

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY As REFLECTED IN TIRIKURAL of THIRUVALLUVAR**INTRODUCTION:**

Thiruvalluvar was a Tamil Poet born in Southern India. As with many Indian Sages, there is some uncertainty concerning the details of his life. His date of birth may have been as early as 200 BC or as late as 800 CE. His birthplace is usually said to be Madras where a temple has been built in his name. One legend associates him to Madurai, the ancient capital of the Pandya rulers who vigorously promoted Tamil literature. Thiruvalluvar might have spent most part of his in Madurai because it was under Pandia rulers that many Tamil poets flourished. There are also recent claim by Kanyakumari Historical and Cultural Research Centre (KHRC) that Valluvar was a king who rules Vallivaanadu in the hill tracts of Kanyakumari District of Tamil Nadu.

Meaning of Thiruvalluvar:

The genius of the Tamil race has flowered to perfection in this great author and the influence which his work. Since its Publication (More than 1400 years ago) exercised over the mind, life and literature of the Tamils is Phenomenal.

The “Thiru” part of his name is an honor given to him as a made of respect. “Valluvar” is perhaps a respectful form of “Valluvan” Which indicated “Weaver” or “Town crier”. This in turn may refer to his caste or occupation or may be his name.

Thirukkural:

Thirukkural is one of the most revered works in the Tamil and he wrote it. It consists of 133 Athikarams or Chapters. Each Athikaram consists of 10 Kurals thus making 1330 kurals (Couplets) in total. Each couplet consists of four seers in the first line and the three seer in the second. A seer is a single or a combination of more than one Tamil ward. Thirukkural is divided into three sections. Section one deals with Aram doing things, with conscience and honour. The Second discusses Porul realities or facts. The third dwells on Inbam the pleasure that a man and a women experience in the course of their relationship. There is a huge statue of Thiruvalluvar showing his first three fingers. The 133 ft denotes Thirukkural’s 133 Athikarams and the show of three fingers, to denote the three themes Aram, Porul, and Inbam. Tirukkural is a moral compilation which has been classified under three major headings; aram (righteousness), porul (wealth), ibam (enjoyment). The ideological implication of these titles is that one must earn wealth through righteous means and enjoyment becomes imminent through that which leads to enlightenment. This view is similar to the Sanskrit tradition of dharma, artha, kama and moksa.

A study of Thirukkural brings out certain characteristics:

1. Issues, which concern wisdom in preference to knowledge.
2. Generalization
3. Scientific outlook.
4. Extolling human effort and presenting a possible ideal word.

Concept of Education:

According to him, Education is not a luxury, of humanity nor a preserve of the classes. It is not even the so-called right of the measure to receive the rudiments of knowledge for the smoothers running of the rule of the classes. It is to him the basic necessary of man as man. For he says that the learned alone are fit to be human beings having the qualifications necessary for membership in family and society and race. He who is not learned is a beast though he lives as man among men he is really a spiritual out- cart quite thrown aside beyond the pale of normal family or society.

Purpose of Education:

The purpose of education is constant and everlasting pursuit for knowledge. He says that even though a person has vast learning, real knowledge of wisdom alone will serve the purpose. Therefore, he differentiates knowledge from learning. Learning is useful for acquiring knowledge but mere learning alone is not knowledge.

Acquisition of knowledge:

According to him knowledge is not a mere accumulation of facts and figures-rather assimilation of all of them. Man has use his own reasoning and should understand what is true and what is not true. This kind of questioning spirit is essential and it should be used under any circumstances.

“Though things diverse from diverse sages” lips we learn.

“Tis wisdom’s part in each the true thing to discern”

In the reasoning advocated in their couplet, there are two important aspects.

1. Reasoning is necessary for any person who comes across anything or hears anything.
2. Form whomsoever a statement comes forth; reasoning is indispensable for the acquisition of real knowledge. That is why Valluvar has used the term “yaar” twice that too consecutively.

Valluvar narrates another aspect qualities of various things differ and true knowledge is nothing but understanding the true nature of such things.

“Whatever thing, of whatever kind be Tis Wisdom’s part in each the very thing to see”

Water has a quality, fire has another and the wind has got an entirely different quality true knowledge consists in understanding and discerning the differing qualities of various things.

Therefore knowledge can be acquired through subjective thoughts and form the qualities of various objects.

True Knowledge:

According to him, humility and virtue are the two important facts of true knowledge. Knowledge is a weapon by which one saves himself from destruction and it is also the strongest fortress, which cannot be destroyed by one’s foes.

