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TOWARD A PHILOSOPHY OF GOOD LIFE IN TIRUKKURAL

TOWARD A PHILOSOPHY OF GOOD LIFE IN TIRUKKURAL

(AN ANALYSIS OF THE CONCEPT OF ARAM AND  
ITS RELATION TO OTHER ASPECTS OF GOOD LIFE)

By

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## ABSTRACT

The present work is concerned with the explication of a philosophy of good life that could possibly be discerned in the ancient Tamil classic, Tirukkural. Though the Classic itself does not go into the details of 'definitions' and analysis of 'rival views', on a careful study of the text and the commentaries - both classical and modern - we find that the Classic incorporates a philosophy of good life which is at once reflective of the Indian view-point and is also suggestive of newer approaches and perspectives.

The argument of the thesis is that the philosophy of good life found in the Kural is directly derivable from the philosophy of religion inherent in it. The method adopted by the author of the Kural to get at the essence of religion, we have argued, is not by referring abstractly to religion per se but by accepting certain aspects and rejecting certain other aspects of the religions current in the Indian scene during his time. The methodology adopted by Tiruvalluvar, the author of the Tamil classic, when investigated, reveals that it is not possible to label the Classic either as a Brahmanical Hindu work or as a Jaina work or as a Buddhist work. Hence, after indicating our own methodology in this study in chapter 1, we have examined the relationship between Tirukkural on the one hand and the three Indian traditions on the other, in chapter 2. We have arrived at the conclusion that the Kural,

without rejecting in toto Brahmanical Hindu ideas, Jaina ideas and the Buddhist ideas, accepts aspects of them which do not smack of a sectarian character, ~~throughly~~ <sup>and makes</sup> subtle but significant modifications in them all to arrive at the essence of religion. Tiruvalluvar seems to imply that the essence of religion consists in aiming at and realizing the Good.

The good life, from this point of view is seen to stand for a transcendent goal inherent in human life which, all the same cannot be realized in a sphere distinct from or outside of life in society. In its barest outlines: our argument is that the qualitative improvements to life in society that a prime moral principle effectuates, when adhered to, indicates aspects of the good life. We have suggested that both the ultimate Ideal and the idealizations of inter-personal relations in society help the individual in <sup>re</sup>realizing the Good. In more specific terms: the realization of the ultimate Ideal itself is synonymous with realizing ideal perfectibility in the 'more immediate' spheres of life in society. Such a philosophy of Good life, characteristic of the Tamil classic has been responsible for its exhorting an ~~activistic~~, this-worldly ethics, without belittling the value of or disregarding the importance of 'ultimate realization', we have maintained. The cue for our interpretation has been that even though the Kural refers to Aram, porul and inbam (the three values) in three different sections, the thrust of the whole work is to maintain the supremacy of Aram. This is the basis of our considering porul and

injam as extensions of Aram and not as independent values. In sum we have argued that the Kural's philosophy of good life is illustratively evident from the way in which it treats of Aram as underlying every aspect of human life. Chapters 3,4 and 5 are respectively devoted for Aram and its 'extensions'. In chapter 6 we have drawn the strings of our argument together and summarized the results of our investigation.

## PREFACE

The aim of the present work is to argue that the good life is a recurrent theme in the ancient Tamil classic Tirukkural (also referred to as the Kural) and that it is understandable best against the backdrop of the Indian religio-philosophical traditions. The idea of the Good which has had a peculiar attraction for the Indian religious philosopher, we have maintained, is seen reflected clearly in the Tamil classic as well, though it is subjected to an analysis which has resulted in an emphasis on this-worldly concerns without overlooking the metaphysical aspirations of man. We have arrived at this position on the following grounds:

(i) the value-scheme accepted in the Tamil classic resembles closely the Brahmanical Hindu view;

(ii) the idealistic view of life that it presents is symptomatic of its acceptance of strands of thought which are typically Jaina and characteristically Buddhist; and

(iii) the elements of commonality in the three religious traditions of India have reflected themselves in, rather than determined wholly the Kural's attitude to religion as such.

The analytic-interpretative approach adopted in this study has accordingly been 'designed' to suit and reflect the methodology adopted by Tiruvalluvar (also referred to as Valluvar), the author of the Tamil classic, in his spelling out, on the one hand, the essence of religion and, on the other, the essentials of good life. Some of the dominant

aspects of our contribution towards an understanding of the perennial theme (the good life) as we find it in the Kural may be indicated briefly.

We have sought to interpret:

(i) the way in which a happy synthesis of what may be termed the transcendental and empirical approaches to human life is arrived at (in the Classic), indicating at once what we would term the religious perspective and the good life that it results in;

(ii) the two-fold significance of such synthesis, viz., the transformation-potential that religion (as incorporating the essence of good life) offers for the individual and the idealization of inter-personal relationships resulting from the normative orientation given to the personal aspects of human life;

(iii) the deeper psychology of "personality-development" calling for not a destruction of the instinctive-emotional structures of life but sublimation of them;

(iv) the rationale behind the enormous importance accorded to the economic and political aspects of good life, i.e., the clear recognition of the foundational character of the 'basic securities' that the economic and political institutions offer; and

(v) the dimensional and 'extensional' significance attached to the concept of 'morality' at the basis of (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv).

