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# UNIT 1 ANCIENT DALIT THINKERS

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## 1.0 OBJECTIVES

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The rebellion against caste system is as old as the caste system itself. The unit has a assumption that *Sramanic* thinking is Dalit thinking. The historical and ideological conflict between *Sramanic* and Brahmanic system of thought are portrayed as ancient Dalit thinking. The unit tries to look at Buddhist, Jaina thinkers, Ajivikas, Bhutavadins, and Tiruvalluvar as Ancient Dalit thinkers as they ideologically opposed to Vedic Brahmanical system of thought. They were the ones who philosophized against oppression, domination, discrimination and had a vision of egalitarianism, equality, material oriented thinking, this worldly thinking. Regarding the Buddhist, Jaina, Carvaka we do not intend to repeat their ideologies, as they are dealt elaborately in other units of MA philosophy courses. We only show quickly how they are verbalizing Dalit philosophy of life.

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## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

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The indigenous people, Dalits have different approach and outlook to reality and the world they encounter is quite different from Vedic Brahmanical categories of thinking. As people at the foundational ground of civil society, they have a unique philosophy, culture and knowledge system. From the ancient times, there had been strong voices and ideological systems that challenged the discriminative and oppressive structures and ideologies of Brahmanical hegemony. However, historically Vedic tradition tried to pose itself as successful in either destroying those variant strands, silencing those defiant voices or cunningly incorporating them into their scheme of thinking (if they find those ideologies cannot be totally destroyed). From ancient period onwards, there were thinkers and systems that gave rise to egalitarian society without discrimination and subjugation. This unit spells out first the conflict between Brahmanical and Indigenous Dravidian people as a background to understand the difference in ideologies. It also dwells quite briefly on Buddhist and Jaina ideologies as Ancient Dalit thinking as they remained a challenge to Brahmanic hegemonic ideology. The Indigenous wisdom is for

integral liberation which does not merely attempt at mobilization for acquisition of resources and power. It predominantly addresses the question of basic identity as dignified co-humans with others both as individuals and a people. Dalit thinking from ancient times onwards seeks to project an inclusive ideology upholding human dignity and optimistically building a new human family in which there would be no trace of any discriminatory hierarchical consciousness.

## 1.2 CONFLICT OF VEDIC AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

Historically, it seems the story of the origins of the Dalits goes far back in history. The people known as the Dalits today had definitely a beginning, similar to the beginning of other human beings on earth. According to many scholars in history, the story of Dalits is traceable to the archaeological evidences of Indus Valley civilizations whose period is approximated fixed before 1500 B.C.E. The people of Indus Valley civilizations are the aboriginals of the then Indian continent. They are different from the people of Vedic culture and they are generally identified as Dravidians and this in turn distinctly imply the fact that the ancient Dalits belong to the Dravidian culture, that is preserved in and through Tamil language and literature. The people of Vedic culture broadly known as the Aryans do differ from people the Dravidian culture. That between these two cultures there existed continuous conflict between these two cultures. Many of the Vedic hymns evidently imply the prevalence of a conflict between these two communities and as a result the people of Vedic community were the winners of these conflicts. Most of the Vedic hymns or texts are addressed to Lord Indra and they narrate the rivalry between the Aryans or *Aryas* and the *Dasyas*, the excluded communities by the Aryas.

To evidence more about these two opposing groups and hostility of the Vedic People against the Dalits, few of the relevant verses from the hymns of the *Rigveda* are stated with their subsequent meaning. “*vi janihayaran ye ch dasyvo...* means ‘You (Indra) know well Aryas and Dasyus’ ....*hatavi dusyun prarya vaarnamavata* ,,, means...He (Indra) killed the Dasyus and protected the Aryan race (colour). *vadhihi dasyu dhanini..* means You (Indra) killed rich Dasyu. *akarma dasyurabhi no amanturanya-varto amanus*” means “All around us are ritual-less Dasyas who do not practice religious rituals and are alien to Vedic laws. *sajatubharma chhadadadhana ojo. ... puro vimindannacharada vi dasi ... vidana vajirna dasyuve hetimasnarya....saho vadhrya sumnamindar. . dasyu hatyaya* means ‘Armed with his thunderbolt, Indra went about destroying the forts of Dasas, ... O Indra, throw .your thunderbolt at the Dasyus, ... increase the power and glory of Aryas.”

