CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

In the foregoing pages we have elucidated the significance of individual ethics, social morality and the grandeur of polity as envisaged by Tiruvalluvar in his undying world literature, the Tirukkural. All those that are written are not literature. A genuine literature is one which reflects the cultural heritage of people like a mirror. Every book that is written must have a goal, an underlying principle running throughout - the difficulties of reaching the goal, the means of achieving the objective and the fruits thereof. The language in which the treatise is written must be chaste and lucid to be read, reflected upon and everyone can understand the contents. It is no exaggeration if we categorically assert that Tirukkural is one such works which is treated even to-day as a moral compendium which deals with all facets of human living.

Valluvar, in accordance to the environment prevailed during his time categorised the philosophy of life as aram, porul and inbam. But these doctrines are applicable even to-day and the days to come and Hence, Tirukkural flourishes as a
perfect moral literature which intends to make mankind perfect at all level. "The followers of domestic life with the path of love, the followers of ascetic life with the path of grace have to resort to religious life and renounce at heart level and attain the perfect realization of knowing the highest truth. This is the path regulated by Valluvar as the path of religion. This path has been explained in a generic way. All religionists have to resort to the paths of discipline and mercy. Are not all the people in the world attempt to relinquish external attachments and internal clinging by realizing the uncertain and impermanent nature of the world, getting rid of lust, wrath and delusion and attainment of perfection? Moreover, the formation of this text commencing with 'The Praise of God', highlighting the salient features of God belonging of several religions, the usage of terms referring to god and liberation throughout are applicable and acceptable to any religionists and people of any country, any time and any language. Due to these unique features only Tirukkural is hailed as a universal treatise in the past, present and future," (Arumuga Mudaliyar, 1971: 185).

The Tirukkural, praised by different scholars during different periods of time, is a great compendium which portrays a high standard of life essential for cultivating human conduct. Man and society are integral parts and Hence, Valluvar has elucidated individual morality from two perspectives - acceptable and despicable. Similarly, social ethics has been elucidated from positive and negative points of view. Positively, all the adaptable virtues are explained and negatively all repugnant behaviours are pointed out. Social evils, the process of socialization, harmonious
living, the significance of following collective behaviour and the importance of relinquishing distasteful qualities etc., are well explained. To put it precisely, \textit{Valluvar's} intention is to make individual free from destiny and become perfect; the social net work must be relieved of the men of base mentality who become a menace to social progress. To achieve these two major objectives viz., individual freedom and social responsibility, \textit{Valluvar} aptly and appropriately incorporates the major role of government, its structure and functions, mainly to fulfil the dual goals - elimination of enemies and ensuring peaceful existence.

"\textit{Tiruvalluvar} was not called upon to build an utopia or construct a new heaven and a new earth in the rarefied atmosphere of abstract thought. He was proud of the society in which he lived. There were, to be sure, in that society wicked men and wastrels as well as men of nobility and virtue. With sure strokes, he painted both sets of men \textit{kayamai} (கயமை) and \textit{panpudaimai} (பான்புதைமை). But he was satisfied that the society had been organised with an eye to maintain conditions in which it would be easy for men to lead a moral life and that men were not left in doubt as to their functions and place in society or as to their ultimate destiny. In broad divisions and suitable sub-heads and in separate chapters, he described the life and attributes of the ordinary citizen (house-holder), the sage (ascetic) and the king, minister of state and other men of power and influence. In depicting life and manners and formulating rules of conduct for individual success and social harmony, he reminded men constantly of \textit{Aram}, the great power which keeps ceaseless watch over
individuals, the state and society and which confers on lives lived in accordance with its principles riches beyond measure, both material and spiritual". (G.U. Pope, Dr., Rev., Tirukkural, 1976: vii-viii).

The famous Tamil saying is like this. when the banks of the field is raised the level of water increases; when water level is increased, the length of the paddy is raised; when the paddy's length is raised, the citizens will raise in all spheres; and when the citizens raise, the kingdom will prosper. Valluvar too recognises the merit of agricultural operations and has glorified it in a topic and praises the greatness of rain. This view is exemplified from the statement: 'when water fails, functions of nature cease' and 'however they roam, the world must follow still the plougher's team.