Aims of Education:

Education is constant and everlasting pursuit for knowledge. The foremost aim of acquiring knowledge is to prepare a man to adapt himself to the world and the society in which he lives. So logically true education make a man wise makes him suitable and adaptable to the society. So that a total well being of the society is achieved, In short the ideal state if Valluvar consists of persons with true education.

Subject of Study:

“Letters” and “Numerals” are the two eyes of mankind, he says by “Letter” he means all kinds of work consisting of letter like linguistics, prose, poetry, drama, etc.. By “Numerals” he means mathematics which is the basis for all the post Valluvar developments.

Valluvar is conscious to the fact that the word is constantly changing and he was conscious of such changes in the educational field. Therefore, he says, “Learn faultlessly what you ought to learn”. So any subject which is useful to the students as well as to the society can come under this purview.

‘Tirukkural’ etymologically means the ‘holy couplets,’ i.e. a text having two lines with seven words each in the Tamil poetic ‘venba’ metre. It has 1330 couplets with 133 chapters each containing 10 couplets. Tiruvalluvar did not write autobiography nor any authentic biographies are available there is no perfect life-sketch of Tiruvalluvar.

PHILOSOPHICAL INSIGHTS OF TIRUKKURAL

Tiruvalluvar's philosophy is that of common man and hence he developed his ideals in such a manner that man ought to live as a true human being and cherish all the human values, promote earthly virtues, establish social harmony, engage in domestic life, follow political ideologies, develop mutual assistance, adhere to the life of renunciation, enjoy all kinds of pleasures, contemplate deeply on a few metaphysical issues etc. In the chapter known as 'the Praise of God,' Tiruvalluvar glorifies the significant features of God: He is the ancient Lord or the Supreme Being; Lord with perfect intelligence; Flower decked God; He who has transcended likes and dislikes; Iraivan – the protector of the universe; unparalleled Lord; the embodiment of righteousness; Lord endowed with Eight attributes; He who has defeated the attack of the senses; the great controller of the living beings. Nowhere does the author mention the Lord with his specific name, probably to teach mankind about the relationship between God, human beings and the world. Had he mentioned the name of God, then people would think that the moral philosophy of Tiruvalluvar is based on the preachings of that particular religion whose God's name has been mentioned. Since Tiruvalluvar wanted to establish a society where people belonging to all religious sects should lead a peaceful and harmonious life, he had explicated the need of monotheistic divinity. Still scholars taking into consideration few religious expressions found in the couplets proclaim that such expressions unequivocally indicate their God and therefore Tiruvalluvar belongs to their religious cult and his moral thought are pertaining to their religion. If Tiruvalluvar is confined to a particular religion, then the universalistic outlook of his moral ideologies would be misnomer.

In the chapter on "The Dread of Beggary," he explains: If the Supreme Lord who has created this world has destined that man should continue to live through begging, then let that Lord wander about the world and perish."(1062). In this verse Tiruvalluvar links the life of penury and poverty leading to the act of begging and the person who is responsible for this degradation and curses Him to go away from this world. Thus Tiruvalluvar wants to behold that mankind should have a self-contained life. Tiruvalluvar has mentioned the fact that the universe has been created by God. Tiruvalluvar deliberately did not write anything about moksa or liberation. Probably, he might have thought that life on this earth is to be lived perfectly and honestly than contemplating upon life beyond death. According to the commentators, since moksa is concerned with a blissful state of experience, it cannot be explained in adequate terms. As such there are no authentic reports about the state of liberation, but many theoretical accounts are available through revelations of the mystic saints. Hence Tiruvalluvar might have thought that any one who is virtuous in his domestic, social, political and moral spheres, he will certainly experience abundant joy in every aspect of life, veedu peru. The kama or inbam (pleasure) described by Tiruvalluvar in the third section is to be understood in terms of leading to the everlasting and increasing bliss. At the worldly level we have physical pleasure and mental happiness, but at the spiritual plane, which is mystic in nature and essence, the delight is to be experienced rather than explained.

Conclusion

Tirukkural reflects the genius of the Tamils in a remarkable way. It is at once ideal and practical, of the earthy as well as highly imaginative, simple as well as subtle, prosaic, matter of fact, earnest and forthright as well as highly poetic and emotional as is apparent in the third book dealing with love. Tiruvalluvar's moral philosophy is anthropo-centric exclusively since its focus is on life on this earth rather than aspiring for heavenly abode. Tiruvalluvar is more concerned with the problems of life and ideal solutions of for socio-political and moral issues. He was totally opposed to absolutizing and idealizing the problems and making it a other worldly affairs.