Many scholars (Srivastava, Kapur Singh, Ambedkar, Smith, Basham, Chattopadhyaya, Chanda, D.D. Kosambi, and others) agree to the fact that the destruction of the Indus Valley Civilisation and contents of the hymns of the *Rigveda* are related. Scholars like Ambedkar, Rao, Koenraad Elst, Navaratna S. Rajaram, Shrikant G. Talageri and K.D. Sethna hold the opinion that the Aryans, the people of Vedic culture and the Dravidians that include the Dalit people belong to Indian nation and therefore both these cultures are of indigenous origin. Scholars namely Jyotirao Phule, Ghose, Srivastava, Chanda, Chattopadhyaya, Fuchs, Hutton, Swami Dharma Theertha, Suniti Kumar Chatterji, Jawaharlal Nehru, D.D. Kosambi, Hermann Kulke and Dietmar Rothermund and many others are of the opinion that the Aryans are not of indigenous origin and they are invaders into the Indian. Thus, many scholars came to the belief that the Aryans are but

the ancient Iranians and therefore they are not of indigenous origin which in turn meant that the Aryans were invaders in to ancient India. The Aryans during their effort to Indian settlement waged continuous war against the Dravidians. The literature from South India suggests that the people whom the Aryans conquered were Dravidians, who subsequently moved south subjugating the indigenous people. Regarding the origin of Aryans, there are two opinions prevalent amongst the scholars: (i) they are like Dalits indigenous people (ii) they are one of the ancient invaders to India from Iranian places. There are textual and archaeological evidences of status of conflict between Aryans and Dasyas resulting the origin of Dalits as Untouchable and vulnerable community. In any theory, Aryans as Invaders or one of the North Indian nomadic groups, the inhuman subjugation of the Dravidians and other indigenous groups are clear in the Brahmanical ideology in Vedic tradition. With this background of subjugation and to some extent 'sidelining' or even alleged 'destruction' of Indigenous wisdom of the Indigenous people, the unit tries to look at Materialist, Naturalist, Buddhist thinkers, Tolkappiyar and Tiruvalluvar as Ancient Dalit thinkers as they ideologically opposed to Vedic Brahmanical system of thought.

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### 1.3 THE BUDDHA: PRAGMATIC THINKER

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Against the supremacy of Brahmans the ideological revolt of Mahavira (540-468 B.C.E.) and Gautama Buddha (563-483 B.C.E.) challenged the Vedic caste categories. Dumont (a famous sociologist and a scholar on the studies Caste system) notes that Buddhism was a force till the fourteenth century. Later it was wiped out by the caste Hinduism. The Jain strategy to deal with the problem also failed due to the fact that its opposition did not express the Dalit problem as untouchables. Jainism ultimately could not divest itself from the influence of the Hindu caste system. Buddhism faced a different kind of problem, because by the time of the *Manusmriti*, the followers of Gautama Buddha were also considered untouchables. In post-Independence India, the hundreds of thousands of Mahar Dalits of Maharashtra who became Buddhists, in 1956 and later and their progeny are known as *Baudh*, which in Marathi has become a synonym for Mahar (untouchable). Iyothee Thass, Dalit leader of Tamil Nadu in the modern period strongly promoted an idea that Adi-Dravidas were *purva* Buddhists.

The Buddhist categories of thought centered around the concept of becoming, *pratityasamudpada* (everything is in motion), rejection of concept of self (*anatta*) and unique notion of liberation (*nirvana*). The Buddha is a great anti-thesis to idealism and absolutism of the Vedic categories. *Moksa* is liberation. Liberation is considered to be the supreme aim of human beings. Liberation may be from social and individual problems. The purpose of liberation is not only to attain happiness, but also to lead a joyful life. *Moksa* does not mean emancipation of soul after death alone. *Moksa* contains emancipation of life here on earth. The main goal of liberation in Buddhism is to remove sufferings (*Dukkha*). According to Buddha every human being must attain this ultimate reality. It is their wide spread teaching. According to Buddha, desire causes suffering. He insisted two things in his teaching. They are suffering (*dukkha*) and cessation of suffering (*dukkha nirodha*). He vehemently indicated that the cosmos is full of suffering. This suffering includes all types of ills, calamities, punishment, jealousy, hatred, deception, and illusion. Therefore Buddha advised men to seek eternal peace, bliss and freedom from this transitory world. He requested men to remove the root of *dukkha*. The first sermon of Buddha was about universal suffering. They are nothing but Four Noble Truths. The noble truths lay path to get rid off pain