In view of the fact that (v) provides the nerve for our whole argument in regard to (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv) we may succinctly indicate an important point that we have made in regard to the principle of morality, viz., the subtle but none-the-less significant difference between the implications of the concept of dharma in the Brahmanical



Hindu tradition and those of aram, in the philosophy of Tirukkural. It seems to us that the protean significance of dharma can be explicated more in terms of 'integration' than in terms of 'extension' which, we have maintained, offers us an insight into the nature of aram. By adopting the model of the extension-principle we have sought to account for the predominantly activistic, this-worldly ethics conspicuous in the Tamil classic.

The distinction that we have suggested is admittedly complex and controversial. The concept of dharma, one may argue, can likewise be interpreted with plausibility. Our submission is that even if it is argued that way, it would strengthen rather than weaken our case. For, without denying the social implications of the ethics of the Sanskritic tradition (we have ourselves investigated this issue in an earlier work) we submit that <sup>it cannot be gainsaid that</sup> an overall preoccupation with the metaphysical is its dominant motif. ~~cannot be gainsaid~~. If the extension-principle is argued to be valid in regard to such a system of ethics, as we have sought to demonstrate, it would only mean that the Tamil ethics which intentionally steers clear of any metaphysical underpinning, should be considered to incorporate this principle in a much more 'direct sense'.

The scope of the present work is thus restricted to an investigation of the theme of good life in the Kural, employing the category of the extension-principle of Aram. Accordingly we have neither gone into a detailed analysis of the various chapters constituting the text of the Kural nor dwelt at length on the differences between rival points of view reflected in the various commentaries, though these are important

areas of literary and exegetical research worthy of attention of the scholar. Similarly no reference has been made to the proliferation of the Kural's ideas in the subsequent religious thought of the Ālvārs and Nāyanmārs in South India, this being an undertaking of stupendous proportions and reserved for a future study.

Though we have used available English translations we have generally sought to give our own renderings sometimes resorting to a free paraphrasing of the terms and phrases in order to bring out the implications of the theme of good life. We have adopted the notes on the transliteration of Tamil and Sanskrit terms respectively from A.K. Ramanujan's The Interior Landscape and N. Tatia's Studies in Jaina Philosophy.

The speedy execution of our work would not have been at all possible but for Professor K. Sivaraman's devoting long hours, even after his office hours, to discussing with us, minutely, the various aspects of our argument. His making some extremely significant suggestions even after the final draft was made ready, have been helpful in our making improvements in the quality of the argument even as the final typing was being done. We would like to convey our grateful thanks to him for all the help rendered. We are grateful to Dr. H.J. Mol for his enlightening us on the deeper implications of social analysis both through the courses in sociology of religion we took with him and through frequent discussions of the specific theme of our research; also for his making valuable suggestions when we were writing the thesis. Our thanks are also due to Dr. J.G. Arapura for his evincing keen interest

in our work right from the beginning, for his devoting time to go through our drafts and making useful suggestions. We are also thankful to Dr. T.P. Meenakshisundaram, retired Vice-Chancellor, Madurai University, Dr. T.M.P. Mahadevan, ex-Director, Centre for Advanced Study in Philosophy, University of Madras and Dr. V.A. Devasenapathi, Director of the Centre for all their valuable suggestions when we were working on the thesis. To the authorities of the University of Madras, our thanks are due for their having permitted us leave of absence to do research at McMaster.

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TRANSLITERATION AND PRONUNCIATION : TAMIL

Vowels

| Short | Long |
|-------|------|
| a     | ā    |
| i     | ī    |
| u     | ū    |
| e     | ē    |
| o     | ō    |

Diphthongs

ai au

Consonants

|            | Lips | Teeth | Ridge behind<br>Upper teeth | Hard Palate<br>Retroflex | Palatal | Soft*<br>Palate |
|------------|------|-------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|---------|-----------------|
| Stops**    | p    | t     |                             | ʈ                        | c       | k               |
| Nasals     | m    | n     | <u>n</u>                    | ṇ                        | ɲ       | ŋ               |
| Liquids    |      |       | r<br><u>r</u>               | l<br><u>l</u><br>r       |         |                 |
| Semivowels | v    |       |                             |                          | y       |                 |

\* Approximate place of articulation

\*\* Manner of articulation

The charts indicate very roughly the phonetic values of the letters. A few striking features of Tamil pronunciation may be mentioned here:

1 The Tamil long vowels are simple long vowels, unlike their English counterparts, which are diphthongs as in boat, beat, boot and bate. Final -ai is pronounced -ey.

2 Among other things, Tamil has two kinds of consonants unfamiliar to English speakers: the dentals t, n and the retroflexes ṭ, ṇ, ṁ and Ṛ. The dentals are pronounced with the tongue stopping the breath at the teeth, positioned somewhat as in Cynṭhia. The retroflexes are made by curling back the tongue towards the roof of the mouth, somewhat as in some American English pronunciations of paṛty, moṛning, giṛl and siṛ.

3 The Tamil sounds represented by p, t, ṭ and k are not aspirated like English pin, tin and kin, but unaspirated as in spin, stain and skin.

4 There are long consonants in the middle of Tamil words. English has them only between words: hoṭ tin, seven nights, sick cow, etc. They are indicated by double letter as in mullai.

5 The Tamil r is flapped or trilled somewhat as in the British pronunciation of ring, berry. The r is most like the American variety; r and ṛ are not distinguished in speech by most Tamil speakers today. But doubled ṛṛ is pronounced like tr in English train; ṇṛ is pronounced ṇṛ as in laundry.