So Valluvar is keen on the survival point of human beings on this earth. Only when food problem is resolved men can think of other issues and resort to virtuous living. The agriculturist is characterised as the physician of hunger. Then Valluvar analyses the significance of humanistic trends. Man must realize himself, understand about the attitude of his relatives and friends. Above all he must ascertain his role in the society. In this process only the characteristic features of domestic as well as ascetic virtues have been described. If a person continues to resort of domestic life, he must stick on to the virtues meant for that type of living; if one follows the ascetic path, he must know its importance and the relevent duties pertaining to that type of life. Then only he must become a recluse and live with determination. It is absurd to become a hermit in haste and leaving that life abruptly due to mental agitation. May be due to this reason Valluvar emphatically maintains. 'Think and then dare the deed! 'Any act

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must be planned well before execution by knowing the time, place and consequences. Then only good results will occur. On the contrary, if any act is done just for doing, but leaving in the middle without knowing further course means, then, only disastrous consequence will follow.

It will not be an exaggeration if we say that Valluvar is a revolutionist. He makes several revolutions with the sole intention that man should not lead a low life worse than beasts by abnegating higher values, stultifying virtues and weakening the established norms. It is unambiguously asserted that ignorance is the root cause of all calamities and evils. Man's foremost duty is to annihilate ignorance and obtain true knowledge. It is education which makes man acquire knowledge and the fruit of education to act according to one's learning. Everyone is endowed with character, but conduct is revealed in action. Among all actions, the best action is to adore the Supreme Being (உலகவின் செயல்).

Hence, it is logically concluded that the effect of education is to worship God. This is the first revolution. Next, while explaining food, clothing and shelter Valluvar sows the seed for green revolution. Next he makes a revolution on human life itself by seriously pointing out the disastrous nature of meat eating, drinking toddy, looking at other's wives, talking ill of others. If Valluvar had stopped with the mentioning of objectionable behaviour, then it amounts to pessimistic approach to life. Any scholar who speaks about pessimism alone cannot be treated as a genuine scholar. He must give well hopes for righteous living.
“During the period of Valluvar the cartelistic principle was widespread everywhere. People thought that one attains glory due to birth. Valluvar vehemently opposed this menace which corrodes the social norms and attempted to solve this wild divisive disease. The society has been classified into several communities based on certain professions and not certainly due to birth. For there is no difference among the species in birth. Due to karma force and the combination of five elements the souls are given bodies and being born. Hence, no distinction by birth among the living beings. Difference is caused due to good and bad deeds. Those which engage in good deeds attain name and fame, while those which indulge in bad deeds are driven to a state of disrepute.

All human beings agree as regards their birth but differ as regards their characteristics, because of the different qualities of their actions.

(Kural 972)

There are only two categories of mankind viz., the higher and the lower. The lower is regarded as the base (தம்பு) and dishonourable (தில்லர்). The higher is the perfect ones. Through the actions performed by one, his stature as lower or higher can be determined and measured. Throughout his work Valluvar spread this message which has been transformed as a major social revolution during his time.

A man’s deeds are the touchstone of his greatness and littleness.

(Kural 505)
Hence, just because a person is placed in high position due to his higher birth in a caste and academic qualifications, he is not a man with honour. Similarly, a man who lacks higher birth and credentials, he cannot be treated as lower. Seldom can we judge people as lower or higher based on their status and position. It is quite possible that a base may get higher position while the virtuous may be kept in a low level.

"(Subramaniya Pillai, G., 1965: 228-229)

Therefore the central theme of Valluvar is not to discriminate people on peripheral grounds such as caste, profession etc. Valluvar's main intentions are that there should not be men of base mentality. Such fellows must be re-habilitated and transformed into men of perfection. The entire gamut of the kural permeates the idea of perfection through self-realization. When birth is common to all how do the difference of lower and higher occur among men? Valluvar insists that one should not follow the dictates of the mind, but must control it and follow the paths of discipline and virtue and rise to the mountain of goodness. Such persons alone will be subservient to others and live as models who are accredited as great ones. They alone can do rare deeds and withstand all ordeals and live in the minds of all people. On the contrary, the lower fellows resort to the path of the senses and obey to the commands of the mind, become wild and get angry, indulge in quarrels and fighting and suffer eternally. Even though one is born in a so called high caste, he will be a lower one if he follows the prohibited deeds and he will be demigrated. Hence, Valluvar makes a revolution by eliminating caste distinctions through the performance of righteous deeds and possessing all loveable characteristics.
There are two levels of living to mankind - (I) the subjective or internal life and (ii) the objective or external life. According to Valluvar, the heart will be purified due to veracity (amanasam) while the body can be purified with water. Both internal and external purifications are inevitable for perfect living. Hence, Valluvar has classified his entire treatment of virtues meant of subjective side and external conditions. Only when the subjective part is purified, good words would come out and the actions would also be in accordance to norms. Valluvar has made a revolution by explaining individual ethics in the arathuppal and social ethics in the Poruppal. In the kamathuppal (ascertion on love) he ordains the principles of joyous living at the collective and individual levels. Whether individual living or social living, man must be free from internal threats and external dangers. It is the government which protects human beings from all sorts of disturbances and ensures peaceful living. Hence, Valluvar makes a political revolution by pointing out the principles of polity through royalty and ministers of state in the poruppal itself. For, political set up will be a misnomer in the absence of a society.

