

## **SIGNIFICANCE OF THIRUKURAL**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

- Tirukkural, (Tamil: “Sacred Couplets”) also spelled Tirukural or Thirukkural, also called Kural, the most celebrated of the Patiren-kirkkanakku (“Eighteen Ethical Works”) in Tamil literature and a work that has had an immense influence on Tamil culture and life.
- It is usually attributed to the poet Tiruvalluvar, who lived in India in the sixth century, though some scholars place it earlier (1st century BC)
- The Tirukkural (Tamil) also known as the Kural, is a traditional Tamil sangam treatise on the art of living. There are 133 chapters in total, with 1330 couplets or kurals.
- The Tirukkural has been compared to the great books of the world's major religions for its practical concerns, poetic insights into daily life, and universal and timeless approach.

### **ABOUT TIRUVALLUVAR:**

Little is known about Tiruvalluvar, the work's author, except that he was born in Mylapore (Chennai, Tamilnadu) and belonged to the weaver community. He is also known by many other names, including Nayanar, Theivappulavar, and Perunavalalar. The work is frequently referred to as Tamil Marai, a reference to its association with the Vedas.

### **HISTORICAL INFORMATION:**

- It is believed that Valluvar wrote the work in response to a request from his close friend and student Elela Singan. When the work was finished, Valluvar took it to Madurai, as was the custom of reading new compositions in public in front of critics and scholars.
- The conceited scholars of Madurai insisted on measuring the greatness of the work by placing it with other works on a plank kept afloat in the tank of the great temple and seeing if the plank remained afloat. The significance of this is that the greatness of a work is realised based on the divine qualities of the work rather than the weight of its manuscript (written on Palm leaves).
- The Sangam Plank is said to have shrunk in size to hold only the Kural manuscript, throwing out the rest, much to the surprise of the critics.

- Idaikkadar had praised Kural, saying that his greatness was such that Valluvar had packed the essence of all knowledge from the vast world spanned by seven seas inside a mustard seed. Anu had substituted the term kadugu (mustard) for Auvaiyar (meaning an atom).
- It is interesting to note that the concept of Atom had already been established in the Tamil country two thousand years ago.

### **THREE DIVISIONS IN THIRUKURALS:**

- BOOK I – Aram (அறம்): Book of Virtue (Dharma), dealing with moral values of an individual and essentials of yoga philosophy (Chapters 1-38)
- BOOK II- Porul (பொருள்): Book of Polity (Artha), dealing with socio-economic values polity, society and administration (Chapters 39-108).
- BOOK III- INBAM (இன்பம்): Book of Love (Kama), dealing with psychological values and love (Chapters 109-133).

### **STRUCTURE OF THIRUKURAL:**

Tirukkural is a collection of 1330 couplets, each of which follows the structure of "Kural Venba," a grammatical construction consisting of two lines of four and three words. The piece is divided into 133 Adhikarams, each with ten couplets.

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THIRUKURAL:**

- Thirukkural equally emphasizes the vital principles of vegetarianism, castelessness, and brotherhood. The Thirukkural's lessons are so powerful that they can be regarded as a source of inspiration for people of all ages.
- The sage Valluvar, who was unanimously elevated to the rank of Thiruvalluvar, observed both the goodness and the weaknesses of governance at various levels and encouraged men and women to lead moral lives based on strong values such as righteousness, justice, truth, love, honesty, courage, and compassion through various couplets. He described the lives and characteristics of ordinary citizens, wives, husbands, and kings, among others.
- Thirukkural has become a research topic in many universities and learning institutions around the world. It has been translated into over 40 languages, and its universality has been universally acknowledged and praised.

