇṇum uriyar piṇarkku. (Kural 72)

Those that love not live only for themselves; as to those that love, they will give their very bones for helping others.

A person without love lives with only the self at the centre. A person with love grows mature enough to give of themselves for others. Love turns the narrow sense of “I” into the wide sense of “we”, and it widens into affection in the family, compassion in society and humanity across the world.

அன்பின் வழியது உயிர்நிலை அஃதிலார்க்கு
என்புதோல் போர்த்த உடம்பு. (குறள் 80)

aṇṇiṇ vāiyatu uyirnilai aṭṭilārkkū
eṇṇuṭōl pōrtta uṭampu. (Kural 80)

The seat of life is in Love; the man who hath it not is only a mass of skin-encased bone.

Living means more than keeping the body alive. Life gains meaning only when there is a mind that feels the joys and sufferings of other beings. In Thiruvalluvar's view, then, love is not just one human quality; it is the lifeblood of human life.

Love and Virtue

The kural below shows how inseparable love and virtue are:

அன்பும் அறனும் உடைத்தாயின் இல்வாழ்க்கை
பண்பும் பயனும் அது. (குறள் 45)

aṇṇum aṇṇum uṭaittāyiṇ ilvāḷkkai
paṇṇum payaṇum atu. (Kural 45)

If love aboundeth in the home and righteousness doth prevail, the home is perfect and its end is all fulfilled.

The greatness of a household lies not in wealth or power but in a life full of love and virtue. Love is the quality of the heart, and virtue is how it shows up in action.

A person with love does not wish to harm others. When you feel another's suffering as your own, virtues such as giving, hospitality, not harming, not killing and compassion arise naturally. The virtue the Thirukkural speaks of is therefore not conduct practised under compulsion; it is a way of life that grows naturally out of love. Valluvar goes deeper still in:

அறத்திற்கே அன்புசார்பு என்ப அறியார்
மறத்திற்கும் அஃதே துணை. (குறள் 76)

aṛattirkē anpucārpū enpa ariyār
maṛattirkum aṭtē tuṇai. (Kural 76)

They are fools who say that love is for the righteous alone: for even against the evil-minded love is the only ally for a man.

Love is not only a sign of tenderness. It is also an inner strength that moves a person to do their duty, to make sacrifices for others and to stand courageously on the side of justice.

Virtue: It Begins with Purity of Mind

Thiruvalluvar's thinking on virtue does not rest on outward acts alone; it rests on the inner life. Virtue begins in the human mind itself. Therefore:

மனத்துக்கண் மாசிலன் ஆதல் அனைத்தறன்
ஆகுல நீர பிற. (குறள் 34)

maṇattukkaṇ mācilaṇ ātal aṇaittaṛaṇ
ākula nīra pira. (Kural 34)

Be pure in heart: all righteousness is contained in this one commandment; all other things are naught but empty display.

Valluvar says that a mind free of stain is the foundation of virtue. Even when an act looks good from outside, its moral worth shrinks if deceit, envy, greed or the desire for fame lies behind it. Virtue lies not only in what a person does but in why they do it.

Thiruvalluvar establishes the greatness of virtue with:

அறத்தினூஉங்கு ஆக்கமும் இல்லை அதனை
மறத்தலின் ஊங்கில்லை கேடு. (குறள் 32)

aṛattiṇūuṅku ākkamum illai ataṇai
maṛattaliṇ ūṇkillai kēṭu. (Kural 32)

There is no greater good than righteousness, nor no greater ill than the forgetting of it.

Wealth and power are impermanent, but the human worth gained through virtue lasts. That is why Valluvar sees virtue as the highest wealth of human life.

From Love to Compassion

The love of the Thirukkural does not stop at family and relatives. When it moves beyond other human beings and embraces all living things, it reaches the high state called compassion (arul).

அருட்செல்வம் செல்வத்துள் செல்வம் பொருட்செல்வம்
பூரியார் கண்ணும் உள. (குறள் 241)

*aruṭcelvam celvattuḷ celvam poruṭcelvam
pūriyār kaṇṇum uḷa. (Kural 241)*

The chiefest wealth is a heart that over floweth with mercy; for material wealth is found even in the hands of vile men.

The wealth of compassion, which feels the sorrow of other beings, ranks above material wealth. In this way the love of the Thirukkural widens step by step: individual love, then love in the family, then love in society, then love for all life. That is why Valluvar asks:

தன்னுயிர்க்கு இன்னாமை தானறிவான் என்கொலோ
மன்னுயிர்க்கு இன்னா செயல். (குறள் 318)

*taṇṇuyirkku innāmai tāṇarivāṇ enkolō
maṇṇuyirkku innā ceyal. (Kural 318)*

He who hath felt what pain meaneth to himself, how doth he bring himself to inflict it on others?

In that one question, “How can someone who knows what pain is to himself do the same to other beings?”, the deep foundation of virtue is revealed. A heart that can put itself in another’s place is the true beginning of virtue.

A Message for Today’s World

Human society has made great progress in science, technology and the economy, yet hatred, violence, selfishness and discrimination remain. In this situation, the love and virtue of the Thirukkural shine not as ancient ideas but as humane principles that today’s world still needs.

Knowledge gives a person power, and virtue guides that power towards good. Technology connects people, and love joins their hearts. Law prevents wrongdoing, and virtue creates a mind that does no wrong.

In the Thirukkural, love and virtue are not two separate doctrines. Love is the root of virtue, and virtue is the fruit of love. Love frees a person from selfishness, and virtue leads them towards the common good. When love widens into compassion, a person sees all beings as joined with themselves.

The life of virtue that Thiruvalluvar shows is therefore not conduct practised out of fear; it is a high way of living that blossoms naturally out of love. Love makes a person human, and virtue makes that person a higher human being. Where these two meet, personal peace, family well-being, social unity and world humanity blossom.

5.2. Hospitality in Thirukkural

Hospitality is one of the finest marks of Tamil culture. To welcome even a stranger at your door with a cheerful face, to feed them and to care for them with love is the Tamil way of life. Thiruvalluvar does not treat this as a social habit alone; he raises it to the basic virtue of domestic life. He devotes a whole chapter of the Thirukkural to hospitality, setting out the greatness of caring for guests.

The Purpose of Household Life: Hospitality

இருந்தோம்பி இல்வாழ்வது எல்லாம் விருந்தோம்பி
வேளாண்மை செய்தற் பொருட்டு. (குறள் 81)

*iruntōmpi ilvālvatu ellām viruntōmpi
vēlāṇmai ceytar poruṭṭu.* (Kural 81)

What for do the wise toil and set up homes? It is to feed the guest and help the pilgrim.

Valluvar says that a person earns wealth, looks after it and keeps a family not merely so that they and their family may live, but so that they can be of use to others too. Here hospitality goes beyond giving food; it becomes a social virtue of living by sharing what one has.

Valluvar also says that while a guest waits outside, it is not right to eat alone, even if the food were the nectar of immortality:

விருந்து புறத்ததாத் தானுண்டல் சாவா
மருந்தெனினும் வேண்டற்பாற்று அன்று. (குறள் 82)

*viruntu purattatāt tāṇuṇṭal cāvā
marunteṇiṇum vēṇṭarpārru anru.* (Kural 82)

Were it even the draught of immortality it shall not be tasted alone when the guest is in the hall.
will expand.

The deeper point is that keeping what you have received only for yourself is not the true use of wealth.

A Cheerful Face Is superior to Food

In hospitality, food is not all that matters; the spirit in which it is given, and the cheerful spirit, a smiling the face, is crucial too.

மோப்பக் குழையும் அனிச்சம் முகம்திரிந்து
நோக்கக் குழையும் விருந்து. (குறள் 90)

*mōppak kuḷaiyum aṇiccam mukamtirintu
nōkkak kuḷaiyum viruntu.* (Kural 90)

The anitcha flower fadeth when thou holdest it near the nose and smellest it: but a mere look is enough to break the heart of the great.

Valluvar says that just as the anicham flower wilts the moment it is smelled, a guest's heart wilts if they are received with a changed face. He teaches, subtly, that true hospitality lies less in the quantity given than in making the guest feel, "You are dear to us."

The Foundation of Social Relationship

Hospitality reduces the distance between people. It turns a newcomer into a relative and joins an individual to society. It can therefore be seen not only as a personal virtue but as a quality that builds social unity. The kural below states that hospitality was honoured as the finest duty of household life:

இருந்தோம்பி இல்வாழ்வது எல்லாம் விருந்தோம்பி
வேளாண்மை செய்தற் பொருட்டு. (குறள் 81)

*iruntōmpi ilvālvatu ellām viruntōmpi
vēlāṇmai ceytar poruṭṭu.* (Kural 81)

What for do the wise toil and set up homes? It is to feed the guest and help the pilgrim.

This thought is relevant even in today's urbanized, individual-centred life. Modern hospitality lies not only in giving food but in respecting others, welcoming newcomers and standing by those who need help.

In the Thirukkural, hospitality is not the act of giving food; it is the virtue of sharing the heart. The distinction of wealth lies not in possessing it but in sharing it. The greatness of a home lies not in its comforts but in the love felt by those who come there. Through hospitality, Thiruvalluvar establishes the humane idea that "the highest household life is to live not only for oneself but also for others".

5.3. Compassion for Living Beings in the Thirukkural

The Thirukkural takes a broad ethical view: one should live with respect for all living beings, not human beings alone. Through chapters such as Compassion, Refusing Meat, Not Killing and Not Doing Harm, Valluvar insists on the right of living beings to live.

Seeing Another Life as One's Own

தன்னுன் பெருக்கற்குத் தான்பிறிது ஊன்உண்பான்
எங்ஙனம் ஆளும் அருள். (குறள் 251)

tannūṇ perukkarkut tānpīritu ūṇuṇpāṇ

enṇaṇam ālum aruḷ. (Kural 251)

How can he feel pity, who eateth other flesh in order to fatten his own?

Valluvar asks how someone who kills another creature and eats its flesh to build up their own body can be called compassionate. Beyond the question of diet, he raises a basic ethical question: do we respect the lives of other beings as we respect our own?

அருளல்லது யாதெனின் கொல்லாமை கோறல்
பொருளல்லது அவ்வுன் தினல். (குறள் 254)

aruḷallatu yāteṇiṇ kollāmai kōral

poruḷallatu avvūṇ tiṇal. (Kural 254)

The killing of animals is veritable hardness of heart; but the eating of their flesh is inequity indeed.

Valluvar makes not-killing the very basis of compassion.

The pinnacle of Compassion for all life

The kural below shows that one who lives without harming other beings stands highest among human beings:

கொல்லான் புலாலை மறுத்தானைக் கைகூப்பி
எல்லா உயிரும் தொழும். (குறள் 260)

kollāṇ pulālai maruttāṇaik kaikūppi

ellā uyirum toḷum. (Kural 260)

Behold the man who killeth not and abstaineth from flesh meat: all the world joineth hands to do him reverence.

Sorrow for living beings alone is not enough, as this kural shows:

உண்ணாமை வேண்டும் புலாஅல் பிறிதொன்றன்
புண்ணுது உணர்வார்ப் பெறின. (குறள் 257)

uṇṇāmai vēṇṭum pulāal piritonran
puṇatu uṇarvārp peṇiṇ. (Kural 257)

If a man can only realize to himself the agony and pain suffered by other living beings, he would not desire to eat fleshmeat.

This kural explains that feeling that creature's suffering in one's own mind is itself compassion for life. The deep message of the chapter is that we must choose a way of life that does not cause suffering.

Today, this thought can be linked with ideas such as animal protection, biodiversity and environmental conservation. Valluvar's compassion for living beings leads to the understanding that a human being is not the ruler of nature but a part of its chain of life.

In the Thirukkural, compassion for living beings extends the love shown to human beings. The kural teaches us to cherish all living beings as we cherish our own lives. A person's greatness lies not in strength but in the compassion shown to creatures weaker than oneself. In this way the Thirukkural puts forward a broad ethics that includes all beings.

5.4. Renunciation in the Thirukkural

In the Section on Virtue, the ethics of the ascetic life follow those of domestic life. Many chapters show that renunciation means more than physically withdrawing from the world; it means conquering the bonds of the mind, such as desire, attachment, anger and pride. The commentarial tradition divides the chapters of the Section on Virtue into the Domestic Life division and the Ascetic Life division.

Giving Up Attachment

Excessive attachment causes much of human suffering. Wealth, fame and power should be instruments for living; they must not become forces that rule a person. To follow this in life, the grace of God is essential, and to receive grace one must give up other attachments and hold fast to the feet of God.