and suffering. Birth, old age, sickness and death are painful. Painfulness is known to us through sorrow, lamentation, dejection and despair. The whole world is immersed in this universal suffering. Buddha realized indiscernible and transcendental enlightenment. Buddha says that suffering also leads humanity towards enlightenment. Without suffering we cannot attain enlightenment. One, who seeks *nirvana*, is not afraid of suffering. In order to get rid off suffering, one has to seek the Ultimate Truth. Buddha realized the highest state of happiness. This state of happiness led him from the ordinary (worldly) state of consciousness (*lokiya citta*) to attainment of *supra-mundane* bliss. Buddha denied the existence of soul and had no place for traditional theory of *karma* and rebirth. These ideas are more prevalent in the latter part of Buddhism. Buddhism taught people to liberate themselves from their pains and sufferings. Buddhism propagates humanness, equality, and humanitarian approach to all the problems of human life. Buddhism upholds the middle path. This choice is not kind of escapism. It strikes balance between extremes, luxury and austerity. In short, Buddhist teaching focused on concrete, pragmatic and everydayness of human existence. His emphatic anti-substantialist crusade, that everything is dependent and exists only for a moment, is a definite blow to Brahmanical concept of self as permanent and absolute.

### Check Your Progress I

**Note:** Use the space provided for your answer

- 1) What are the historical situations of subjugation of Indigenous people by Vedic people?

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- 2) Sketch the Buddhist challenge to Brahmanical ideology.

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## 1.4 ANCIENT INDIAN MATERIALIST THINKERS

The materialist philosophers of India known as Carvakas believe only in the reality of the matter and none other. Though their original texts are not extant, theirs is the philosophy that has been thoroughly criticized and vehemently rejected in almost all works of other schools of philosophy in India. The human goal according to them is only material wealth and physical pleasure. Their concern is this worldly. Hence their metaphysical position is centered around only material world. Arguing that only perception is the valid means of knowledge, Carvaka builds up the metaphysical system of material monism. According to the valid source of knowledge only material world is real as it is perceivable. Regarding the substance out of which the entire physical universe is made, Carvaka accepted only the four elements which are observable viz. earth, fire, air and water, refusing to accept the fifth, unobservable element of ether. For them different things in the

world were made up of varying combinations of these four basic elements. Refusal to accept any kind of 'self' or 'spirit' which is not observed as the cause of this world, Carvaka holds that the combinations of the four material elements by the intrinsic characters of the elements themselves. Even the so-called 'self' or 'consciousness,' accordingly to them is only the combination of these elements. To the objection as to how the self which is conscious in character can be produced by unconscious physical elements, the reply is by way of the example of betel leaf, betel nut and lime, none of which is red, but still producing red colour when chewed together as in the chewing of a *pan*. When human person, according to the Carvaka, dies, nothing survives and the body disintegrates into the original four elements. Anything 'super-natural' or 'super-sensuous' is outrightly rejected by Carvaka as they are beyond the purview of sense perception and cannot be validated by it. Totally trusting in the human senses, even though criticised for its limitations by all others, Carvaka emphasized on the verifiability of truth only by ordinary sense experience.

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## 1.5 NATURALIST THOUGHT IN INDIGENOUS TRADITION

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Ancient Tamil Dravidian community developed a holistic and comprehensive understanding of the material world in which they were living. In the largely agricultural based Tamil society nature posed as a background for the philosophical tradition. The concept of nature becomes a specific thread of thought that characterizes something unique to the Tamil tradition. Philosophy always engages itself with the concrete experiences of reality. In the classical Tamil literature, called as *cankam* literature, nature is portrayed as directly involving in the life of the humans and influencing the human living and thought patterns. All the descriptions of Nature and its surroundings in both *akam* and *puram* poems deliberately speak of the intertwining of human life with that of nature. All these external aspects of Nature are very much reflected as the internal human aspects. The external material world, according to classical Tamil tradition, participates in the world of humans.