The highest life lies in the following measures:

1. To remove the darkness of ignorance
2. To infuse the light of knowledge
3. To attain glory in this birth
4. To attain liberation subsequently
5. To follow the path of righteousness
6. To realize the highest truths and
7. To lead a life of perfection

Man, who has been endowed with six senses, has to strictly adhere to the above proceedings according to Valluvar. By exercising his sixth sense, man has to stick on to the human qualities thereby brushing aside animal behaviour. This is the goal of life. But in the present day context, we come across people resorting to a life of material comforts. Undue importance is given to body, dress, home, women, children, field, cattle, wealth, etc., which are perishable in due course. People are baffled due to serious attachments and pride as 'I' and 'mine' and become a prey to crows. Instead of leading a total human life by 'seeing' the soul in the body and the consciousness functioning in the soul, we come across a large number of people mostly leading a dubious life.

Since Valluvar wishes to 'see' man as equalling to the sky-dwelling celestial, a perfect being, he has no hesitation to eschew the vulnerable style of life and insist upon a regularised life. Then it is quite natural for Valluvar the highlight the philosophical doctrines from several perspectives - mental, individual, moral, social, political etc. For, the philosophers are those who contribute vivacious ideas which are valuable for men of all countries, all time, all faiths and all classes. Valluvar as a philosopher has formulated the philosophy of life which culminates in the realization of the highest truth in all spheres of life. The couplets are saturated with thought
contents, appropriate terms and phrases with several poetic allusions. These contents are valued and critically estimated by scholars of repute during different occasions. It brings forth novel ideas everytime.

"The Tirukkural which was designed for perfect life on earth is not merely an ethical treatise, but an explanatory text of life which is within the parameteres of ethics. This approach of Valluvar is highly appreciable. Though there are similarities on the ideologies of joy, wealth and righteousness as envisaged by from the time of Tolkappiar and Vatsayanar, Kautilyar and Mumu, the works of latter scholars are not similar to that of Valluvar. Tirukkural is totally meant for perfect living on earth, but Vatsayanar, Kautilyar and Mumu put forth separate principles of joy, wealth and righteousness with every minute detail suitable for their country only. Unlike these thinkers, Valluvar's message is not meant only for the Tamil country, but for mankind as a whole in a simple but elegant way. For instance, like Kautilyar's Arthasastra or Mahabharata, Valluvar did not concentrate on the significance of social life, origin of society and state, formation of the state from the society etc. On the contrary, Tirukkural speaks vividly and authentically about a state, the king to foster it, the nature of the government, its functionaries etc., not in accordance to the prevailing situation in Tamil country, but to be acceptable to one and all in the world. This is the unique grandeur of Tiruvalluvar. Hence, men of any country could quote this work, to substantiate their views". (Arumuga Mudaliyar, S., 1971: 2-3).
"As a penance performed by the people of Tamil country, a sage from this land has attained global popularity for the following:

(i) Highlighting the principles of life to live in tune with nature
(ii) Explaining the fruits of such living
(iii) Showing the methods of following the principles as per one's station
(iv) Principles of domestic life.
(v) Formulating the ideals of social life
(vi) Highlighting the doctrines of religious life and
(vii) Elucidating in three major headings - aram, porul, and inbam.

The Tamils found out the Truth that the grand traditional wealth and joy must be based on virtue. Following this footprint, Valluvar has remarkably pointed out that the worldly life is totally based on the path of aram including enjoyment and liberation. This is the philosophy of life expounded by Valluvar as lived by Tamil people". (Ibid. 5)