பற்றுக் பற்றற்றான் பற்றினை அப்பற்றைப்
பற்றுக் பற்று விடற்கு. (குறள் 350)

parruka parrarāṇ parrinai apparraip
parruka parru viṭarku. (Kural 350)

Attach and tie thyself to Him who hath conquered all attachments; bind thyself firmly to Him in order that all thy bonds may be broken.

True renunciation lies not in dress or appearance but in the heart. There is no use looking like an ascetic without subduing desire. Thiruvalluvar's asceticism is therefore an inner discipline of restraining oneself.

Renunciation and Compassion

The thought of renunciation in the Thirukkural does not separate a person from society. Through qualities such as compassion, austerity, truthfulness, freedom from anger, not doing harm and not killing, it makes a person more responsible.

One who has conquered desire will not take away another's rights; one who has conquered anger will not torment others; one who has conquered pride will not look down on other beings. Renunciation is therefore not hatred of the world; it is conquering the limitless desire within oneself.

In today's world of consumption, competition and greed for wealth, the Thirukkural's thinking on renunciation takes on new meaning. Understanding the difference between need and desire, and living with moderation, self-restraint and simplicity, matter in modern life too.

The renunciation the Thirukkural shows is not running away from the world; it is conquering the mind while living in it. Giving up attachment is higher than giving up possessions, and conquering oneself is higher than conquering others. In this way Thiruvalluvar presents asceticism as a way of life that leads to inner purity and freedom of mind.

5.5. Personal Discipline in the Thirukkural

A good society is made of good people. Laws alone cannot refine a society; qualities such as self-restraint, honesty, a sense of responsibility and humility must take root in every person. The Thirukkural approaches this through the broad idea of living called personal discipline (ozhukkam).

Discipline Is Distinction

What lifts a person is not wealth or position but discipline. That is why Valluvar teaches, in the kural:

ஒழுக்கம் விழுப்பம் தரலான் ஒழுக்கம்
உயிரினும் ஒம்பப் படும். (குறள் 131)

olukkam viḷuppam taralāṇ olukkam
uyiriṇum ōmpap paṭum. (Kural 131)

The man whose conduct is pure is honoured by all: purity of conduct is therefore to be prized even above life.

Knowledge and skill may help a person advance, but discipline makes that advancement worthy of respect. Thiruvalluvar emphasizes that discipline should be guarded even more than life. If a learned person lacks discipline, their very learning can become a harm to society.

Self-Restraint: The Guard of Discipline

Valluvar places self-restraint at the centre of personal discipline. Restraint is the ability to control thought, word and deed. The kural below conveys that a mature mind does not become the instant slave of feeling but acts after considering the consequences:

அடக்கம் அமரருள் உய்க்கும் அடங்காமை
ஆரிருள் உய்த்து விடும். (குறள் 121)

aṭakkam amararuḷ uykkum aṭaṅkāmai
āriruḷ uyttu viṭum. (Kural 121)

Self-control leadeth unto heaven, but uncontrolled passion is the royal road to endless darkness.

In the same way, a person's words are a measure of their discipline.

தீயினால் சுட்டபுண் உள்ளாறும் ஆறாதே
நாவினால் சுட்ட வடு. (குறள் 129)

tīyinaḷ cuṭṭapuṇ uḷḷārum ārātē
nāviṇāḷ cuṭṭa vaṭu. (Kural 129)

The burn caused by fire healeth in its time: but the wound burned in by the tongue remaineth a running sore for ever.

This kural tells a plain truth: a wound on the body may heal, but a wound that words leave on the mind lasts a long time. Personal discipline therefore does not control action alone; it refines thought, speech and feeling together.

From the Individual to Society

The benefit of living with discipline does not stop with the individual. Honest individuals make good families, good families make a good society, and a good society makes a responsible nation. Social change therefore begins with the individual.

In today's age of the internet and social media, the scope of personal discipline has widened further. Not writing online what you would hesitate to say in person, not spreading false information and respecting other people's privacy can all be counted as modern forms of discipline.

In the Thirukkural, personal discipline is not outward restraint; it is the inner control by which a person regulates themselves. Restraint, pleasant speech, honesty, patience and humility decide a person's true worth. Valluvar's view is that before you try to change the world, you must refine yourself. Because personal discipline is the first seed of social discipline, this thought of the Thirukkural is always relevant.

5.6. Self-Confidence in the Thirukkural

Thiruvalluvar does not use the word "self-confidence" directly, but ideas that build it appear in chapters such as Enthusiasm, Strength of Mind, Effort, Firmness in Action and Not Losing Heart in Adversity. Valluvar's view is that a person's rise or fall depends to a great extent on strength of mind and effort. He records that a person's height is set by the measure of their mind in the kural:

வெள்ளத் தனைய மலர்நீட்டம் மாந்தர்தம்
உள்ளத் தனையது உயர்வு. (குறள் 595)

vellaṭ taṇaiya malarnīṭṭam māntartam
uḷḷat taṇaiyatu uyarvu. (Kural 595)

The water with which a plant is watered is the measure of the luxuriance of its flower: Even so, the spirit of a man is the measure of his fortunes.

Just as the lotus stalk rises to match the depth of the water, a person rises as high as their mind. This kural teaches that a high ideal and confidence are the beginning of human progress.

Strength of Mind and Success

To reach a goal in life, setting an aim is not enough; you need the strength of mind to get there. Success forms where thought and action meet. To make this clear, Valluvar says:

எண்ணிய எண்ணியாங்கு எய்துப எண்ணியார்
திண்ணியர் ஆகப் பெறின. (குறள் 666)

eṇṇiya eṇṇiyāṅku eytupa eṇṇiyār
tiṇṇiyar ākap peṛiṇ. (Kural 666)

That which they will, men acquire even in the manner that they will, provided they will with all their might.

Valluvar also insists on carrying on without losing heart over failures:

துன்பம் உறவரினும் செய்க துணிவாற்றி
இன்பம் பயக்கும் வினை. (குறள் 669)

tunpam uravarinūm ceyka tuṇivāṛri
iṇpam payakkum viṇai. (Kural 669)

Take up the doing of works that increase happiness: and even if thou have to suffer cruel mortification in the doing of them, steel thy heart and persevere to the end.

Whatever obstacles arise in the work you have taken up, do not abandon it; keep at it until you succeed. Self-confidence does not dwell only on obstacles; it is the frame of mind that believes obstacles can be crossed.

The Value of Effort

Even when a task does not succeed because of fate, one may still succeed through the effort made, says the Valluvam:

தெய்வத்தான் ஆகா தெனினும் முயற்சிதன்
மெய்வருத்தக் கூலி தரும். (குறள் 619)

teyvattāṇ ākā teṇiṇūm muyarcitan
meyvaruttak kūli tarum. (Kural 619)

Even though the Gods be against, Industry is bound to pay the wages of labour.

This kural carries the thought that even when the hoped-for success does not fully arrive, honest effort is never wasted. Self-confidence is therefore not mere positive thinking; it is confidence in action, joined with effort.

In the Thirukkural's view, self-confidence is not arrogance; it is strength of mind that knows its own ability, clarifies its goal and acts with perseverance. A person's power reaches fullness only when the thought "I can" joins the deed "I will try".

5.7. Education in Thirukkural

Thiruvalluvar does not see education as a mere gathering of knowledge. He says it should widen a person's vision, refine their conduct and be a wealth that stands by them throughout life.

கற்க கசடறக் கற்பவை கற்றபின்
நிற்க அதற்குத் தக. (குறள் 391)

*kaṛka kacaṭarak karpavai kaṛrapin
niṛka ataṛkut taka. (Kural 391)*

Acquire thoroughly the knowledge that is worth acquiring: and after acquiring it walk thou in accordance therewith.

The way of learning Valluvar shows is this: learn what should be learned, and after learning, live accordingly. Learning is not just keeping information in memory. True education is to learn clearly and to live by what you have learned.

Education: The Eyes of mankind

Education is like the eye, and the Valluvam teaches that gaining it is the aim of human life.

எண்ணென்ப ஏனை எழுத்தென்ப இவ்விரண்டும்
கண்ணென்ப வாழும் உயிர்க்கு. (குறள் 392)

*eṇṇeṇpa ēnai eluttenpa ivviraṇṭum
kaṇṇeṇpa vālum uyirkku. (Kural 392)*

Two are the eyes of living kind: the one is called Numbers, and the other, Letters.

Numeracy and literacy are called the eyes of human life. Eyes show us the appearance of the world; education helps us understand its meaning.

கண்ணுடையர் என்பவர் கற்றோர் முகத்திரண்டு
புண்ணுடையர் கல்லா தவர். (குறள் 393)

*kannuṭaiyar eṇṇavar kaṛṛōr mukattiraṇṭu
puṇṇuṭaiyar kallā tavar. (Kural 393)*

The learned alone can be said to possess eyes: the unlettered have but two sores in their head.

Only the educated have eyes. By calling the unlearned people who have sores in place of eyes, the Valluvam says that education is not mere sight; it is discerning sight.

The Imperishable Wealth

Material wealth may perish, but education stays in a person's thought and personality. Valluvar therefore regards education as imperishable wealth. He makes this clear in:

கேடில் விழுச்செல்வம் கல்வி ஒருவற்கு
மாடுஅல்ல மற்றை யவை. (குறள் 400)

*kēṭil viḷuccelvam kalvi oruvaṛku
māṭualla marrai yavai. (Kural 400)*

An imperishable and flawless treasure is learning to a man; other wealth is as nothing before it.

In the Thirukkural, education is the union of knowledge, discipline and practice. A learned person should not only know things but live by what they have learned. The fullness of education lies in turning knowledge into life.

5.8. Leadership Qualities in the Thirukkural

In the Section on Wealth (Porul), the Thirukkural speaks of the king, the minister, the fortress, the army, the citizens, counsel, knowing the right time and acting after careful examination. These ideas can also be read as basic principles of leadership.

தூங்காமை கல்வி துணிவுடைமை இம்முன்றும்
நீங்கா நிலனாள் பவற்கு. (குறள் 383)

tūṅkāmai kalvi tuṇivuṭaimai immūṇrum
nīṅkā nilaṇāḷ pavaṛku. (Kural 383)

Behold the men that are destined to rule the earth: the three virtues, alertness, learning and quickness of decision, leave them not.

Valluvar names awareness, knowledge and courage as the basic qualities of a leader.

Leadership

The Valluvam says that people love the leadership of a leader who is easy to approach and who loves everyone:

காட்சிக்கு எளியன் கடுஞ்சொல்லன் அல்லனேல்
மீக்கூறும் மன்னன் நிலம். (குறள் 386)

kāṭcikkku eḷiyaṇ kaṭuñcollaṇ allaṇēl
mīkkūrum manṇaṇ nilam. (Kural 386)

If the prince is accessible to all his subjects and is never harsh of word, his kingdom will be esteemed above every other.

The Thirukkural names four qualities proper to a leader: fearlessness, generosity to the poor, knowledge and enthusiasm.

The principles of Leadership

முறைசெய்து காப்பாற்றும் மன்னவன் மக்கட்கு
இறையென்று வைக்கப் படும். (குறள் 388)

muraiceytu kāppārrum manṇavaṇ makkaṭku
iraivenru vaikkap paṭum. (Kural 388)

Behold the prince who administreteth impartial justice and protecteth his subjects: he will be looked upon as a god among men.

The Thirukkural's principles of leadership is that a leader must be able to do and protect what the people who depend on them need. Leadership is therefore not a right of power; it is a duty of responsibility. A good leader should be willing to hear counsel and to accept those who point out faults.

In the Thirukkural's thinking on leadership, knowledge, courage, justice, counsel, responsibility and the welfare of the people come together. A true leader is not only one who walks in front; a true leader brings everyone forward.

5.9. Physical Health in the Thirukkural

The chapter on Medicine (Marundhu) speaks not only of treatment after disease arrives but also of a way of living that protects against disease. Valluvar's emphasis on discipline in eating is especially notable.

மருந்தென வேண்டாவாம் யாக்கைக்கு அருந்தியது
அற்றது போற்றி உணின் (குறள் 942)

marunteṇa vēṇṭāvām yāḱkaikku aruntiyatu
arratu pōrri uṇiṇ (Kural 942)

Two are the eyes of living kind: the one is called Numbers, and the other, Letters.

This kural expresses a preventive view of health: if you eat in measure only after the previous meal has been digested, you may reach a state where the body needs no medicine.

Food in Measure

அற்றால் அளவறிந்து உண்க அஃதுஉடம்பு
 பெற்றான் நெடிதுய்க்கும் ஆறு. (குறள் 943)

arrāl alavarintu uṇka aṭtuṭampu
perṛāṇ neṭituykkum āru. (Kural 943)

Eat with moderation and after the food that thou hast taken is digested: that is the way to prolong thy days.

Not only the quality of food matters but also its quantity. The basis of health is eating with a knowledge of how much the body needs.