From the beginning of human history nature played a vital role in the life of human community by creating the ambience for the human beings to live and to think. Interestingly, classical Tamil literature has recorded the ancient Tamils' approach to Nature slightly different from many of world's cultures. More than the 'fear-factor,' it has been the 'wonder-at' attitude of the Tamils that aroused human curiosity to know Nature. Evidently ancient Tamil tradition has focused its attention more specifically on both aesthetical and rational aspects of human understanding of Nature than on ending up in ritualistic and religious rendering of natural powers. The influence of Nature on Tamils thought pattern is very decisive and far-reaching. Naturalism and romanticism are the two great thought pattern that pervades the entire classical Tamil literature. These two witness to Tamil thinking as 'nature-dependent'.

Tamils had a unique feature of Naturalism. *Bhuatavada* is the result of it. Tolkappiyar mentions about it while speaking on '*pirappin akam*' from the air, the sound is produced and then it gave rise to letters. Tamil philosophical journey started with 'from external to internal' in the ancient period. *Kula teivam* (gods of the clan) and *nila theivam* (gods of the land) were there. *Nila theivam* is to be understood against the background of emergence of the *bhutavada* which created a unison thought about the life of people with Nature.



The world is not an abstract entity, but a concrete tangible expression of nature. For the Tamils, physical world is true, real and existing. The universe is the amalgamation of five gross elements, earth, water, fire, air and ether. “Though the products are ephemeral, the primordial matter is considered to be a reality.” The physical world is constituted of the five elements, which contains within it the seeds of decomposition. The world is of a composite structure and there is a possibility of it being reduced to its constituent parts later.

The philosophical tradition of ancient Tamils has been pragmatic existential philosophy. Earthly life with body is for the sake of enjoying the fruits of previous *karmas* and to work out one’s own liberation. The bodies, material aspects of the world are thus necessitated so as to make the soul reach its destiny of attaining perfection. In ancient literature, besides the literalism with imagery and poetic expressions realistic approach to nature is found throughout Tamil literature that Nature is out there, existing by itself and influencing the human living and thought patterns. The external material world participates in the world of humans. The appreciation of Nature arose not just out of interest to be associated with human events or to be viewed as the background to human emotion and action. It is philosophy of here and now which characterizes Tamil concept of human life in the material and physical world.

Nature has been defined as the outer, external and objective world of sense perception. It is non-human and is not the product of human either in material or mental sense. It exists by itself having its own uniqueness of its existence and it is an independent reality without any ontological dependence of human existence. Realism in ancient Tamil tradition is neither naïve realism nor representationism but a common-sense realism and critical-scientific realism. External world is a real, independent existent whose truth could well be established by virtue of its own existence and by perception of it by human senses and mind. Ontologically human and external world are independent realities and pragmatically they are interdependent and interconnected realities for their sustenance. They co-exist with each other with relationship of mutual and complementary nature.

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## 1.6 TOLKAPPIYAR: GRAMMARIAN AND PHILOSOPHER

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Tolkappiyar is the author of *Tolkappiyam*, grammatical work of Tamil language. According to *Tolkappiyar*, the world of nature is divided into word and substance or categories. The natural objects are classified as *uyir*, *mei*, *uyir-mei*. Time, world, soul, body, God, action, elements, sun, moon and the word are included in the substance (*porul*). The *Tolkappiyam* upholds the reality of both soul and matter. The classification of the alphabets indicates uniquely the relation between soul or spirit and matter. The Tamil alphabets are known as *Uyir* and *Mey*, vowels and consonants. Etymologically they stand to mean the soul and body. The twelve such ‘soul’-letters, conjoin with the consonants to give meaning and life. Spirit animates the body, the matter to be alive. Meaning of any existence, either it be any word in a language or any life in the world, is derived out of the combination of soul and matter, *uyir* and *mey*. In the process of conjoining with the consonants, the vowels do not change their nature. Vowel appears only through the medium of body, consonant. *Tolkappiyar* is well aware of the differences in the nature of the two realities, soul and matter. Analysis of the concepts of soul and matter, as metaphysical principles found in *Tolkappiyam*, leads one to find that the spirit and matter continuum is essential for meaningful expressions in terms of language and in ordinary existence of the humans on earth.