6 The absence of voiced sounds like b, d, j, g and of s, sh and h needs some reference here. The Tamil of the classical period does not represent any of these sounds, though later Tamil orthography found letters for sounds like j, s and h. But p, t, ṭ, c and k serve for these sounds also in certain positions: (A) after nasals, these consonants are voiced into b, d, ḍ, j and g; (B) between vowels p, t and ṭ are voiced into b, d and ḍ and pronounced laxly, but k and c are pronounced h (or g) and s; (C) initially, most Tamilians pronounce c as s. For instance, what is written cankam is pronounced sangam and akam is pronounced aham (or agam).

N.B. We gratefully acknowledge our debt to Professor A.K. Ramanujan from whom we have adopted verbatim the phonetic scheme of transliteration and notes on pronunciation. (vide Preface)

TRANSLITERATION AND PRONUNCIATION : SANSKRIT

Vowels

| Short | Long |
|-------|------|
| a     | ā    |
| i     | ī    |
| u     | ū    |
| ṛ     |      |
| ḷ     |      |
| e     |      |
| ai    |      |
| o     |      |
| au    |      |

Consonants

|   |    |    |    |     |
|---|----|----|----|-----|
| k | kh | g  | gh | ṅ   |
| c | ch | j  | jh | n   |
| ṭ | ṭh | ḍ  | ḍh | ṇ   |
| t | th | d  | dh | n   |
| p | ph | b  | bh | m   |
| y | r  | l  | ḷ  | ḷh  |
| v | s  | ṣ  | s  | h   |
|   | -ṁ | or | m, | : ḥ |

The vowels in Sanskrit present little difficulty, except that the sound of a approaches that of a in rural, and ā that of a in father. A vowel with a bar (-) above it is long; ṛ and ḷ are respectively pronounced as ri and li. The consonants are almost like in English, except that g is always hard and the sound of c approaches that of ch in church; ṭ, ḍ, etc. (indicated by a dot below) are cerebrals and are the same as in turn, d in drum and so on; t, d and n are pure dentals; the aspirated letters kh, gh and ch have the sound of the first letter plus an aspiration; ṅ is like n in sing; ṇ is like n in tinge; ṣ is like s in sure; ḥ is a pure aspirate; ṁ is the symbol of a nasal.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

The present study is concerned with the theme of good life in Tirukkural, an ancient Tamil classic. The good life has always been a theme of serious discussion in the Indian religious tradition and, in spite of the sharp differences (characterizing the view-points of the various religious traditions within the Indian scene) in the details of the analysis of the theme, there has been a significantly unique area of agreement regarding the core-idea of what constitutes the ultimate good. Without considering the perspectival differences discernible in them (for, they are not important for our immediate task, viz., indicating the lines on which the philosophy of good life in the Kural needs to be approached) it may be stated that the ultimate good in human life has been visualized by them to have the significance of inspiring man to aim at and achieve a state which is an epitome of spiritual perfection. They seem to agree that man is basically possessed of an amphibious nature, living on 'the good earth' and looking forward to entering a 'brave new world' which is, at the moment it is thought, a concept merely, but which nevertheless begins to haunt him sooner or later and create a state of restlessness and discontentment with the existent state. They thus seem to point to

two phases of human life which are distinct (but not discontinuous) and are transparently evident for a person of discernment: one, the stage describable most aptly as the 'biological' (since the individual complacently acquiesces in the 'physical mode' of living - being oblivious of 'metaphysical questings') and two, the state of 'ultimate concern', which brings with it a tremendous attitudinal transformation. This has been responsible for their seriously suggesting a reordering of human life by 're-considering priorities' and has resulted in the concept of good life.

In more precise terms: the term good life is used in the Indian religious tradition to indicate the ultimate ideal in human life as also the ideals to be pursued in the 'immediate present'. In both cases the difficulty posed by the 'ideal' (the difficulty becomes apparent when we go into the details about the nature of the ultimate ideal in life suggested and also about the other ideals to be pursued as the 'means of attainment') for man is indeed evident and leads to the question whether an ideal should after all be far removed from the actualities in life. It seems to us that in postulating the good life as an ideal which is not near at hand and yet not too distant for achievement, the Indian religions tacitly accept that keeping the ideals distinctly removed from the actual life-situations is one way of helping man to attain transformation of personality. This is more clearly evident from a consideration of the ideals in life stipulated, since each ideal reveals an idealization of inter-personal relationships which ultimately effect transformation of human life.

As long as man is content with the 'immediate' and the 'actual' and not concerned with 'what lies beyond' and with the 'ideal' and the 'ideals', he may not be motivated at all by any consideration other than the actual and the immediate. The sole concern with the immediate may itself be responsible for purely egoistic and self-regarding tendencies and activities. To get out of oneself, to become other-regarding is synonymous with developing an attitude of non-attachment towards the immediate environment and this basic idea of 'expansiveness' in the Indian religions has resulted in the articulation of a highly metaphysical Weltanschauung.<sup>1</sup>

The subtle distinction referred to above, between the good life conceived of as an ideal life and the ideals in life (as means), is extremely significant since it is highly suggestive of the lines of demarcation within the various strands of thought which go to make up the Indian religious tradition; it also points to the metaphysical implications of an idealistic world-view. Interested as we are in highlighting the Tamil classic's reconceiving the Indian ideal, we need not labour on the point that the 'unity in diversity' so characteristic of the Indian scene is attributable to the same ideal being conceived and reconceived in manifold ways within the Indian context itself. But, what must be reiterated is that the reciprocal

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<sup>1</sup> In one of the rare passages the author of the text (which is about to be studied in the body of the text of the thesis) gives us a description of the pursuit of such an ideal in life as also one who is disposed benevolently towards others (3.10).

relationship between the ideal of good life (what may be referred to, in the Indian terminology, as attaining self-realization or realizing the ultimate purpose in life) and the ideals in life which need to be pursued scrupulously, has been emphasized in different ways in the different traditions and offer us an insight into the 'Indian viewpoint'.