மாறுபாடு இல்லாத உண்டி மறுத்துண்ணின்
 ஊறுபாடு இல்லை உயிர்க்கு. (குறள் 945)

mārupātu illāta uṇṭi maruttuṇṇiṇ
ūrupātu illai uyirkku. (Kural 945)

If thou eat abstemiously the food that doth not disagree with thy system thou will have no troubles in the body.

This kural adds the thought of avoiding food that does not suit the body and following a fitting diet.

The Thirukkural's thinking on health gives priority not to medicine after disease but to an orderly life before it. The basis of health is to live with an understanding of food, measure, digestion and the nature of the body.

5.10. Medical Ethics in the Thirukkural

The chapter Medicine also records ideas about treatment and the physician. It says the physician must act knowing the disease, its cause, the way to cure it and the nature of the patient.

நோய்நாடி நோய்முதல் நாடி அதுதணிக்கும்
 வாய்நாடி வாய்ப்பச் செயல். (குறள் 948)

nōynāṭi nōymutal nāṭi atutaṇikkum
vāynāṭi vāyppac ceyal. (Kural 948)

Consider the disease and its root and the means of curing it: and then set about the cure with every precaution.

First the disease must be known; then its cause has to be found; then the remedy investigated and the suitable treatment undertaken. This kural presents that as the clear form of a proper medical approach.

Patient – Centred Medicine

உற்றான் அளவும் பிணியளவும் காலமும்
கற்றான் கருதிச் செயல். (குறள் 949)

urrāṇ aḷavum piṇiyaḷavum kālamum
karrāṇ karutic ceyal. (Kural 949)

Let the physician take the measure of the patient as well as of the disease and let him take account of the season that is: and then let him set about the cure with every precaution.

One approach does not suit everyone with the same disease. The kural explains that a physician must act with attention to the patient's condition, the extent of the disease and the time.

உற்றவன் தீர்ப்பான் மருந்துழைச் செல்வான் என்று
அப்பால்நாற் கூற்றே மருந்து. (குறள் 950)

urravaṇ tīrppāṇ maruntuḷaiḥ celvāṇeṇru
appālnār kūṟṟē maruntu. (Kural 950)

The patient, the physician, the medicine and the apothecary, on these four doth all cure depend: and four again are the attributes of each of them.

Valluvar looks at the many components of the treatment process together: patient, physician, medicine and medical assistance.

In the Thirukkural, medical ethics is not only about curing disease; it is about acting with understanding of the patient, with knowledge, with investigation and with responsibility. What sets it apart is a medical outlook that attends not to the disease alone but to the patient as well.

5.11. Mental wellbeing in the Thirukkural

You will not find a chapter called “mental wellbeing” in the Thirukkural. Even so, the kural about worry, anger, envy, greed, suffering, strength of mind, friendship, love and restraint offer elements of living that help peace of mind.

அழுக்காறு அவாவெகுளி இன்னாச்சொல் நான்கும்
இழுக்கா இயன்றது அறம். (குறள் 35)

aḷukkāru avāvekuḷi innāccol nāṇkum
iḷukkā iyaṇratu aṟam. (Kural 35)

Avoid envy and greed, anger and harsh words; that is the way to acquire righteousness.

Keeping away from envy, limitless desire, anger and hurtful words is called virtue. These affect not only a person's relationships but also their peace of mind.

Strength of Mind when Facing adversity

It is human nature to falter in the face of misfortune. This leads to unrest of mind, and mental health declines. Valluvar points to one remedy: if, when suffering comes, one accepts it cheerfully, it will not affect the mind. The kural that puts forward this idea is:

இடுக்கண் வருங்கால் நகுத அதனை
அடுத்தூர்வது அஃதொப்பது இல். (குறள் 621)

iṭukkaṇ varuṅkāḷ nakuka ataṇai
aṭuttūrvatu aṭtoppatu il. (Kural 621)

When thou meetest with misfortune face it with thy best smile: for there is nothing like a smile to enable a man to hold his own against it.

This should not be taken to mean that suffering is to be denied. It can be understood as saying that we should gain the firmness of mind to face misfortune without being completely broken by it.

Good human relationships are also necessary for mental wellbeing. The importance Valluvar gives to love, friendship, pleasant words and gratitude is connected with a person's inner life and social relations.

Way so cultivating Mental well being

Envy at the progress of others ruins mental health. Instead of envying others' progress, it helps to appreciate it with joy and to act with the thought "we too can reach such a height, and we shall". This idea is in the kural:

அறனாக்கம் வேண்டாதான் என்பான் பிறனாக்கம்
 பேணாது அழுக்கறுப் பான். (குறள் 163)

aṛaṇākkam vēṇṭātāṇ enpāṇ piraṇākkam
pēṇātu alukkaṛup pāṇ. (Kural 163)

It is he that careth not for virtue or for wealth that envieth his neighbours prosperity instead of rejoicing at it.

The Thirukkural asks us to refine the mind before seeking peace of mind outside. Its messages for living are: know your emotions, regulate them, do not waver in suffering and nurture loving relationships.

5.12. Humanity in Thirukkural

Respecting a person as a person, feeling another's suffering, helping, not doing harm, relieving hunger and treating people with love are the foundations of humanity. This thought runs through the whole Thirukkural in various forms.

அன்பிலார் எல்லாம் தமக்குரியர் அன்புடையார்
 என்பும் உரியர் பிறர்க்கு. (குறள் 72)

aṇpilār ellām tamakkuriyar aṇpuṭaiyār
eṇpum uriyar piraṛkku. (Kural 72)

Those that love not live only for themselves; as to those that love, they will give their very bones for helping others.

A mind that widens beyond selfishness towards others is the beginning of humanity.

Feeling Another's Suffering as One's Own

அறிவினான் ஆகுவது உண்டோ பிறிதின்றோய்
 தம்நோய்போல் போற்றாக் கடை. (குறள் 315)

aṛiviṇāṇ ākuvatu uṇṭō piritiṇṇōy
tamṇōypōl pōṛrāk kaṭai. (Kural 315)

Of what avail is intelligence to a man if he doth not feel as his very own the pain suffered by other beings and so feeling doth not abstain from injuring any?

The question “What use is knowledge that does not feel another’s suffering as one’s own?” touches the greatness of humanity. The height of knowledge lies not in its quantity but in its usefulness to others.

Generosity and compassion

Help becomes giving only when it is done for someone truly in need. The kural explains this:

வறியார்க்குஒன்று ஈவதே ஈகைமற் றெல்லாம்
குறியெதிர்ப்பை நீர துடைத்து. (குறள் 221)

vaṛiyārkkūṇru īvatē īkaimar rellām
kuṛiyetirppai nīra tuṭaittu. (Kural 221)

Giving to the poor is alone charity: all other giving is of the nature of loan.

Help given without expectation is the highest form of humanity.

In the Thirukkural, humanity is the inner journey from “I” to “we”. Knowledge and wealth gain human worth only when one feels the sorrow of others and acts for their welfare.

5.13. Social Harmony in the Thirukkural

A society does not endure by laws alone. Respect for one another, love, justice, patience, pleasant speech and a willingness to yield are the foundations of social harmony.

இனிய உளவாக இன்னாத கூறல்
கனியிருப்பக் காய்கவரந் தற்று. (குறள் 100)

iṇiya uḷavāka iṇṇāta kūṛal
kaṇiyiruppak kāy kavarn taru. (Kural 100)

Behold the man who useth hard words when sweet ones serve; he preferreth the unripe fruit to the ripe.

To speak harshly when you could speak sweetly is like choosing the unripe fruit and leaving the ripe. Words play a big part in tending relationships, and this kural shows the responsibility of language in social life.

Goodness in return for Evil

Valluvar says the highest quality is not to continue the cycle of revenge but to answer evil with good. This is a deep ethical approach to social harmony. The kural that explains it is:

இன்னாசெய் தாரை ஒறுத்தல் அவர்நாண
நன்னயம் செய்து விடல். (குறள் 314)

iṇṇācey tārai oruttal avarnāṇa
nannayam ceytu viṭal. (Kural 314)

How shall a man punish them that have injured him? Let him do them a good turn and make them ashamed in their hearts.

Impartiality

For social harmony, justice comes first. Without impartiality, which treats everyone equally without taking sides, lasting unity cannot arise. The harmony of the Thirukkural therefore does not erase differences; it protects human decency even amid differences.

Love, pleasant speech, patience, justice and forgiveness are the pillars of social harmony the Thirukkural shows. Unity does not mean everyone being the same; it means different people living together with respect.

5.14. Friendship in Thirukkural

In the Thirukkural, friendship is not treated as a mere pastime. Valluvar examines its many dimensions: choosing a good friend, testing friendship, cherishing true friendship and avoiding bad company.

முகநக நட்பது நட்பன்று நெஞ்சத்து
அகநக நட்பது நட்பு. (குறள் 786)

mukanaka natpatu natpanru neñcattu
akanaka natpatu natpu. (Kural 786)

Friendship is not the companionship that smileth to the face: it is rather the love that delighteth the heart.

A smile on the face alone is not friendship; friendship is true love that blossoms from the heart.

The Friend Who Corrects mistakes

A friend is not only someone who is there in good times. Valluvar defines friendship as: the friend who turns you away from the wrong path and stands with you when suffering comes.

அழிவின் அவைநீக்கி ஆறுஉய்த்து அழிவின்கண்
அல்லல் உழப்பதாம் நட்பு. (குறள் 787)

aliviṇ avainīkki āruuyttu aliviṇkaṇ
allal ulappatām natpu. (kural 787)

That man alone is thy friend who turneth thee aside from wrong, directeth thee toward the right, and beareth thee company in misfortune.

This kural stresses the duty of friendship. For the act of rescuing a friend in anguish, Valluvar uses a lofty simile.

உடுக்கை இழந்தவன் கைபோல ஆங்கே
இடுக்கண் களைவதாம் நட்பு. (குறள் 788)

uṭukkai iḷantavaṇ kaipōla āṇikē
iṭukkaṇ kaḷaivatām natpu. (Kural 788)

Behold the hand of the man whose garment hath been blown aside, how it hurrieth to recover his limbs: that is the symbol of the true friend that hasteneth to succour a man in his misfortune.

Just as the hand moves on its own when a garment slips, true friendship helps a friend in distress without waiting to be called.

The value of friendship lies less in sharing joy than in correcting faults, standing by in suffering and being true.

5.15. Governance in the Thirukkural

In the Section on Wealth, the Thirukkural discusses political elements such as the state, the ruler, the minister, the fortress, the army, the citizens, justice, the economy and the envoy at length. In Valluvar's political thought, the welfare of the people and justice come first.

படைகுடி கூழ்அமைச்சு நட்புஅரண் ஆறும்
உடையான் அரசருள் ஏறு. (குறள் 381)

paṭaikuṭi kūlamaiccu naṭpuaran ārum
uṭaiyān aracarul ēru. (Kural 381)

He is a lion among princes who is well endowed in respect of the six things, to wit, troops, population, substance, council, alliances, and fortifications.

Valluvar names these six elements, army, citizens, economic prosperity, ministry, friendship and fortress, as the main limbs of the state.

Just Rule

வான்நோக்கி வாழும் உலகெல்லாம் மன்னவன்
கோல்நோக்கி வாழும் குடி. (குறள் 542)

vānnōkki vālum ulakellām mannavan
kōlnōkki vālum kuṭi. (Kural 542)

The world looketh up to the rain cloud for life: even so do men look up to the sceptre of the prince for protection.

This kural expresses the idea that just as the world looks up for rain, the life of the citizens depends on the sceptre of the state. The basic point is that politics is not a tool for personal glory; it is a responsibility for the protection and welfare of the people. In the political theory of the Thirukkural, justice matters more than power, the welfare of citizens more than the ruler, and a sense of responsibility more than strength.

5.16. Administrative Skill in the Thirukkural

Administration is not only about making decisions; it is about entrusting the right task to the right person at the right time, assessing the results and carrying it through. Such administrative ideas appear in many chapters of the Thirukkural.

இதனை இதனால் இவன்முடிக்கும் என்றாய்ந்து
அதனை அவன்கண் விடல். (குறள் 517)

itaṇai itaṇāl iṇamutikkum enṛāyntu
ataṇai avaṇkaṇ viṭal. (Kural 517)

Determine first the capacity of the servant and the work for which he is fit: and then leave him in responsible charge of the same.

One must work out who will accomplish a task and how, with what skill, and then hand it to that person. This links to the administrative idea of the right person for the right job.

Planning and Execution

எண்ணித் துணிக கருமம் துணிந்தபின்
எண்ணுவம் என்பது இழுக்கு. (குறள் 467)

eṇṇit tuṇika karumam tuṇintapin
eṇṇuvam eṇṇatu ilukku. (Kural 467)

Decide not upon any action except after careful deliberation; he is a fool who undertaketh first and sayeth it in his heart, I shall think afterwards.