While discussing on the personhood, it is always important that the dichotomy of soul and body would not serve our purpose. Human being is a holistic personality having equal status and importance given to body and soul. Personality for *Tolkappiyam* insists on the importance of having a sound body. Only a body that is fit can adequately respond to the surroundings and externalize the thoughts and feelings. Such externalization (*meypattu*) being a basic function of a persona, what the body, and looks mean to a persona cannot be underestimated. *Tolkappiyam* shows clearly the significance of the physical aspect of human being. The philosophical tradition of ancient Tamils was pragmatic existential philosophy. *Tolkappiyam* provides us the insight that meaningful existence is possible only with due recognition of spirit and matter. One cannot underestimate and throw away the existence of either of spirit or of the matter. *uyir-mei* combine together to form meaningful words and existence. *Uyir-mei* is not just combination of *uyir* and *mei*, it is *uyir-mei*, having spirit and matter as constitutive of each other. In Tamil tradition human nature is not just body or soul alone, but the right combination of both spirit and matter. Human or worldly nature is both spirited matter and materialized spirit.

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## 1.7 TIRUVALLUVAR: DRAVIDIAN GENIUS

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Tiruvalluvar is said to be from the *valluva* community. (There are some scholars who say that he was a Brahmin) His monumental work in Tamil, called *Tirukkural* portrays a Dravidian philosophy of life which is totally different from the Vedic, Sanskrit tradition, especially in its conception of supreme goals of life and in its outlook of life here on earth. For the details of this text we have already dealt in the course on Indian philosophy. Here we would try to present Tiruvalluvar's life in line with the general philosophy of life from the Dalit perspective. The popularity of the *Tirukkural* is limited to Tamil Nadu and southern parts of the subcontinent. The most likely reason for the limitation is that it was written in Tamil and not reflecting the Brahminical ideology, as per the view of some Tamil Dalit thinkers. *Tirukkural* reflects the genius of the Tamils in a remarkable way. It is secular and neutral towards all religions. Hence, *Tirukkural* can be very well accepted as a universal ethical text on the art of living. "*Muppal*" meaning three parts, of which the first deals with *Aram* (virtue or the moral values of life), the second discusses *Porul* (wealth or socio-economic values of life), and the third on *Inbam* (love, depicting the psychological values of life). Therefore, the three books of the *Tirukkural*, respectively, deal with the ideal approaches to virtue, wealth and love, covering all the major aspects of life.

### Centrality of *Aram* (Rigtheousness)

In *aratupal*, the main aim is to speak of *aram*, righteousness. The fourth chapter emphasizing on *aram*, gives a key as it were to unlock the treasures of *Tirukkural*. Valluvar believes that *aram* helps one in all ways. To Valluvar, *aram* is omnipresent, is the material, intellectual, domestic, spiritual and moral perfection of the man. He believes in the perfect men who are the embodiments of this *aram*, the standing examples for the world to follow. He also believes in nature's help in the path of righteousness. In his descriptions of the three-fold goal of life, Valluvar does not want to force others to accept his fundamental beliefs. He also may be presumed to lay down his ideas of the three fold goal of life without reference to God or Nature. This is not to say that he relinquishes these fundamental ideas. Though he is tolerant enough to appreciate other points of view and to lay down the scheme of life as acceptable to all, his inner inspiration cannot be hidden completely; but he explains it in a way suitable for others.

Valluvar is more concerned with the problems of life and ideal solutions of moral choices. He was totally opposed to killing. He is a real supporter of righteousness. Valluvar's main preoccupation was with the inculcation of ethical values; 'the idealization of values geared to conformism, uniformity and stability. Tiruvalluvar has a consciously conceived structure to plan and execute moral life and its enhancement in personal as well as social life. Moral virtues aim at the refinement of the individual. But the refinement of the individual is not an end in itself. It is only a means to an end. So, Tiruvalluvar defines *aram* as that which produces happiness of the society. In other words, *aram* is the ground of moral practice as envisioned by *Tirukkural*.