The significance attached to the ideals to be pursued in the immediate workaday world is that they help the individual in realizing his ultimate goal. In fact, without the pursuit of the latter, the former cannot be realized, it is maintained. It is because of this that the term good life in the Indian tradition, may be interpreted to refer both to the ultimate end of human life and the immediate means that are suggested. The various Indian religious traditions have worked out their own models to reiterate the point. And our present study of the theme of good life in the Kural, it is hoped, will bring out the careful reformulation and the comprehensive treatment of the necessity of idealization of human relations that it stands for.

Without anticipating the distinct standpoint that the Kural takes on this issue of the nature of the relationship between the immediate ideals and the ultimate ideal, we may mention here that the author of the Classic conceives this relationship in a very unique way. While certainly he speaks of multiple ideals which concern man in the immediate context of life in answer to the different aspects of his personality make-up, he does not speak of the ultimate ideal

as entirely different from the non-ultimate ones. The structure of the text itself evidences this fact in two important respects: (i) no separate section is allotted for a consideration of the ultimate ideal<sup>1</sup> and (ii) even when the immediate ideals are spoken of, there is a clear suggestion that pursued in an ethical way they themselves 'constitute' the realization of the ultimate ideal.

Even the brief reference we have made above to the way in which the theme of good life figures prominently in the Kural would indicate how well the Classic reflects the Indian view-point. But, due to the fact that till recently ancient Indian culture and philosophy have been subjected to close study and deep analysis by adopting the focus of concern on Sanskrit works, not many studies on the Tamil classic (from the perspective of Indian philosophy and religion) have appeared. It seems to us, therefore, that a study like the one we propose to make, would contribute its bit to 'answer' to such a 'need'. It is important to take note of the fact that it is increasingly being realized that other classical languages of India, especially Tamil, reflect and project, through ethico-social treatises, the Indian view-point. A.K. Ramanujan, a contemporary writer who interprets Tamil literature to the West<sup>2</sup> has significantly pointed to the necessity of studying classics written in other Indian languages like Tamil to get a good insight

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1 vide infra, pp. 7 and 9.

2 He is Professor of Dravidian Studies and literature in the Department of South Asian Languages and Civilizations of the University of Chicago.

into Indian tradition. His views are worth quoting at some length here. He has said:

For a long time, Indian civilization was thought of only as the civilization of classical India expressed mainly in Sanskrit. For over a hundred years in Europe and America they have had Sanskrit studies. Now people are beginning to realize that there are many Indias. It is not one India and India is not just in the past. India has a live, longstanding, continuous tradition and it is a multiple tradition. In the study of this multiple tradition we need the living languages. We need all the different linguistic traditions to be represented, not only Sanskrit but also Dravidian traditions... Until we have some idea of, and some acquaintance with all of these, ... the picture of India will not be complete. It will be partial and it will be unbalanced. The recognition of such imbalance is one reason why Dravidian studies and particularly Tamil studies are increasingly receiving attention ... For a total picture of Indian civilization and Indian linguistics we need both these classical but contrasted languages.<sup>1</sup>

Tirukkural is considered to be a world-classic<sup>2</sup> and, among the classical works in Tamil it has earned the praise of being the greatest ethical treatise. The work reflects the characteristic

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1 Cited by K.C. Kamaliah, Preface in the Kural, Madras: M. Seshachalam & Co., 1973, p. xxi.

2 The term classic used to refer to the Greek writings in the context of the Western world is applied to the Kural here. It is interesting to note here that at least three important aspects of the notion of a classic are significant in regard to the Kural. In brief, the three aspects are: (i) adherence to an established set of methods, (ii) possession of an enduring interest, quality or style and (iii) being a literary production of the first rank. (For other aspects of the notion of a classic see The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, unabridged edn., 1966.) The counterpart of the notion of classic in India would be sāstra in the terminology of Sanskrit and nūl in Tamil. They claim universal relevance, addressed as they are to man as man.

feature of Tamil literature, viz., its confidence in human powers expressing itself in a positive affirmation of life on earth. The chief concern of the work is with the fundamentals of good life and, in contrast to the Sanskritic division of human values into four, viz., dharma (virtue), artha (material wealth), kāma (desire) and mokṣa<sup>1</sup> (liberation) we find in it a detailed discussion of only the first three.<sup>2</sup> The distinctive feature of the work is its maintaining that the good life consists in living up to the ideals of the first three values and in the process realizing the fourth.<sup>3</sup> The questions that immediately arise here are: "Has the deliberate 'omission' of the fourth value, in the Tamil classic, resulted in a qualitatively different approach to the concept of good life?" "If not, how has the Tamil work managed to 'convey the meaning' through the first three values alone?" and, "Can it be said that Tirukkural repeats in Tamil the Sanskritic ideal with little variation?" The present thesis attempts to answer these

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1 For an elaborate treatment of these four values see P.H. Prabhu, Hindu Social Organization. Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1963; S. Radhakrishnan, Religion and Society. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1954; and P.S. Sivaswamy Iyer, Evolution of the Hindu Moral Ideals. Calcutta: Calcutta University Press, 1935.