Examine before acting; once the decision is made, don't hesitate needlessly. Valluvar sets out the balance between planning and execution.

Knowing the resources, the time, the method and the ability to carry out a difficult task is the mark of good administration. The kural that conveys this is:

கருவியும் காலமும் செய்கையும் செய்யும்
அருவினையும் மாண்டது அமைச்சு. (குறள் 631)

karuviyum kālamum ceykaiyum ceyyum
aruvinaiyum māṇṭatu amaiccu. (Kural 631)

Behold the man who can judge aright the (men and) means of achieving great enterprises, the proper season to commence them and (the worth of) the enterprises themselves: he is the proper man for thy council.

The administrative thought of the kural is a coordination of planning, choosing the right people, knowing the time, delegating responsibility and efficiency. A good administrator is not one who does everything personally; a good administrator gets things done.

5.17. Economic Thoughts in the Thirukkural

The Thirukkural insists on earning wealth by the path of virtue, protecting it, using it properly and making it useful to others as well. In this way economics is joined with human welfare.

இயற்றலும் ஈட்டலும் காத்தலும் காத்த
வகுத்தலும் வல்லது அரசு. (குறள் 385)

iyaṟṟalum īṭṭalum kāttalum kātta
vakuttalum vallatu aracu. (Kural 385)

The prince shall know how to develop the resources of his kingdom and how to enrich his treasury: how to preserve his wealth and how to spend it worthily.

Creating income, earning it, protecting it and then distributing it fittingly are the elements of good economic administration.

The Social Use of Wealth

When a country is economically self-sufficient, that in itself makes enmity disappear. The Valluvam puts forward the idea that a country should aim for such economic progress. The kural below echoes that thought:

செய்க பொருளைச் செறுநர் செருக்கறுக்கும்
எஃகுஅதன்றி கூரியது இல். (குறள் 759)

*ceyka poruḷaic ceṟunar cerukkaṟukkum
eḷḷkuataṇṇiṟ kūriyatu il. (Kural 759)*

Amass wealth: for there is no sharper steel to cleave thy foemans pride.

Economic strength gives both the individual and the state the capacity to act. But the broad thought of the Thirukkural is that wealth must remain under the control of virtue. Chapters such as Giving, Knowing One's Duty to Society and Hospitality also set out wealth's social responsibility. The final purpose of earning wealth, then, is not just to amass it but to make it useful.

The economic thought of the Thirukkural includes production, earning, protection and sharing. Wealth must not rule a person; it must serve human welfare. Valluvar's basic message is that an economy joined with virtue is lasting wealth.

5.18. Agriculture in the Thirukkural

Thiruvalluvar regards agriculture not as an occupation alone but as the foundation of social life. Without food production the world cannot function, so he gives the farmer a high place.

சுழன்றும்ஏர்ப் பின்னது உலகம் அதனால்
உழந்தும் உழவே தலை. (குறள் 1031)

*cuḷaṇṇumērp piṇṇatu ulakam ataṇāl
uḷantum uḷavē talai. (Kural 1031)*

Roam where they will, men must at last stand behind the plough for their food: in spite of every hardship, therefore, husbandry is the chiefest industry.

Though the world is busy with many occupations, in the end it depends on farming for food.

The foundation of Society

Farming removes the disease of hunger from the living beings of the world and brings joy of mind and clarity of heart. To honour farmers, who are physicians curing the disease of hunger, Valluvar gave the kural:

உழுதுண்டு வாழ்வாரே வாழ்வார்மற் றெல்லாம்
தொழுதுண்டு பின்செல் பவர். (குறள் 1033)

*uḷutuṇṇu vāḷvārē vāḷvārmar rellām
toḷutuṇṇu piṇcel pavar. (Kural 1033)*

They alone live who live by tilling the ground: all others but follow in their train and eat only the bread of dependence.

This kural exalts the self-reliance and social contribution of those who create food through labour.

உழவினார் கைம்மடங்கின் இல்லை விழைவதூஉம்
விட்டேமென் பார்க்கு நிலை. (குறள் 1036)

*uḷaviṇār kaimmaṭaṅkiṇ illai viḷaivatūm
viṭṭēmen pārkkū nilai. (Kural 1036)*

Even they who have renounced all desire will have to suffer if the husbandman sitteth still with folded arms.

Valluvar conveys the socio-economic truth that if the farmers' hands fail, other fields suffer too. In the Thirukkural, agriculture is not only food production; it is the lifeline of human society. To honour the farmer is not merely respecting one occupation; it is to honour the fundamental labour that sustains human life.

5.19. The Environment in the Thirukkural

Ideas about the “environment” do not appear directly in the Thirukkural, but through thoughts on rain, water, farming, compassion for living beings, not killing and moderate consumption, it records how human life depends on nature.

The Primacy of Water

For the cycle of life in the world to go on without obstruction, water is indispensable. Valluvar records the importance of water in the kural:

நீர்இன்று அமையாது உலகெனின் யார்யார்க்கும்
வான்இன்று அமையாது ஒழுக்கு. (குறள் 20)

nīrinru amaiyātu ulakeniṇ yāryārkkum
vāninru amaiyātu olukku. (Kural 20)

Nothing on earth can go without water; that being so, the conduct of even most virtuously minded of men dependeth ultimately on rain.

Without water, life in the world cannot go on. Valluvar therefore also stresses the importance of rain, the source of water.

விசம்பின் துளிவீழின் அல்லால்மற் றாங்கே
பசும்புல் தலைகாண்பு அரிது. (குறள் 16)

vicumpiṇ tuḻivīḻiṇ allālmaṭ ṛāṅkē
pacumpul talaikāṇpu aritu. (Kural 16)

Even grass will cease to grow if the showers from above should cease to fall.

In this kural, even the life of a small green blade of grass needs rain. Valluvar shows that human beings, plants, water and rain are not separate; they form a chain of nature, each linked to the next.

Compassion for Life and Ecology

If a country declines in prosperity for want of water, it falls into poverty. Disease, hunger and enmity then increase and spoil the character of the country. Water is therefore the greatest source for removing these. When a country thrives with natural abundance, hunger will disappear. When everyone gets food, mental and physical health improve, and since everyone gets everything, the feeling of enmity also disappears. Even giving and austerity come within reach. That protecting nature is our duty is stated in:

தானம் தவமிரண்டும் தங்கா வியனுலகம்
வானம் வழங்காது எனின். (குறள் 19)

tāṇam tavamiraṇṭum taṅkā viyaṇulakam

vāṇam vaṇkātu eṇiṇ. (Kural 19)

Neither Charity nor Tapas will abide on the wide earth if the heavens should hold back their showers.

The environmental thought of the Thirukkural shows that human beings cannot live apart from nature. Protecting nature is not only protecting the outer world; it is protecting the very foundation of human life. So says Valluvar.

5.20. Family Virtue in the Thirukkural

In the Thirukkural the family is seen not merely as a personal dwelling but as the first social structure in which virtue is formed. Love, responsibility, hospitality, the gift of children and good relationships are the elements of family virtue.

அன்பும் அறனும் உடைத்தாயின் இல்வாழ்க்கை
பண்பும் பயனும் அது. (குறள் 45)

aṇpum aṇum uṭaittāyiṇ ilvāḷkkai
paṇpum payaṇum atu. (kural 45)

If love aboundeth in the home and righteousness doth prevail, the home is perfect and its end is all fulfilled.

A family's greatness lies not in its accumulated wealth, but in a relationship full of love and virtue.

The Social Responsibility of the Family

Individual life is not about living for oneself and one's own family. Every individual should do their own small duty to the world that created and protects them. Even if one cannot do great social work, every person has a duty to protect, as far as they can, the relatives and living beings around them. With this in mind, Valluvar defines very clearly the actions a householder must undertake. Standing by ascetics, the poor and the departed who are related to them is the virtue of household life. The Valluvam speaks of the discipline undertaken in the family structure thus:

இல்வாழ்வான் என்பான் இயல்புடைய மூவர்க்கும்
நல்லாற்றின் நின்ற துணை. (குறள் 41)

ilvāḷvāṇ eṇṇāṇ iyalputaiya mūvarkkum
nallāṟṟiṇ niṇṇa tuṇai. (Kural 41)

The householder is the mainstay of all who follow the three other paths of life.

Domestic life is not a structure of living for oneself alone; it carries a social responsibility to support others too. The basis of that responsibility is a good family structure.

Valluvar therefore makes clear, through the following kural, that a virtuous wife, and good children who carry its growth to the next stage, are indispensable for a family's excellence:

மங்கலம் என்ப மனைமாட்சி மற்றதன்
நன்கலம் நன்மக்கட் பேறு. (குறள் 60)

maṇkalam eṇṇa maṇaimāṭci marraṭaṇ
naṇkalam naṇmakkaṭ pēru. (Kural 60)

The chiefest blessing is an honourable home; and its crowning glory is worthy offspring.

A family's distinction lies in good family character and in raising the next generation along a good path.

The family virtue of the Thirukkural is a union of love, responsibility, sharing and the making of a good generation. If a good society is to arise, the family, its first school, must be established in virtue.

5.21. Women in Thirukkural

The Thirukkural's ideas about women must be read against the social background of its time. The place of women appears from various angles in the parts on domestic life, the life partner, the gift of children and the Section on Love. Among these, the life partner's character, the management of the household and the depth of the relationship are important elements.

Women in Domestic Life

The life partner is shown as a person of worth who runs the household well according to its means.

மனைத்தக்க மாண்புடையள் ஆகித்தற் கொண்டான்
வளத்தக்காள் வாழ்க்கைத் துணை. (குறள் 51)

*maṇaittakka māṇpuṭaiyaḷ ākittar koṇṭāṇ
vaḷattakkāḷ vāḷkkait tuṇai.* (Kural 51)

She is the good helpmate who possesseth every wifely virtue and spendeth not above her husband's means.

Through this kural Valluvar shows her responsibility and importance in the family. And he records that without a good mistress of the household the home will not prosper:

மனைமாட்சி இல்லாள்கண் இல்லாயின் வாழ்க்கை
எனைமாட்சித் தாயினும் இல். (குறள் 52)

*maṇaimāṭci illāḷkaṇ illāyiṇ vāḷkkai
eṇaimāṭcit tāyiṇum il.* (Kural 52)

All other blessings turn to nought if the wife faileth in wifely virtues.

The point is that however many outer resources there may be, without the inner worth of family life its fullness is diminished.

A Woman's Voice in Love

In the Section on Love, a woman's emotions such as love, separation, longing and lovers' quarrels are expressed in a distinct voice. In the Thirukkural, then, the woman is shown not only as someone with family responsibility but also as someone of deep feeling and desire. This part clearly shows the worth of the life partner, her important role in the family and her emotional voice in the life of love.

5.22. Management in the Thirukkural

The term “management” does not appear in the Thirukkural, but elements of management such as planning, selecting human resources, knowing the time, knowing the place, delegation, decision-making and monitoring can be found widely in the Section on Wealth. Planning is essential before any task, but hesitating after a decision has been taken harms effectiveness. The kural records this thought:

எண்ணித் துணிக கருமம் துணிந்தபின்
எண்ணுவம் என்பது இழுக்கு. (குறள் 467)

enṇit tuṇika karumam tuṇintapin
enṇuvam enṇatu ilukku. (Kural 467)

Decide not upon any action except after careful deliberation; he is a fool who undertaketh first and sayeth it in his heart, I shall think afterwards.

Human Resource Management

Human resources play a big part in choosing the right person, handing over the task and completing it in time. Using that resource skilfully paves the way to success. Such thinking is regarded as the best in management and administration, and the Thirukkural records it here and there. One example is this kural:

இதனை இதனால் இவன்முடிக்கும் என்றாய்ந்து
அதனை அவன்கண் விடல். (குறள் 517)

itaṇai itaṇāl ivanmuṭikkum enṛāyntu
ataṇai avanṇaṇ viṭal. (Kural 517)

Determine first the capacity of the servant and the work for which he is fit: and then leave him in responsible charge of the same.

Responsibility should be given only after assessing the nature of the task, the way to accomplish it and the ability of the person who will do it. This is an excellent principle of competence-based delegation.

Time and Execution

Time and place play a big part in the success of an action. The kural below explains that these must be kept in mind while acting:

ஞாலம் கருதினும் கைகூடும் காலம்
கருதி இடத்தாற் செயின். (குறள் 484)

ñālam karutiṇum kaikūṭum kālam
karuti iṭattār ceyiṇ. (Kural 484)

Thou canst conquer even the whole world if thou choose the proper time and the proper objectives.