Meaningfulness of life or good life is not something given as actuality, but an ideal that can be realised only through a continued effort and *aram* as a principle of life would be a sure way of realising that good. Therefore, considering *aram* as the nucleus of the authentic life does not amount to relegating either *porul* or *inbam* to a secondary place. Whether we consider *porul* and *inbam* as indispensable for the pursuit of *aram* or look at them as outward manifestations of a principle inherent in human nature, *aram* does not suffer devaluation nor does its significance get diminished. In the case of *porul*, the establishment is in the large arena of economy and polity and in the case of *inbam* the process of establishment is in the comparatively smaller area of two human persons coming together in love. Therefore, *aram* as a moral principle in life permeates the entire life of a human being both personally and interpersonally and, thus, enables him/her in living an authentic human life on earth. Thus, *aram* itself becomes the fundamental principle of virtuous living.

### **Upholding Material Affairs**

*Tirukkural* in *Porulpal* (material wealth) deals with the economical and political values of life. This is the largest section of the *Tirukkural* and covers almost all the material aspects of life. As moralist-poet Tiruvalluvar was not a mere impractical visionary unfamiliar to the ways of the world, but had a deep insight into human nature and possessed great practical wisdom. He lays down with characteristic brevity the principles that should govern the conduct of wise and good men in the affairs of the world. Some chapters are particularly addressed to princes and those around them, while others are applicable to all persons engaged in secular affairs. In dealing with nobility of social life, devotion to social causes, qualities of dignity and pride, sublimity, mannerism and sensitivity to shame, he highlights the primacy of farming as a devoted service to society. The concluding chapters expose the harmful nature of futile wealth, the pains of poverty seeking alms, dreadfulness of beggary and the meanness of cowardice which harm human dignity. Therefore, to sum up, the various requirements of a welfare state and the qualities to be cultivated by the rulers, administrators and others are covered exhaustively in the *Porulpal*.

### **Regulating Family Life**

According to *Tirukkural*, a good house holder alone can be a good citizen. A major division of the *Arathuppal* is *Illaraviyal* (family / domestic virtue) consisting of 20 chapters of two hundred couplets all of which present the virtues of both the house holder and the citizen. The Tamil word '*illaram*' literally means "virtue at home" or "virtuous family life." It is a natural state of life for practising virtue (*aram*). It is meant for fulfilling the social and religious duties. The order of family life transforms the crude self-centred egoism into self-sacrifice and concern for social welfare. The home is the centre of love, compassion and self-sacrifice. It



is the centre of fulfilment of virtue (*aram*). The chapters 5 to 24 of *Tirukkural* are grouped as *Illaraviyal*, which present the virtues of the householder and citizen emphasizing or stressing certain noble qualities in one way or other. All the two hundred couplets on domestic virtues explain the primary importance of family and social life, the role of spouses, the wealth of children, kindness of love, words, charity, duty to society, gratitude, hospitality, equity, uprightness, humility, discipline, and forbearance. It also warns against the evils of adultery, envy, covetousness, slander, vanity and idle talk. While taking on *Thuravaraviyal*, ascetic virtue, Valluvar says it is not renouncing the world because it is impossible to get away from the world. The attitude of non-attachement and giving up of the egoistic sense of I, me, mine, and sublimation into dispassion and universal love is what he means by *Thuravarm*. It implies a positive state of mind and a life of purity and virtue. When he speaks of *uzh*, destiny, it is not as commonly interpreted as 'fate' or law of *karma*. His understanding is that human person is the architect of his or her own fortune. Tiruvalluvar does not believe in the overriding influence of fate. He is mainly concerned with the present and this world. To him, how one lives is a matter of supreme importance. Hence, in the *Tirukkural*, he advocates strenuous self-effort as part of one's life irrespective of success or failure.