2 Aram, porul, inpam and viṭu are the four corresponding values recognized in the Tamil tradition. In the Kural we do not find a section for viṭu. vide infra, pp. 9,46,48,74,90. See also pp. 92 & 116.

3 vide supra, p. 5.



and related questions with pointed reference to the treatment of the theme in the text itself and is not presented as just a 'study in variation' in Indian philosophy and culture. An attempt is made to study the Classic as not merely an expression of the spirit of Indian philosophy which surely it reflects but also to see how far the philosophy of good life portrayed in it has implications for human thought itself.<sup>1</sup>

While writing a pre-publication review of an English translation of the Kural by the Rev. G.U. Pope, R.C. Temple observed:

The Kural is not only the first work of its own language, but as 'one of the highest and purest expression of human thought' has also interest far beyond the ten millions of speakers of Tamil ... The Kural is divided into three books, embracing really in a series of short stanzas the whole ethics of the daily life, not of any particular race or people but of mankind generally ... In its own land the Kural owes its popularity as much to the beauty of its versification as to its morality, but it is in its breadth of view and its speaking to the heart of man that must make it a favourite with the world at large.<sup>2</sup>

If morality is considered distinctive of man irrespective of questions relative to distinctions of class, caste, sex, time or clime, then it may be said that any ethico-social treatise which has come to be considered a classic, of necessity, must also be

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1 Its implication for modern understanding in terms of what may be described in the words of a contemporary sociologist as the problem of sacralization of identity, also will be considered.

2 Cited in Kamaliah, op. cit., p.1.

considered to contain within it root-ideas of the good life for man everywhere. And, the Kural as a world-classic can naturally be expected to offer guide-lines for humanity as a whole on the subject of good life. Our main focus of concern would be to examine the philosophy of good life as can be gathered from the couplets of the Kural and to see how far the Indian soil in which the philosophy of the Tamil classic has grown, has supplied the vital sap to it.

A paradoxical situation that arises even as we commence the study of the theme of good life in the Kural is this: On the one hand, the enumeration of values (four in the Sanskritic tradition and three in the Tamil classic) seems to imply some clear-cut distinctions. An important question here is whether the Kural breaks away from the Sanskritic tradition *by* treating the values as it does. In this sense the significance attached to viṭu in the Kural has to be considered also as a contextual study in Indian philosophy. On the other, the similarity characterizing the core-ideas of the first three values accepted in the Sanskritic tradition and those of the Tamil tradition smacks of an identity of views between them. It is in the light of such 'pre-views' that we consider the question of studying the philosophy of Tirukkural in relation to Indian philosophy extremely important and significant.

Before proceeding further it may be useful to consider some details about the author of the Classic, the date of the work, the style adopted and the commentaries that have been written, for

they may help us to provide the backdrop for our study in the thesis.

The age in which Tiruvalluvar, the author of Tirukkural, lived is shrouded in mystery. He was probably born during the Caṅkam age (coinciding with the pre-Christian and early Christian era) when Tamil civilization was at its peak. The Tamil people were enjoying a high degree of material prosperity, thanks to trade and commerce with many foreign countries.<sup>1</sup> The period in the history of the Tamils was characterized by contentment and happiness. Such a material prosperity in the Tamil country might have provided an edge to a philosophy of good life with its this-worldly emphasis in the Kural.

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1 V.Kanakasabhai, The Tamils Eighteen Hundred Years Ago. Madras: The South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society, Tinnevely, Ltd., 1956, p. 31 writes: "From the earliest times, the products of Tamilakam appear to have attracted the merchants of distant lands. It was most probably from Tamilakam that, during the reign of Solomon (about 1000 B.C.) 'once in every three years, the ships of Tarshish came bringing gold and silver, ivory, apes and peacocks'. The names of the last two objects kapim and tukim as found in the Hebrew Bible are the same as those still used in Tamil, kavi and thokai. Subsequently the Arabs and Greeks appear to have kept up the trade with Tamilakam. The Greek names for rice (oryza), ginger (zingiber) and cinnamon (karpion) are almost identical with their Tamil names, arisi, inchiver and karuva, and clearly indicate that the Greek merchants conveyed these articles and their names to Europe from the Tamil land. The Egyptian Greeks under the Ptolemies carried on an extensive trade in Indian commodities and Alexandria became, at an early period, the chief emporium of this lucrative commerce." The author quotes (ibid., p. 32.) Pliny as stating: "The subject is one worthy of attention, there being no year in which India does not drain our Empire of at least 55,000,000 sesterces (486,979 pounds) sending us in return wares which are sold for a hundred times their original value."

It is important, however to note that the close relationship which is discernible between the ethos of the work of Tirukkural and the ethos of the Caṅkam classics can be asserted. What is generally conceded in the case of Great Men of History, viz., that they are both the creators and also the creatures of their times may be said about Tiruvalluvar in relation to the Cankam Tamil classics. The latter are full of references to the terms and expressions of Tirukkural. And, the Kural itself reflects the values and ideals cherished in the Cankam period.