Even great goals may be fulfilled if one acts knowing the proper time and circumstance. In management, therefore, not only resources but also time and circumstance are resources. The management thought of the Thirukkural is: plan, investigate, choose the worthy person, act knowing the time and carry through with firmness. Good management is not doing more tasks; it is doing the right task in the right way at the right time.

5.23. The Thirukkural in World Languages

The Thirukkural arose in Tamil, but its central ideas touch the common questions of human life. Virtue, love, justice, friendship, governance, education, labour, family and romantic love matter to people all over the world, which is why the Thirukkural is honoured as the universal scripture. People of many languages have translated it into their own languages mainly because it holds ideas of universal appeal.

Education carries a person beyond boundaries such as country and town. In the same way, through translations, the Thirukkural has crossed its source language and reached people of many nations.

Translating the Thirukkural is not merely changing words. Carrying into another language the concentration of a kural set in two lines, its simile, its grammatical structure and its cultural subtlety is a great challenge. Every translation is therefore a cultural bridge between the source and the new linguistic setting.

The universal relevance of the Thirukkural is not determined by the number of its translations alone. The way it states the basic questions of human life so briefly is the chief reason for its wide readership.

Questions such as “How should one live as a good person?”, “How should power be used?”, “What is the use of wealth?”, “What should friendship be like?” and “How can one live without harming others?” are common to people everywhere, across time and language.

The Thirukkural has been translated into many languages, Indian languages, European languages and South-East Asian languages, and this is proof that it is a universal scripture. Its translations are an exchange of knowledge and culture between Tamil and the cultures of other languages.

The Thirukkural arose as a treasure of Tamil, and through translations it has grown into a work that converses with the wider human community. The strength of its journey through the world lies not in its short form but in the broad human thought held within it. Languages change, but the need for love, virtue, justice and humanity does not. It is this common humanity that keeps the Thirukkural travelling beyond the boundaries of language.

In this chapter, “The Universal Scripture of Valluvam”, we have learned about the themes the Thirukkural speaks of. In the next part, let us learn the Thirukkural through the Garland of Kural Gems.

Chapter 6 – Garland of Kural Gems (Kural Manimalai)

This **Garland of Kural Gems** has been compiled by gathering one kural for each chapter from the Section on Virtue (Aram) and the Section on Wealth (Porul). If you learn one kural a day, we can learn all three sections completely.

அறத்துப்பால்

Arattuppāl – Righteousness

1. கடவுள் வாழ்த்து

Kaṭavuḷ vāḷttu - In Praise of the Lord

அகர முதல எழுத்தெல்லாம் ஆதி
பகவன் முதற்றே உலகு. (குறள் 1)

akara mutala eḷuttellām āti
pakavaṇ mutarrē ulaku. (Kural 1)

A is the starting-point of the world of sound: even so is the Ancient one Supreme the starting-point of all that exists.

2. வான்சிறப்பு

Vāṇciṟappu - In Praise of Rain

வான்நின்று உலகம் வழங்கி வருதலால்
தான் அமிழ்தம் என்றுணரல் பாற்று. (குறள் 11)

vāṇniṇru ulakam vaḷaṅki varutalāl
tāṇamiḷtam eṇṇuṇaral pārru. (Kural 11)

It is the unfailing fall of rain that sustaineth the earth: look thou therefore upon it as very amrita - the drink immortal of the gods.

3. நீத்தார் பெருமை

Nīttār perumai - The Greatness of those who have renounced the World

அந்தணர் என்போர் அறவோர்மற் றெவ்வுயிர்க்கும்
செந்தண்மை பூண்டுஓமுக லான். (குறள் 30)

antaṇar eṇṇōr aṇavōmar revvuyirrkum
centaṇmai pūṇṭuoluka lāṇ. (Kural 30)

Brahmans are also to be looked upon as men of renunciation: for they have compassion on all life.

4. அறன் வலியுறுத்தல்

Araṇ valiyuruttal - The glorification of Righteousness

அன்றறிவாம் என்னாது அறம்செய்க மற்றது
பொன்றுங்கால் பொன்றாத் துணை. (குறள் 36)

*aṇṇarivām eṇṇātu araṁceyka marṛatu
poṇṇuṅkāḷ poṇṇāt tuṇai. (Kural 36)*

Say not in thy heart, I shall be righteous by and by, but begin to do good works without delaying; for it is righteousness will be thy undying companion on the day of thy death.

5. இவ்வாழ்க்கை

Ilvāḷkkai - Family Life

வையத்துள் வாழ்வாங்கு வாழ்பவன் வான்உறையும்
தெய்வத்துள் வைக்கப் படும். (குறள் 50)

*vaiyattuḷ vālvāṇku vālpavaṇ vāṇuraiyum
teyvattuḷ vaikkap paṭum. (Kural 50)*

The householder who liveth as he ought to live will be looked upon as a god among men.

6. வாழ்க்கைத் துணைநலம்

Vāḷkkait tuṇainalam - The blessings of a good helpmate

மங்கலம் என்ப மனைமாட்சி மற்றதன்
நன்கலம் நன்மக்கட் பேறு. (குறள் 60)

*maṅkalam eṇpa maṇaimāṭci marṛatan
naṅkalam naṇmakkaṭ pēru. (Kural 60)*

The chiefest blessing is an honourable home; and its crowning glory is worthy offspring.

7. மக்கட்பேறு

Makkaṭpēru – Offspring

குழலினிது யாழினிது என்பதம் மக்கள்
மழலைச்சொல் கேளா தவர். (குறள் 66)

*kuḷaliniṭu yāḷiniṭu eṇpatam makkaḷ
maḷalaiccol kēḷā tavar. (Kural 66)*

The flute is sweet and the guitar dulcet; so say they who have not heard the babbling speech of their little ones.

8. அன்புடைமை

Anpuṭaimai - Love

அன்பிலார் எல்லாம் தமக்குரியர் அன்புடையார்
என்பும் உரியர் பிறர்க்கு. (குறள் 72)

*anpilār ellām tamakkuriyar anpuṭaiyār
enpum uriyar pīrarkku. (Kural 72)*

Those that love not live only for themselves; as to those that love, they will give their very bones for helping others.

9. விருந்தோம்பல்

Viruntōmpal - Hospitality

மோப்பக் குழையும் அனிச்சம் முகம்திரிந்து
நோக்கக் குழையும் விருந்து. (குறள் 90)

*mōppak kuḷaiyum aniccam mukamtirintu
nōkkak kuḷaiyum viruntu. (Kural 90)*

The anitcha flower fadeth when thou holdest it near the nose and smellest it: but a mere look is enough to break the heart of the great.

10. இனியவை கூறல்

Iniyavai kūral - Kindness of Speech

இனிய உளவாக இன்னாத கூறல்
கனியிருப்பக் காய்கவர்த் தற்று. (குறள் 100)

*inīya uḷavāka innāta kūral
kaṇiyiruppak kāykavarnt̥ tarru. (Kural 100)*

Behold the man who useth hard words when sweet ones serve; he preferreth the unripe fruit to the ripe.

11. செய்ந்நன்றி அறிதல்

Ceynnaṇṇi arital - Gratitude

செய்யாமல் செய்த உதவிக்கு வையகமும்
வானகமும் ஆற்றல் அறிது. (குறள் 101)

*ceyyāmal ceyta utavikku vaiyakamum
vāṇakamum ārral aritu. (Kural 101)*

Behold the kindness done without any obligation; even the heavens and the earth but poorly paid.

12. நடுவுநிலைமை

Naṭuvunilaimai - Uprightness of Heart

வாணிகம் செய்வார்க்கு வாணிகம் பேணிப்
பிறவும் தம்போல் செயின். (குறள் 120)

*vāṇikam ceyvārkkku vāṇikam pēṇip
pīravum tamapōl ceyiṇ. (Kural 120)*

Behold the business man that looketh after the interests of others as his own; his business will expand.

13. அடக்கமுடைமை

Aṭakkamuṭaimai - Self-control

தீயினால் சுட்டபுண் உள்ளாறும் ஆறாதே
நாவினால் சுட்ட வடு. (குறள் 129)

*tīyiṇāl cuṭṭapuṇ uḷḷārum āratē
nāviṇāl cuṭṭa vaṭu. (Kural 129)*

The burn caused by fire healeth in its time: but the wound burned in by the tongue remaineth a running sore for ever.

14. ஒழுக்கமுடைமை

Oḷukkamuṭaimai - Purity of Conduct

ஒழுக்கம் விழுப்பம் தரலான் ஒழுக்கம்
உயிரினும் ஒம்பப் படும். (குறள் 131)

*oḷukkam viḷuppaṁ taralāṇ oḷukkam
uyiriṇum ōmpap paṭum. (Kural 131)*

The man whose conduct is pure is honoured by all: purity of conduct is therefore to be prized even above life.

15. பிறனில் விழையாமை

Piraṇil viḷaiyāmai - Non-Desiring of Another Man's wife

பிறன்மனை நோக்காத பேராண்மை சான்றோர்க்கு
அறனொன்றோ ஆன்ற ஒழுக்கு. (குறள் 148)

*pīraṇmaṇai nōkkāta pērāṇmai cāṇṇōrkku
araṇonṇō āṇra oḷukku. (Kural 148)*

Behold the high-souled man that looketh not on anothers wife: he is more than righteous; he is saintly.

16. பொறையுடைமை

Poraiyuṭaimai - Forgiveness

பொறுத்தல் இறப்பினை என்றும் அதனை
மறத்தல் அதனினும் நன்று. (குறள் 152)

poruttal irappinai enrum atānai
marattal atāṇinum nanru. (Kural 152)

Forgive thou always the injuries that others may do thee; but if thou forget them it were even better.

17. அழுக்காறாமை

Aḷukkārāmai - Non-Envy

ஒழுக்காறாக் கொள்க ஒருவன்தன் நெஞ்சத்து
அழுக்காறு இலாத இயல்பு. (குறள் 161)

oḷukkārāk koḷka oruvaṇṭaṇ neñcattu
aḷukkāru ilāta iyalpu. (Kural 161)

Know that thy heart is inclining towards virtue when thou findest that it is free from all feelings of envy.

18. வெஃகாமை

Veḷkāmai - Non-Coveting

அஃகாமை செல்வத்திற்கு யாதெனின் வெஃகாமை
வேண்டும் பிறன்கைப் பொருள். (குறள் 178)

aḷkāmai celvattiṟku yāteṇiṇ veḷkāmai
vēṇṭum piṟaṇkaip poruḷ. (Kural 178)

If thou desire that thy substance should not grow less, covet not the riches in thy neighbours hands.

19. புறங்கூறாமை

Puraṅkūrāmai - Refraining From Slander

ஏதிலார் குற்றம்போல் தம்குற்றம் காண்கிற்பின்
தீதுண்டோ மன்னும் உயிர்க்கு. (குறள் 190)

ētilār kuṟrampōl tamkuṟram kāṇkiṟpiṇ
tītuṇṭō maṇṇum uyirkku. (Kural 190)

If a man can scan his own faults as he doth those of his enemies, can evil ever come to him?

20. பயனில் சொல்லாமை

Payanila collāmai - Refraining from vain speaking

சொல்லுக சொல்லில் பயனுடைய சொல்லற்க
சொல்லில் பயனிலாச் சொல். (குறள் 200)

colluka collil payaṇuṭaiya collarka
collil payaṇilāc col. (Kural 200)

Speak thou only such words as are worth saying; and speak not ever words that are profitless and vain.

21. தீவினையச்சம்

Tīvinaiyaccam - Fear of Evil Doing

தீயவை தீய பயத்தலால் தீயவை
தீயினும் அஞ்சப் படும். (குறள் 202)

tīyavai tīya payattalāl tīyavai
tīyinum aṇcap paṭum. (Kural 202)

Evil bringeth forth evil; evil therefore is to be feared even more than fire.

22. ஒப்புரவறிதல்

Oppuravarital - Complaisance

கைம்மாறு வேண்டா கடப்பாடு மாரிமாட்டு
என்னாற்றும் கொல்லோ உலகு. (குறள் 211)

kaimmāru vēṇṭā kaṭappāṭu mārimāṭṭu
eṇṇārrum kollō ulaku. (Kural 211)

The gracious expect no return when they oblige: how can the world ever repay the rain-cloud?

23. ஈகை

Īkai - Charity

அற்றார் அழிபசி தீர்த்தல் அஃதொருவன்
பெற்றான் பொருள்வைப் புழி. (குறள் 226)

arrār alipaci tīrttal aṭtoruvan
perrāṇ poruḷvaip puḷi. (Kural 226)

To fill the gnawing hunger of the poor; that is the way that the wealthy man should lay up a store for himself against an evil day.