### Extolling Love and Marriage

In *Inbathuppal*, Tiruvalluvar speaks of premarital love (*Kalaviyal*) and marital love (*Karpiyal*). Tiruvalluvar very delicately portrays the blossoming of love between a young man and a woman, their joys of embrace and the depth of their love and the tender emotions of their hearts. The whole of *Kalaviyal* and *Karpiyal* in *Tirukkural* has reference to the indigenous system of marriage with all its premarital norms. '*Kalavu*' and '*Karpu*' are two of the unique concepts developed on the Tamil soil based on a system of marriage in which free love was permitted. The marriage itself was solemnized between two young persons deeply in love with one another and not as between two strangers brought together in wedlock to iron out their temperamental differences later.

The literal meaning of the Tamil word '*kalavu*' is 'theft'. Tiruvalluvar gives a different connotation and meaning to '*kalavu*' in the realm of premarital love. It is generally accepted that 'theft' connotes basically a 'loss' of something without the 'owner' being conscious of it. In the realm of the hearts which are in love, *kalavu* means precisely that the 'lovers' find their hearts being 'stolen'. Hence, *kalavu* connotes the experience of the lovers of 'the stolen heart'. It gives us also the underlying implication of the relationship between the lovers before marriage. The 70 couplets in *kalaviyal* section complement 'romance in love', with the lovers admiring and extolling beauty and charm of each other, revelling in the language of signs, enjoying the joy of intimacy and ecstasy of love. In the process, there is a wailing on the loss of decorum and a longing for the clamour of relatives and society to speed up the process of wedlock.

In the analysis of '*Karpu*' (love in the married state), *Tirukkural* describes in detail the mental experiences of the husband and wife when they have to accept the inevitability of periodic separation in the course of their married life. Considerations of duty may impose even prolonged periods of separation on lovers, but this they must bear with a sense of sacrifice, enduring all personal hardships. Tiruvalluvar points out how the lovers prove equal to the task by reliving the experiences they shared and by expectantly longing for the time when they will be reunited. Though the strength of their love makes the endurance possible, its inevitability leaves the mark of physical and emotional changes and

these are described in the *Tirukkural*, particularly from the point of view of the ‘beloved’.

The section on marital love (*Karpiyal*) elaborates the situation after the charm of bridal union in wedlock. When the male goes off on duties and avocations, trade and business to amass wealth for a better life, he leaves the spouse forlorn. The passion of love and pangs of separation manifest in different forms of pain to the mind and body, such as pining in sorrow, wailing in paleness, pallor of loneliness, cursing the eyes, the evening; relating visions of dreams, withering of limbs, conversing and chiding the soul, failing in modesty, signalling symptoms of passion, throbbing and longing for reunion. The concluding chapters on the section of *Karpiyal* converse on the situation when the lovers meet after long separation, expression of resentment and pleasure in the form of feigned sulking and pouting that enhance the pleasure of love. Thus, on the whole, the marital love between the couple is not mere lust or physical pleasure, but an elevating human love of spiritual and ethical grandeur. It is a complete integration of the physical, mental, moral and spiritual aspects of human life. Therefore, *Tirukkural*’s theory of love stands as the highest pedestal of human perfection.

### ***Veedu*: Bliss here and now**

Life is a journey. It is a journey towards destiny. We human beings dedicate our life in journeying towards our destiny and strive to reach it. Thinkers have various opinions on human destiny and the means to attain it. Tiruvalluvar deals elaborately with *aram*, *porul*, *inbam*. However, he does not explicitly express his thoughts on *veedu*. *Veedu* means liberation. His thought is based on ethics as applicable to all. He gives meaning to the family life by showing how a person leads the life with common good as goal in one’s life. Thiruvalluvar’s instructions would direct the society and the individual towards holistic development.

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## **1.8 LET US SUM UP**

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Ancient materialist, Buddhist and Dravidian thinkers have left a great legacy of stressing the this worldly, natural and concrete living against which the Vedic-Brahmanical system developed its own idealistic conception and dominated the entire Indian philosophical discourse.

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## **1.9 KEY WORDS**

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<i>Uyir-Mei</i>	: Vowels and consonants
<i>Aram</i>	: Righteousness
<i>Veedu</i>	: Bliss here on earth.

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## **1.10 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES**

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