In regard to the life of Tiruvalluvar: it is accepted by eminent researchers that nothing definite is known. The great Tamil scholar, R.A.P. Sethu Pillai, for example states that Tiruvalluvar's birth-place, details about his parents, caste, upbringing and education are treasures that cannot be unearthed.<sup>1</sup> Some details that are known are from certain traditions that have been handed over and from certain legends about the author. According to these, the author, probably a weaver by profession, lived and worked in Mylapore in the city of modern Madras. His traditional name Tiru-valluva-nāyanār literally meant 'the sacred devotee, priest or sooth-sayer of the pariah class'.

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1 Tiruvalluvar Nool Nayam. Madras: Tirunelveli Saiva Siddhanta Publishing House Ltd., 1961, p.1. cf. G.U. Pope, Tirukkural, trans., Madras: The South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society, Tinnevely Ltd., 1962, p. xviii and E.J. Robinson, Tamil Wisdom, Madras: The South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society, Tinnevely Ltd., 1957, p. xxvii.

He is said to have gone to Madura with his great work to submit it to the College of poets (Caṅkam), founded in the days of Vamca Cekhara, an ancient king of the Pandyan kingdom. The high-caste assembly would not permit Tiruvalluvar to take his seat along with the learned professors of the Academy on account of his 'low caste'.<sup>1</sup> The poet meekly submitted and requested for permission to lay his book on the end of the seat. On this being granted, the book was placed where the poet should have been seated and the whole bench at once disappeared leaving the learned professors afloat<sup>a</sup> in the lotus tank. Realizing then the worth of

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2 (of previous page) The term valluvar has been subjected to a lot of analysis since it is considered to offer us evidence regarding the caste of Tiruvalluvar. S.S. Bharati draws our attention to the fact that some verses in the Caṅkam classics "refer to the function of heralds (valluvars), who proclaim by royal commands auspicious announcements in the palace and the inner courts of the city of kings" and observes that the context makes it clear that the valluvars had access to the innermost shrines in kings' palaces and rode the royal elephants in the discharge of their duty. Furthermore he refers to valluvars being spoken of as uyarnthon (the high officer) in a verse of Palaikouthamanar. Tiruvalluvar, Madura: Tamil Sangam Power Press, 1929, p. 28. )

It is possible that though during the Cankam age the word valluvar had no reference to the 'untouchable' class, the word gradually lost its original significance and began referring to those who proclaimed the orders and commands promulgated by the king by beat of drums from the back of an elephant. It is thus possible that the author of the Kural held such a position in the Pandyan court. His eminence in the literary world might have overshadowed his official greatness just as Kautilya's fame is more due to his authoring the Artha-Sāstra than because of his having been a minister of the great King Chandragupta.

1 Bharati (ibid., p. 30.) cites another reason to contest the idea that the word valluvar referred to one of lowly birth. He refers to other persons known to Caṅkam literature by the same name but who were not of a low caste. He writes: "Nanjirkurisil, a great Vellala chieftain, who was eulogised by three great classical poets, Orusirai Periyandar, Maruthan Ilānahanar and Karuvurkatha Pillay, was

the poet, they sang in praise of Tiruvalluvar and it is known as Tiruvalluvamālai (Garland of Tiruvalluvar).<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to find a statement in the Tiruvalluvamālai<sup>2</sup> to the effect that fools slight the author as a mere valluvar, while the learned will not accept that statement.

It is important to observe that the speculations touched off by the chance association of the name valluvar with the anonymous author of the work are quite significant. The picture of the author that emerges from his work is that of a man of universalist vision and understanding but one who defies understanding merely in terms of caste obligations and station in life. It is quite possible that he was a man involved in and committed to action and that he was also a contemplative and one who could identify himself with the 'low' and

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1 (of previous page) (contd.) also known as valluvar ... Valluvar was originally the official designation of the author of the Kural but in course of time it came to be his only name known known in Tamilakam, i.e., the causal surname derived from the poet's office got fossilized in time into a mere personal name." (ibid., p.31.)

We also find the above view directly challenged by another scholar who writes: "While Sri Bharati has given good reasons for refusing to believe many of the old legends about Tiruvalluvar, it is hardly possible without further confirmation, to accept his hypothesis and to throw overboard the tradition which connects Tiruvalluvar with the humbler classes." (H.A. Popley, The Sacred Kural or the Tamil Veda of Tiruvalluvar, Calcutta: Y.M.C.A. Publishing House, 1958, pp. 18-19.)

1 Even though the story is perhaps not historically true, it is significant to note that it could last even the most devastating attack of critics and vindicate its position among scholars. The Tiruvalluvamālai was, very likely, a composition of a much later date, but it reflects the intention of the Tamil literati to show that

the poor, one who was not prepared to accord distinction for mere learning., learning unaccompanied by virtue, a citizen who was equally aware of his duties without an undue assertion of his rights, a warm human being sensitive in his personal relationships and above all, a wise man who was not without a word of advice alike to the ascetic and to the lovers.

Regarding the more specific question of the date of composition of the work, there are mainly three views. One is that it could not have been written earlier than the sixth century A.D.<sup>1</sup> The other is that it was produced sometime in the first century A.D.<sup>2</sup> The third is that it is the product of the first or second century B.C.<sup>3</sup> The cumulative evidence seems to favour the third view.<sup>4</sup>

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1 (of previous page) (contd.) all outstanding Tamil poets must accord recognition to the Kural.