24. புகழ்

Pukaḷ - Glory

ஈதல் இசைபட வாழ்தல் அதுவல்லது
ஊதியம் இல்லை உயிர்க்கு. (குறள் 231)

ītal icaipaṭa vāḷtal atuvallatu
ūtiyam illai uyirkku. (Kural 231)

Give to the poor and add glory unto thy name: there is no greater profit for man than this.

25. அருளுடைமை

Aruḷuṭaimai - Mercy

அருட்செல்வம் செல்வத்துள் செல்வம் பொருட்செல்வம்
பூரியார் கண்ணும் உள. (குறள் 241)

aruṭcelvam celvattuḷ celvam poruṭcelvam
pūriyār kaṇṇum uḷa. (Kural 241)

The chiefest wealth is a heart that over floweth with mercy; for material wealth is found even in the hands of vile men.

26. புலால் மறுத்தல்

Pulāl maruttal - Abjuring of flesh-meat

கொல்லான் புலாலை மறுத்தானைக் கைகூப்பி
எல்லா உயிரும் தொழும். (குறள் 260)

kollāṇ pulālai maruttāṇaik kaikūppi
ellā uyirum toḷum. (Kural 260)

Behold the man who killeth not and abstaineth from flesh meat: all the world joineth hands to do him reverence.

27. தவம்

Tavam - Tapas

உற்றநோய் நோன்றல் உயிர்க்கு உறுகண் செய்யாமை
அற்றே தவத்திற்கு உரு. (குறள் 261)

urranōy nōṇṇal uyirkku uṇṇa ceyyāmai
arṛē tavattirku uru. (Kural 261)

Patient endurance of suffering and non-injuring of life, in these is contained the whole of tapas.

28. கூடாவொழுக்கம்

Kūṭāvōḷukkam - Imposture

வலியில் நிலைமையான் வல்லுருவம் பெற்றம்
புலியின்தோல் போர்த்துமேய்ந் தற்று. (குறள் 273)

*valiyil nilaimaiyāṇ valluruvam peram
puliyaṇtōl pōrttumēyn taru. (Kural 273)*

Behold the man who hath not attained mastery over himself putting on the puissant look of the austere: he is like a cow that grazeth about wearing a tiger's skin.

29. கள்ளாமை

Kaḷḷāmai - Abstaining from Fraud

எள்ளாமை வேண்டுவான் என்பான் எனைத்தொன்றும்
கள்ளாமை காக்கதன் நெஞ்சு. (குறள் 281)

*eḷḷāmai vēṇṭuvāṇ enpāṇ enaittonrum
kaḷḷāmai kākkataṇ neṇcu. (Kural 281)*

Who so wanteth not to be held in contempt, let him guard himself against every thought of fraud.

30. வாய்மை

Vāymai - Truthfulness

வாய்மை எனப்படுவது யாதெனின் யாதொன்றும்
தீமை இலாத சொல்லு. (குறள் 291)

*vāymai enappaṭuvatu yāteṇiṇ yātonrum
tīmai ilāta colal. (Kural 291)*

What is truthfulness? It is the speaking of that which is free from even the slightest taint of evil.

31. வெகுளாமை

Vekuḷāmai - Abstaining From Anger

தன்னைத்தான் காக்கின் சினம்காக்க காவாக்கால்
தன்னையே கொல்லும் சினம். (குறள் 305)

*taṇṇaittāṇ kākkiṇ ciṇamkāka kāvākkāl
taṇṇaiyē kollum ciṇam. (Kural 305)*

If thou want to look after thyself, keep off from choler; for if thou keep not off, it will come upon thee and destroy thy own self.

32. இன்னா செய்யாமை

Inṇā ceyyāmai - Non-injuring

இன்னாசெய் தாரை ஒறுத்தல் அவர்நாண
நன்னயம் செய்து விடல். (குறள் 314)

iṇṇācey tārai oruttal avarṇāṇa
naṇṇayam ceytu viṭal. (Kural 314)

How shall a man punish them that have injured him? Let him do them a good turn and make them ashamed in their hearts.

33. கொல்லாமை

Kollāmai - Not -Killing

பகுத்துண்டு பல்லுயிர் ஓம்புதல் நூலோர்
தொகுத்தவற்றுள் எல்லாம் தலை. (குறள் 322)

pakuttuṇṭu palluyir ōmputal nūlōr
tokuttavarṇuḷ ellām talai. (Kural 322)

To divide one's bread with the needy and abstain from killing; these are the greatest of all the commandments of all the prophets.

34. நிலையாமை

Nilaiyāmai - The Vanity of All things

நெருநல் உளனொருவன் இன்றில்லை என்னும்
பெருமை உடைத்திவ் வுலகு. (குறள் 336)

nerunal uḷaṇoruvaṇ iṇṇillai eṇṇum
perumai uṭaittiv vulaku. (Kural 336)

But yesterday a man was and today he is not: that is the wonder of wonders in this world.

35. துறவு

Tuṛavu - Renunciation

பற்றுக் பற்றற்றான் பற்றினை அப்பற்றைப்
பற்றுக் பற்று விடற்கு. (குறள் 350)

parruka parrarṇāṇ parrinai apparraip
parruka parru viṭarku. (Kural 350)

Attach and tie thyself to Him who hath conquered all attachments; bind thyself firmly to Him in order that all thy bonds may be broken.

36. மெய்யுணர்தல்

Meyyunaṭtal - Realization of the Truth

எப்பொருள் எத்தன்மைத்து ஆயினும் அப்பொருள்
மெய்ப்பொருள் காண்பது அறிவு. (குறள் 355)

*epporuḷ ettaṇmaittu āyinuṁ apporuḷ
meypporuḷ kāṇpatu arivu. (Kural 355)*

To separate the true from the false in everything, whatever its nature may be, that is the part of a wise understanding.

37. அவா அறுத்தல்

Avā aṟuttal - The killing of Desire

அவாஎன்ப எல்லா உயிர்க்கும்எஞ் ஞான்றும்
தவாஅப் பிறப்பீனும் வித்து. (குறள் 361)

*avāeṇṇa ellā uyirkkumeṇ ṇāṇṇum
tavāap piṟappīnum vittu. (Kural 361)*

Desire is the seed that yieldeth unto every soul, and always, a never failing crop of births.

38. ஊழ்

Ū - Destiny

ஊழின் பெருவலி யாவுள மற்றொன்று
சூழினும் தான்முந் துறும். (குறள் 380)

*ūḷiṇ peruvali yāvuḷa marraṇṇu
cūḷiṇum tāṇmun tuṟum. (Kural 380)*

What is there that is mightier than destiny? For even as its victim is meditating a plan to overcome it, it forestalleth him and bringeth him down.

பொருட்பால்

Poruṭpāl - The material world

39. இறைமாட்சி

Iṟaimāṭci - The Qualification of the Prince

முறைசெய்து காப்பாற்றும் மன்னவன் மக்கட்கு
இறையென்று வைக்கப் படும். (குறள் 388)

*muraiceytu kāppāṟṟum maṇṇavaṇ makkaṭku
īraiyeṇṇu vaikkap paṭum. (Kural 388)*

Behold the prince who administheth impartial justice and protecteth his subjects: he will be looked upon as a god among men.

40. கல்வி

Kalvi - Learning

கற்க கசடறக் கற்பவை கற்றபின்
நிற்க அதற்குத் தக. (குறள் 391)

*kaṛka kacaṭarak kaṛpavai kaṛrapin
niṛka ataṛkut taka. (Kural 391)*

Acquire thoroughly the knowledge that is worth acquiring: and after acquiring it walk thou in accordance therewith.

41. கல்லாமை

Kallāmai - The Neglecting of Instruction

விலங்கொடு மக்கள் அனையர் இலங்குநூல்
கற்றாரோடு ஏனை யவர். (குறள் 410)

*vilan̄koṭu makkaḷ aṇaiyar ilan̄kunūl
kaṛṛārōṭu ēṇai yavar. (Kural 410)*

How much better are men than beasts? Even so much are the learned better than those that have not cared for instruction.

42. கேள்வி

Kēḷvi - Listening to the Instruction of the wise

செல்வத்துள் செல்வம் செவிச்செல்வம் அச்செல்வம்
செல்வத்துள் எல்லாம் தலை. (குறள் 411)

*celvattuḷ celvam ceviccelvam accelvam
celvattuḷ ellām talai. (Kural 411)*

The most precious of treasures is the treasure of the ear: Verily it is the crown of all kinds of wealth.

43. அறிவுடைமை

Arivuṭaimai - The understanding

எப்பொருள் யார்யார்வாய்க் கேட்பினும் அப்பொருள்
மெய்ப்பொருள் காண்பது அறிவு. (குறள் 423)

*epporuḷ yāryārvāyk kēṭpinum apporuḷ
meypporuḷ kāṇpatu arivu. (Kural 423)*

To separate the true from the false in every utterance, whoever it be that speaketh, that is the part of a wise understanding.

44. குற்றங்கடிதல்

Kurraṅkaṭṭal - Eschewing of Faults

தன்குற்றம் நீக்கிப் பிறர்குற்றம் காண்கிற்பின்
என்குற்றம் ஆகும் இறைக்கு. (குறள் 436)

taṅkurram nīkip piṛarkurram kāṅkiṛpiṇ
eṅkurram ākum iṛaikku. (Kural 436)

If the prince correcteth his own faults and looketh into those of others, where is the ill that can approach him?

45. பெரியாரைத் துணைக்கோடல்

Periyārait tuṇaikkōṭal - Cultivating the Friendship of the worthy

இடிப்பாரை இல்லாத ஏமரா மன்னன்
கெடுப்பார் இலானும் கெடும். (குறள் 448)

iṭippārai illāta ēmarā manṇan
keṭuppār ilānum keṭum. (Kural 448)

Behold the prince who repositeth not on the support of men who can rebuke him; he will perish even when he hath no foes.

46. சிற்றினம் சேராமை

Cirriṇam cērāmai - Keeping aloof from vulgar company

நிலத்தியல்பால் நீர்திரிந்து அற்றாகும் மாந்தர்க்கு
இனத்தியல்பு தாகும் அறிவு. (குறள் 452)

nilattiyalpāl nīrtirintu arṛākum māntarkku
iṇattiyalpa tākum arivu. (Kural 452)

Water altereth and taketh the character of the soil through which it floweth; even so the mind taketh the colour of the company with which it consorteth.

47. தெரிந்து செயல்வகை

Terintu ceyalvakai - Deliberation before Action

எண்ணித் துணிக கருமம் துணிந்தபின்
எண்ணுவம் என்பது இழுக்கு. (குறள் 467)

eṇṇit tuṇika karumam tuṇintapiṇ
eṇṇuvam eṇpatu ilukku. (Kural 467)

Decide not upon any action except after careful deliberation; he is a fool who undertaketh first and sayeth it in his heart, I shall think afterwards.

48. வலியறிதல்

Valiyaṛital - Judging of strength

வினைவலியும் தன்வலியும் மாற்றான் வலியும்
துணைவலியும் தூக்கிச் செயல். (குறள் 471)

viṇaivaliyum taṇvaliyum māṛṛāṇ valiyum
tuṇaivaliyum tūkkic ceyal. (Kural 471)

Weigh justly the difficulty of the enterprise, thy own strength and the strength of thine enemy,
and the strength also of your allies: and then enter thou upon it.

49. காலமறிதல்

Kālamaṛital - Judging the opportune Moment

கொக்கொக்க கூம்பும் பருவத்து மற்றதன்
குத்தொக்க சீர்த்த இடத்து. (குறள் 490)

kokkokka kūmpum paruvattu marṛatan
kuttokka cīrtta iṭattu. (Kural 490)

When the time is against thee feign inaction like the stork: but when the tide is on, strike with
the swiftness of its souse.

50. இடனறிதல்

Iṭaṇaṛital - Judging of Place

நெடும்புனலுள் வெல்லும் முதலை அடும்புனலின்
நீங்கின் அதனைப் பிற. (குறள் 495)

neṭumpuṇaluḷ vellum mutalai aṭumpuṇaliṇ
nīṅkiṇ atanaip piṛa. (Kural 495)

All powerful is the crocodile in deep water: but out of it, it is plaything of its foes.

51. தெரிந்து தெளிதல்

Terintu teḷital - Testing of Men for confidence

குணம்நாடிக் குற்றமும் நாடி அவற்றுள்
மிகைநாடி மிக்க கொளல். (குறள் 504)

kuṇamṇāṭik kuṛramumṇāṭi avarruḷ
mikaināṭi mikka koḷal. (Kural 504)

Weigh a mans good and weigh his evil: whichever is more, take that to be his nature.