2 (of previous page) verse 8.

1 Pope, op. cit., Introduction; Robinson, op. cit., Introduction.

2 V.V.S. Aiyar, The Kural or the Maxims of Tiruvalluvar, Tiruchirapalli: V.V.S. Krishnamoorthy & Co., 1952, Introduction.

3 V.R. Ramachandra Dikshitar, Studies in Tamil Literature and History, London: Luzac & Co., 1930, p. 132.

4 Some of these may be cited here: (i) According to Ceylon chronicles Āiara or Elara was a noble of the Coḷa kingdom who invaded Ceylon with an army, had the local ruler Asela defeated and slain, got himself crowned king of the island, and reigned for forty-four years from 145 to 101 B.C. If this is historically true the date of the Kural could be fixed as the 2nd Century B.C. (ii) Even if, for argument's sake it is accepted that the section dealing with poruḷ is indebted to Kauṭilya's Artha-Śāstra (We shall consider this question in some detail later on. Suffice it to state at this

As for the style of the work: the poetic form with the usage of the intricate and most difficult metre of the Tamil language characterizes it. It is one of the earliest works to adopt the

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4 (of the previous page) (contd.) point that the Poruṭpāl of the Kural was not just a re-production of the Artha-Sāstra.), the Kural must be considered to have been written one or two centuries after the Artha-Sāstra which is generally accepted as the composition of the 4th Century B.C. (iii) The Kural seems to have won the approval of Cittalai Cāttanār, the author of Maṇimēkalai, who is considered to have lived during the 2nd Century A.D. From the fact that Maṇimēkalai contains an unquestionable reference to the Kural ideas (Maṇimēkalai, 22.59.61 seems to be an echo of Tirukkural, 6.5) it may be inferred that the Kural must have been written earlier than Maṇimēkalai. (iv) Another Tamil epic, the Cilappatikāram which is not dated as later than the end of the 2nd Century A.D. approvingly quotes from the extant Tirukkural (Cilappatikāram, 21.33.34 seems to be an echo of Tirukkural, 32.9). To quote a work as authority, as Ramachandra Dikshitar points out (op. cit., p. 135), it must have been popular for some time and there is thus an irrefutable testimony to point out that the Kural was a composition much older than Cilappatikāram. (For a more detailed discussion of the question see Ramachandra Dikshitar, ibid., pp. 132-135.)

In spite of these historical details that we now have it is well to observe the caution suggested by Popley (op. cit., p. 10): "The date of the production of the Kural is open to considerable doubt, and it cannot certainly be settled until the dates of the other Tamil literatures of the first half of the first millennium of the Christian era have been fixed. All that we can say with certainty is that it was produced between 100 B.C. and 300 A.D. The style and subject-matter make it clear that it must have preceded the age of sectarian revival which began in the 7th Century A.D."



kural-venpa form.<sup>1</sup> Though adopting the most difficult metre in the language, "one permitting no deviations from strict rule and requiring such wonderful condensation for a long work"<sup>2</sup>, Tiruvalluvar's work exemplifies complete mastery of the style.

But, with all the technical excellence that characterizes the Kural it should not be thought that Valluvar was merely a scholar who had an appeal to the intellectual world. If his work is considered poetry par excellence it was still not poetry which was written for poetry's sake. The immortality of the work is due to Tiruvalluvar's

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1 'Kural' in the Tamil language literally means 'anything short' and refers to the couplet-form. It is interesting to find that the kural-form is comparable to the sūtra-style adopted in the Sanskrit literature to convey ethical and philosophical ideas. What is of significance about the employment of the kural metre in addition to its interest for a student of literature is the quality of brevity and suggestiveness that is expressly intended by its employment. Though in this respect it is comparable to the sūtra-literature of Brahmanical, Jaina and Buddhist writings, it must be said that brevity in the case of the latter is executed almost with a vengeance. Intended as perhaps a pedagogic medium, the sūtra, in the form of an algebraic formula was used as a mnemonic aid. Brevity seems to be the handmaid of lucidity, as employed in the kural form of the Tamil language. It should also be noted that kural, unlike the sūtra form, is elegant poetry, a work of art. (For a discussion of the points of comparison between the sūtra-style in Sanskrit and the kural-form in Tamil, though written with manifest prejudice against the former, see Maraimalai Adikal, Tirukkural Arāychi, Madras: Pari Nilayam, 1957, pp. 20 ff.)

Pope (op. cit., p. xxii) observes: "Something of the same kind is found in Greek epigrams, in Martial and the Latin elegiac verse. There is a beauty in the periodic character of the Tamil construction in many of these verses that reminds the reader of the happiest efforts of Propertius." He also opines (ibid., p. xxii) that probably Valluvar adopted it as being the best representative in Tamil of the Sanskrit 'śloka'.