52. தெரிந்து வினையாடல்

Terintu viṇaiyāṭal - Testing and employment of men

இதனை இதனால் இவன்முடிக்கும் என்றாய்ந்து
அதனை அவன்கண் விடல். (குறள் 517)

itaṇai itaṇāl ivaṇmuṭikkum enrāyntu
ataṇai avaṇkaṇ viṭal. (Kural 517)

Determine first the capacity of the servant and the work for which he is fit: and then leave him in responsible charge of the same.

53. சுற்றந்தழால்

Currantaḷāl - Cherishing of kindred

காக்கை கரவா கரைந்துண்ணும் ஆக்கமும்
அன்னநீ ரார்க்கே உள. (குறள் 527)

kākkai karavā karaintuṇṇum ākkamum
aṇṇanī rārkkē uḷa. (Kural 527)

The crow concealeth not its food selfishly from its fellows but shareth it lovingly with them: prosperity will abide only with men of a like nature.

54. பொச்சாவாமை

Pocāvāmai - Guarding Against insouciance

முன்னுறக் காவாது இழுக்கியான் தன்பிழை
பின்னூறு இரங்கி விடும். (குறள் 535)

muṇṇurak kāvātu ilukkiyāṇ tappiḷai
piṇṇūru iraṅki viṭum. (Kural 535)

He who faileth to guard against everything beforehand will deplore his negligence when he is surprised by disaster.

55. செங்கோன்மை

Ceṅkōṇmai - Just Government

வான்நோக்கி வாழும் உலகெல்லாம் மன்னவன்
கோல்நோக்கி வாழும் குடி. (குறள் 542)

vāṇṇōkki vāḷum ulakellām manṇavan
kōlnōkki vāḷum kuṭi. (Kural 542)

The world looketh up to the rain cloud for life: even so do men look up to the sceptre of the prince for protection.

56. கொடுங்கோன்மை

Koṭuṅkōṇmai - Tyranny

அல்லற்பட்டு ஆற்றாது அழுதகண் ணீரன்றே
செல்வத்தைத் தேய்க்கும் படை. (குறள் 555)

allaṟpaṭṭu āṟṟātu alutakaṇ ṇīraṇṟē
celvattait tēykkum paṭai. (Kural 555)

Verily it is the tears of those groaning under oppression that wear away the prosperity of the prince.

57. வெருவந்த செய்யாமை

Veruvanta ceyyāmai - Abstaining from deeds that cause trepidation

தக்காங்கு நாடித் தலைச்செல்லா வண்ணத்தால்
ஒத்தாங்கு ஒறுப்பது வேந்து. (குறள் 561)

takkāṅku nāṭit talaiccellā vaṇṇattāl
ottāṅku oṟuppatu vēntu. (Kural 561)

The prince shall measure the guilt of the offender and punish him so that he offend not again: but the punishment shall not be excessive.

58. கண்ணோட்டம்

Kaṇṇōṭṭam - Considerateness

பெயக்கண்டும் நஞ்சுண்டு அமைவர் நயத்தக்க
நாகரிகம் வேண்டு பவர். (குறள் 580)

peyakkaṇṭum nañcuṇṭu amaivar nayattakka
nākarikam vēṇṭu pavar. (Kural 580)

Those who desire to be styled the very pink of courtesy will drink off even the poison that hath been mixed for them before their own eyes.

59. ஒற்றாடல்

Oṟṟāṭal - The service of Intelligence

ஒற்றும் உரைசான்ற நூலும் இவையிரண்டும்
தெற்றென்க மன்னவன் கண். (குறள் 581)

orrum uraicāṇra nūlum ivaiyiraṇṭum
terrenka maṇṇavaṇ kaṇ. (Kural 581)

Let the prince understand that political science and his Intelligence corps are the eyes wherewith he seeth.

60. ஊக்கமுடைமை

Ūkkamuṭaimai - Energy

வெள்ளத் தனைய மலர்நீட்டம் மாந்தர்தம்
உள்ளத் தனையது உயர்வு. (குறள் 595)

veḷḷat taṇaiya malarnīṭṭam māntartam
uḷḷat taṇaiyatu uyarvu. (Kural 595)

The water with which a plant is watered is the measure of the luxuriance of its flower: Even so, the spirit of a man is the measure of his fortunes.

61. மடியின்மை

Maṭiyinmai - Abstention from sloth

நெடுநீர் மறவி மடிதுயில் நான்கும்
கெடுநீரார் காமக் கலன். (குறள் 605)

neṭunīr maravi maṭituyil nāṇkum
keṭunīrār kāmakaḷaṇ. (Kural 605)

Procrastination, forgetfulness, sloth and sleep, those four are the cosy pleasure boats of those that are fated to perish.

62. ஆள்வினையுடைமை

Āḷvinaiyuṭaimai - Manly exertion

அருமை உடைத்தென்று அசாவாமை வேண்டும்
பெருமை முயற்சி தரும். (குறள் 611)

arumai uṭaitteṇṇu acāvāmai vēṇṭum
perumai muyarci tarum. (Kural 611)

Shrink not from any work saying, it is impossible: for labour will give thee the strength to achieve everything.

63. இடுக்கணழியாமை

Iṭukkaṇaḷiyāmai - Intrepidity in the face of misfortune

இடுக்கண் வருங்கால் நகுக அதனை
அடுத்தூர்வது அஃதொப்பது இல். (குறள் 621)

iṭukkaṇ varuṅkāḷ nakuka ataṇai
aṭuttūrvatu aṭtoppatu il. (Kural 621)

When thou meetest with misfortune face it with thy best smile: for there is nothing like a smile to enable a man to hold his own against it.

64. அமைச்சு

Amaiccu - The Councillor of State

கருவியும் காலமும் செய்கையும் செய்யும்
அருவினையும் மாண்டது அமைச்சு. (குறள் 631)

karuviyum kālamum ceykaiyum ceyyum
aruviṇaiyum māṇṭatu amaiccu. (Kural 631)

Behold the man who can judge aright the (men and) means of achieving great enterprises, the proper season to commence them and (the worth of) the enterprises themselves: he is the proper man for thy council.

65. சொல்வன்மை

Colvaṇmai - Eloquence

சொல்லுக சொல்லைப் பிறிதோர்சொல் அச்சொல்லை
வெல்லும்சொல் இன்மை அறிந்து. (குறள் 645)

colluka collaip piritōrcol accollai
vellumcol iṇmai aṛintu. (Kural 645)

Speak thou the speech that cannot be silenced by any other speech.

66. வினைத்தூய்மை

Viṇaittūymai - Purity of Action

ஈன்றாள் பசிகாண்பான் ஆயினும் செய்யற்க
சான்றோர் பழிக்கும் வினை. (குறள் 656)

īṇṛāḷ pacikāṇpāṇ āyinum ceyyarka
cāṇṛōr paḷikkum viṇai. (Kural 656)

Let not a man do those things that good men condemn, even to save the mother that bore him, from starvation.

67. வினைத்திட்டம்

Viṇaittiṭṭam - Decision of Character

எண்ணிய எண்ணியாங்கு எய்துப எண்ணியார்
திண்ணியர் ஆகப் பெறின். (குறள் 666)

eṇṇiya eṇṇiyāṅku eytupa eṇṇiyār
tiṇṇiyar ākap peṛin. (Kural 666)

That which they will, men acquire even in the manner that they will, provided they will with all their might.

68. வினைசெயல்வகை

Viṇaiceyalvakai - The Conduct of Affairs

தூங்குக தூங்கிச் செயற்பால தூங்கற்க
தூங்காது செய்யும் வினை. (குறள் 672)

tūṅkuka tūṅkic ceyarpāla tūṅkaṛka
tūṅkātu ceyyum viṇai. (Kural 672)

Do with deliberation those things that ought to be done in a leisurely way: but put not off even for a moment those things that require prompt action.

69. தூது

Tutu - The Ambassador

இறுதி பயப்பினும் எஞ்சாது இறைவற்கு
உறுதி பயப்பதாம் தூது. (குறள் 690)

iruti payappinūm eñcātu iraivarku
uruti payappatām tūtu. (Kural 690)

Even when threatened with death the perfect ambassador will not fail in his duty but will endeavour to secure his masters profit.

70. மன்னரைச் சேர்ந்தொழுகல்

Maṇṇaraic cērntolukal - Comporting oneself Before princes

அகலாது அணுகாது தீக்காய்வார் போல்க
இகல்வேந்தர்ச் சேர்ந்தொழுகு வார். (குறள் 691)

akalātu aṇukātu tīkkāyvār pōlka
ikalvēntarc cērntoluku vār. (Kural 691)

Whoever desireth to move with princes, let him be like unto men that warm themselves at a fire: let him not approach too near nor stand too far away.

71. குறிப்பறிதல்

Kuripparital - Judging by Looks

அடுத்தது காட்டும் பளிங்குபோல் நெஞ்சம்
கடுத்தது காட்டும் முகம். (குறள் 706)

aṭuttatu kāṭṭum paḷiṅkupōl neñcam
kaṭuttatu kāṭṭum mukam. (Kural 706)

Even as the crystal changeth and assumeth the colour of that which is near, even so doth a face alter and show that which overfloweth the heart.

72. அவையறிதல்

Avaiyarital - Judging of the Audience

அவையறிந்து ஆராய்ந்து சொல்லுக சொல்லின்
தொகையறிந்த தூய்மை யவர். (குறள் 711)

avaiyarintu āṛāyntu colluka collin
tokaiyarinta tūymai yavar. (Kural 711)

O ye that have studied eloquence and have acquired good taste! study well your audience and suit your speech to it.

73. அவையஞ்சாமை

Avaiyañcāmai - Self-confidence Before an Audience

கற்றாருள் கற்றார் எனப்படுவர் கற்றார்முன்
கற்ற செலச்சொல்லு வார். (குறள் 722)

karrāru! karrār enappaṭuvar karrārmun
karra celacollu vār. (Kural 722)

Behold the man who can sustain his conclusions in the congregation of the learned: he will be called a scholar among scholars.

74. நாடு

Nāṭu - Territory

பிணியின்மை செல்வம் விளைவின்பம் ஏமம்
அணியென்ப நாட்டிற்கிவ் வைந்து. (குறள் 738)

piṇiyinmai celvam viḷaivippam ēmam
aṇiyenpa nāṭṭirkiv vaintu. (Kural 738)

Wealth, richness of yield, happiness of the people, immunity from diseases, and safety from invasions, these five are the ornaments of a kingdom.

75. அரண்

Araṇ - Fortresses

மணிநீரும் மண்ணும் மலையும் அணிநிழல்
காடும் உடையது அரண். (குறள் 742)

maṇinīrum maṇṇum malaiyum aṇiniḷal
kāṭum uṭaiyatu araṇ. (Kural 742)

Water - courses, deserts, mountains and thick jungles all these constitute various kinds of defensive barriers.

76. பொருள்செயல்வகை

Poruļceyalvakai - The acquisition of wealth

செய்க பொருளைச் செறுநர் செருக்கறுக்கும்
எஃகுஅதனிற் கூரியது இல். (குறள் 759)

ceyka poruļaiĉ ceṟunar ceṟukkaṟukkum
eḱkuataṇiṟ kūriyatu il. (Kural 759)

Amass wealth: for there is no sharper steel to cleave thy foemans pride.

77. படைமாட்சி

Paṭaimāṭci - The characteristics of the Army

மறம்மானம் மாண்ட வழிச்செலவு தேற்றம்
எனநான்கே ஏமம் படைக்கு. (குறள் 766)

maṟammāṇam māṇṭa vaļiccelavu tēṟṟam
eṇanāṇkē ēmam paṭaikku. (Kural 766)

Valour, honour, decision in the midst of confusion and devotion to the traditional principles of unblemished chivalry - these four are the armours of protection for an army.

78. படைச்செருக்கு

Paṭaiccerukku - The self-abandon of the warrior

பேராண்மை என்பது தறுகண்ணொன்று உற்றக்கால்
ஊராண்மை மற்றதன் எஃகு. (குறள் 773)

pēṟāṇmai eṇpatu taṟukaṇṇoru urrakāl
ūṟāṇmai maṟṟataṇ eḱku. (Kural 773)

The furious courage that striketh hard, that is what they call valour: but it is chivalrous generosity to the fallen that giveth it its edge.

79. நட்பு

Naṭpu - Friendship

உடுக்கை இழந்தவன் கைபோல ஆங்கே
இடுக்கண் களைவதாம் நட்பு. (குறள் 788)

uṭukkai iḷantavaṇ kaipōla āṅkē
iṭukkaṇ kaḷaivatām naṭpu. (Kural 788)

Behold the hand of the man whose garment hath been blown aside, how it hurrieth to recover his limbs: that is the symbol of the true friend that hasteneth to succour a man in his misfortune.

80. நட்பாராய்தல்

Naṭpārāyatal - Testing of fitness for friendship

கேட்டினும் உண்டுஓர் உறுதி கிளைஞரை
நீட்டி அளப்பதோர் கோல். (குறள் 796)

kēṭṭiṇum uṇṭuōr uṛuti kiḷaiñarai
nīṭṭi aḷappatōr kōl. (Kural 796)

There is a virtue even in misfortune: for misfortune is the rod wherewith one can measure the loyalty of friends.

81. பழைமை

Paḷaimai - Intimacy

பழைமை எனப்படுவது யாதெனின் யாதும்
கிழ்மையைக் கீழ்ந்திடா நட்பு. (குறள் 801)

paḷaimai eṇappaṭuvatu yāteṇiṇ yātum
kiḷamaiyaik kīḷntiṭā naṭpu. (Kural 801)

That friendship is called intimacy which submitteth without resenting to all the freedoms taken by the beloved one.

82. தீநட்பு

Tīnaṭpu - The friendship that injureth

கனவினும் இன்னாது மன்னோ வினைவேறு
சொல்வேறு பட்டார் தொடர்பு. (குறள் 819)

kaṇaviṇum iṇṇātu manṇō viṇaivēru
colvēru paṭṭār toṭarpu. (Kural 819)

Behold the men whose acts belie their spoken words: it is bitter to recall their fellowship even in dreams.

83. கூடாநட்பு

Kūṭānaṭpu - False friendship

தொழுதகை யுள்ளும் படையொடுங்கும் ஒன்னார்
அழுதகண் ணீரும் அனைத்து. (குறள் 828)

toḷutakai yuḷḷum paṭaiyoṭuṇkum oṇṇār
aḷutakaṇ ṇīrum aṇaittu. (Kural 828)

Even in his joined hands the false friend will have a weapon concealed: nor put thou more faith in his tears.

84. பேதைமை

Pētaimai - Folly

பேதைமை என்பதுஒன்று யாதெனின் ஏதம்கொண்டு
ஊதியம் போக விடல். (குறள் 831)

pētaimai eṇṇatuonru yāteṇiṇ ētamkoṇṭu
ūtiyam pōka viṭal. (Kural 831)

Dost thou want to know what folly is? It is the throwing away of that, which is profitable and the holding fast to that which is hurtful.

85. புல்லறிவாண்மை

Pullarivāṇmai - Conceited folly

உலகத்தார் உண்டென்பது இல்லென்பான் வையத்து
அலகையா வைக்கப் படும். (குறள் 850)

ulakattār uṇṇēṇṇatu illeṇṇāṇ vaiyattu
alakaiyā vaikkap paṭum. (Kural 850)

Behold the man who denieth what all the world doth assert: he will be looked upon as an evil spirit walking the earth.

86. இகல்

Ikal - The defiant spirit

இகலென்ப எல்லா உயிர்க்கும் பகலென்னும்
பண்பின்மை பாரிக்கும் நோய். (குறள் 851)

ikaleṇṇa ellā uyirkkum pakaleṇṇum
paṇṇiṇmai pārikkum nōy. (Kural 851)

The spirit of defiance is the peccant humour which developeth in all men the distemper called hate.

87. பகைமாட்சி

Pakaimāṭci - The characteristics of enemies

வலியார்க்கு மாறுஏற்றல் ஓம்புக ஓம்பா
மெலியார்மேல் மேக பகை. (குறள் 861)

valiyārkkku māruērral ōmpuka ōmpā
meliyārmēl mēka pakai. (Kural 861)

Strive not with the powerful: but against those that are weaker than thyself carry on wars without relaxing even for one moment.

88. பகைத்திறம் தெரிதல்

Pakaittiram tertial - The appraising of enemies

பகையென்னும் பண்பி லதனை ஒருவன்
நகையேயும் வேண்டற்பாற்று அன்று. (குறள் 871)

*pakaiyennum paṇpi latapai oruvaṇ
nakaiyēyum vēṇṭarpārru anru. (Kural 871)*

The accursed thing called enmity should never be courted willingly even though it be only in jest.

89. உட்பகை

Uṭpakai - The traitor in the camp

உடம்பாடு இலாதவர் வாழ்க்கை குடங்கருள்
பாம்போடு உடனுறைந் தற்று. (குறள் 980)

*uṭampāṭu ilātavar vāḷkkai kuṭaṇkaru!
pāmpōṭu uṭaṇurain taru. (Kural 980)*

Behold the man who mixeth on intimate terms with one who hateth him in his heart; he is like one dwelling in a hut with a cobra for his companion.

90. பெரியாரைப் பிழையாமை

Periyāraip piḷaiyāmai

Refraining from offending the great ones

பெரியாரைப் பேணாது ஒழுகின் பெரியாரால்
பேரா இடும்பை தரும். (குறள் 892)

*periyāraip pēṇātu olukiṇ periyārāl
pērā iṭumpai tarum. (Kural 892)*

If a man slighteth the great ones, their power will bring down on him miseries that can never be remedied.

91. பெண்வழிச் சேறல்

Peṇvaḷic cēral - Submission to wife government

மனைவிழைவார் மாண்பயன் எய்தார் வினைவிழைவார்
வேண்டாப் பொருளும் அது. (குறள் 901)

*maṇaivīḷaivār māṇpayan eytār viṇaivīḷaivār
vēṇṭāp poruḷum atu. (Kural 901)*

Those that dote upon their wives will not attain to greatness: those that have the ambition to do great things turn away from such seduction.

92. வரைவின் மகளிர்

Varaiviṇ makalir - Wanton Women

அன்பின் விழையார் பொருள்விழையும் ஆய்தொடியார்
இன்சொல் இழுக்குத் தரும். (குறள் 911)

*anpin viḷaiyār poru/viḷaiyum āytoṭiyār
iṇcol ilukku tarum. (Kural 911)*

Behold the women that desire a man for the sake of his gold and not for the sake of love: their cajoleries will lead only to misery.

93. கள்ளுண்ணாமை

Kaḷḷuṇṇāmai - Abstaining from drinks

கள்ளுண்ணாப் போழ்தில் களித்தானைக் காணுங்கால்
உள்ளான்கொல் உண்டதன் சோர்வு. (குறள் 930)

*kaḷḷuṇṇāp pōḷtil kaḷittāṇaik kāṇuṅkāḷ
uḷḷāṇkol uṇṭatan cōrvu. (Kural 930)*

The man who seeth while he is sober the drunken state of another man, cannot he picture to himself his own state when he is drunk?

94. குது

Cūtu - Gambling

வேண்டற்க வென்றிடினும் குதினை வென்றதூஉம்
தூண்டில்பொன் மின்விழுங்கி யற்று. (குறள் 931)

*vēṇṭarka vēṇṇiṭṭinum kūtinai vēṇṇatūum
tūṇṭilpon mīṇviluṅki yarru. (Kural 931)*

Take not to gambling even if thou win: for thy wins are even as the baited hook that the fish swalloweth.

95. மருந்து

Maruntu - Medicine

மாறுபாடு இல்லாத உண்டி மறுத்துண்ணின்
ஊறுபாடு இல்லை உயிர்க்கு. (குறள் 945)

*mārupātu illāta uṇṭi maruttuṇṇiṇ
ūrupātu illai uyirkku. (Kural 945)*

If thou eat abstemiously the food that doth not disagree with thy system thou will have no troubles in the body.

96. குடிமை

Kuṭimai - Respectability of birth

இல்பிறந்தார் கண்ணல்லது இல்லை இயல்பாகச்
செப்பமும் நாணும் ஒருங்கு. (குறள் 951)

ilpīrantār kaṇṇallatu illai iyalpākac
ceppamum nāṇum oruṅku. (Kural 951)

Rectitude and sensitiveness to shame come by nature only to men who are born of a good family.

97. மானம்

Māṇam - Honour

மயிர்நீப்பின் வாழாக் கவரிமா அன்னார்
உயிர்நீப்பர் மானம் வரின். (குறள் 969)

mayirñippin vāḷāk kavariṁā aṇṇār
uyirñippar māṇam varin. (Kural 969)

The kavariṁa giveth up its life when it loseth its wool: there are men who are as sensitive, and they put an end to their lives when they cannot save their honour.

98. பெருமை

Perumai - Greatness

பிறப்பொக்கும் எல்லா உயிர்க்கும் சிறப்பொவ்வா
செய்தொழில் வேற்றுமை யான். (குறள் 972)

piṛappokkum ellā uyirkkum ciṛappovvā
ceytoḷil vērrumai yān. (Kural 972)

The manner of birth is the same for all men: but their reputations vary because they differ in the lives that they lead.

99. சான்றாண்மை

Cāṇṛāṇmai - Worth

ஆற்றுவார் ஆற்றல் பணிதல் அதுசான்றோர்
மாற்றாரை மாற்றும் படை. (குறள் 985)

āṛruvār āṛṛal paṇital atucāṇṛōr
māṛṛārai māṛṛum paṭai. (Kural 985)

It is humility that is the strength of the strong: and that is also the armour of the man of worth against his foes.

100. பண்புடைமை

Paṇṇuṭaimai - Courteousness

அரம்போலும் கூர்மைய ரேனும் மரம்போல்வர்
மக்கட்பண்பு இல்லா தவர். (குறள் 997)

arampōlum kūrmaiya rēnum marampōlvar
makkaṭṭpaṇpu illā tavar. (Kural 997)

Though they are sharp as files, the men that are lacking in good manners are no better than mere wooden stocks.

101. நன்றியில் செல்வம்

Nanriyil celvam - The Wealth that is not put to good use

வைத்தான்வாய் சான்ற பெரும்பொருள் அஃது உண்ணான்
செத்தான் செயக்கிடந்தது இல். (குறள் 1001)

vaittānvāy cāṇra perumporuḷ aḥtuṇṇāṇ
cettāṇ ceyakkiṭantatu il. (Kural 1001)

Behold the man who hath laid by in his home treasures in abundance but enjoyeth them not: he is as good as dead, for he maketh no use of them.

102. நாணுடைமை

Nāṇuṭaimai - Sensitiveness to shame

கருமத்தால் நாணுதல் நாணுத் திருநுதல்
நல்லவர் நாணுப் பிற. (குறள் 1011)

karumattāl nāṇutal nāṇut tirunutal
nallavar nāṇup piṛa. (Kural 1011)

The blush of the worthy is for action that become them not: it is therefore quite different to the blush of the fair.

103. குடிசெயல்வகை

Kuṭiceyalvakai - Advancing the family

கருமம் செயலுருவன் கைதூவேன் என்னும்
பெருமையின் பீடுடையது இல். (குறள் 1021)

karumam ceyaoruvaṇ kaitūvēṇ eṇṇum
perumaiyiṇ pīṭuṭaiyatu il. (Kural 1021)

Nothing advanceth a mans family so much as his determination never to weary in labouring with his hands.

104. உழவு

Ulavu - Husbandry

சுழன்றும்ஏர்ப் பின்னது உலகம் அதனால்
உழந்தும் உழவே தலை. (குறள் 1031)

cuḷanrumērp pinṇatu ulakam ataṇāl
uḷantum uḷavē talai. (Kural 1031)

Roam where they will, men must at last stand behind the plough for their food: in spite of every hardship, therefore, husbandry is the chiefest industry.

105. நல்குரவு

Nalkuravu - Penury

இன்மையின் இன்னாதது யாதெனின் இன்மையின்
இன்மையே இன்னா தது. (குறள் 1041)

iṇmaiṇiṇ iṇṇātatu yāteṇiṇ iṇmaiṇiṇ
iṇmaiṇē iṇṇā tatu. (Kural 1041)

Wantest thou to know what is more galling than penury? then know that penury alone is more galling than penury.

106. இரவு

Iravu - Begging

இரக்க இரத்தக்கார்க் காணின் கரப்பின்
அவர்பழி தம்பழி அன்று. (குறள் 1051)

irakka irattakkārk kāṇiṇ karappiṇ
avarpaḷi tampaḷi aṇṇu. (Kural 1051)

Thou mayest beg if thou seest men to help thee that can afford to do charity: if they feign inability, it is their fault, not thine.

107. இரவச்சம்

Iravaccam - The dread of beggary

இரந்தும் உயிர்வாழ்தல் வேண்டின் பரந்து
கெடுக உலகியற்றி யான். (குறள் 1062)

irantum uyirvāḷtal vēṇṇiṇ parantu
keṭuka ulakiyarri yāṇ. (Kural 1062)

If He that made the earth intended that man should continue to live even when he is reduced to beg for his food, may he wander about the world and perish.

108. கயமை

Kayamai - The degraded life

மக்களே போல்வர் கயவர் அவரன்ன
ஒப்பாரி யாம்கண்டது இல். (குறள் 1071)

makkaḷē pōlvar kayavar avaranna
oppāri yāmkantaṭu il. (Kural 1071)

How they take after men, these degraded ones!
Never have we seen likeness so exact!