2 Pope, ibid., p. xxii.

prophetic exhortations to his people to lead a good life which would exemplify the deepest humanity in them. The very fact that he chose the couplet verse form is interpreted by a scholar as a deliberate choice for mass communication. He observes:

Valluvar was a democrat in thought and form.....  
And so was the kural metre chosen ... it was the aptest medium of communication for the achievement of the poet's purpose. In that age when literacy by ear was as important as literacy by the eye, memorising played a vital role in the imparting of education; and nothing could aid this audio-education better than a simple couplet, almost as easy to get currency as a housewife's aphorism, and as likely to be effective in the guidance of day-to-day conduct in life. Ten was the number beyond which counting was difficult for the masses, and imprisoning all essential thoughts on a subject within ten couplets was to ensure that nothing worthwhile was missed.<sup>1</sup> ... Not once does the form flag or begin to stale... as the work moves on to the themes of love and war, which ordinarily might have been better expressed in freer and spacious metres, the tiny couplet rises to the occasion and performs ever imaginative feats ...<sup>2</sup>

Special mention must be made here of the fact that the language of the work is pure Tamil, less than fifty Sanskrit words being used in the whole work of about twelve thousand words.<sup>3</sup>

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1 The work is divided into one hundred and thirty-three chapters and each chapter consists of ten couplets. The ten couplets constituting a chapter treat with clarity, the essentials of their subject-matter, observing brevity.

2 B. Natarajan, "Economic Ideas of Tiruvalluvar" in M.S. Venugopaula Pillai, ed., Thirumathi Sornammal Endowment Lectures on Tirukkural, Madras: University of Madras, 1971, pp. 61-62. This Volume will henceforth be referred to as TSEL.

3 S. Dandapani Desikar, Tirukkural Alakum Amayppum, Madras: Tholkappiyar Nulakam, 1961, pp. 142-143 lists out the Sanskrit words.

The gentle but effective art of poetry employed by Tiruvalluvar would become evident from the fact that humor and irony are couched in gentle expressions and from the way the verbal melody is deftly managed by the choice alteration or arrangement of vowels and consonants. Telling phrases, apt similes and comparisons, striking personifications, gentle hyperboles and innuendoes, sparkle at every page and at every turn.<sup>1</sup> We shall cite a few examples to indicate these aspects of the Kural. Valluvar's humor and irony are strikingly evident in the soliloquies and dialogues in the section Kāmatuppāl.<sup>2</sup> Telling phrases abound in a number of couplets.<sup>3</sup> Similes and comparisons derived from common objects and circumstances lend a realistic analysis of the human situation by the author.<sup>4</sup> Striking personifications and portraits in brief

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1 M.S. Purnalingam Pillai, Critical Studies in Kural, Tinnevely: The Bibliotheca, 1929, pp. 90 ff.

2 See especially Chapter 132 entitled "Feigned Anger".

3 See Tirukkural, 31.6; 58.5; 87.7; 93.6; 113.3; 126.8; 130.3; and 133.6. (Tirukkural will henceforth be referred to as TK in the foot-notes.)

4 'Like the hairs from off the head that fall to the earth', (97.4): to illustrate loss of status; 'Like those that warm themselves at the fire' (70.1): to explain conduct in the presence of a king; 'Like the moon seized by the dragon' (115.6): to point to slanderous rumour; 'Like the cow in tiger's skin' (28.3) : to portray inconsistent conduct; 'As man's shadow dogs his steps wherever he wends' (21.8): to picturize the ruin chasing sinful deeds.

are also found.<sup>1</sup> Hyperboles are found in abundance.<sup>2</sup> It is also important to note that the literary excellences of the Kural have not prevented the rise <sup>of</sup> voluminous commentorial literature.<sup>3</sup>

When the literary excellences of the Kural are closely considered it becomes also evident why studies on the Classic till recently have been focussed on these aspects, especially attracting the attention of literary eyes. Without belittling the value of

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1 'Poverty a sinner' (105.2)

'Envy a sinner' (17.8)

"Her frame tender shoot, her teeth pearls, her smell fragrance, her eyes darts, her shoulders the bent bamboo" (112.3)

2 Vide chapters 112, 113 and 127 respectively.

3 The following are listed as the ten classical commentaries. Parimēlalakar's, Maṅakkuṭavar's, Parithiār's, Kāliṅkar's, Paripperumāḷ's, Tharumar's, Thāmaṭattar's, 'old commentary', Nunporunmalai Asiriyar's and Ramanuca Kavirōyar's. (The last-mentioned may be considered to be a forerunner of the modern commentaries which are many in number.) Of these commentaries (the ones listed above), Parimēlalakar's is still considered to be the 'most classical', even though the Brahmanical tone of the commentary has attracted a lot of criticism. The commentary is noted for the sharpness of its logic and dignity of its criticism. The commentator is considered to have had a mastery over Sanskrit and Tamil and probably lived during the 13th Century. Maṅakkuṭavar's commentary is known for its lucid Tamil, but it is obscure at places and is clearly lacking in logical rigour in the matter of classification of chapters and symmetry of treatment. The tone of this commentary is definitely less Brahmanical.

Recently, vulgate editions of the commentaries have been brought out. While the commentaries of Parimēlalakar, Maṅakkuṭavar, Parithiār, Kāliṅkar and Paripperumāḷ have been brought together in respect of Poruṭpāl and Kāmattuppāl, the volume on the Arattuppāl does not include the commentary of Paripperumāḷ. The Volumes entitled Tirukkural Uraikkotthu (Poruṭpāl), Tirukkural Uraikkotthu (Arattuppāl) and Tirukkural Uraikkotthu (Kāmattuppāl) were published by Kasi Mutt, Thiruppanandal in 1960, 1969 and 1970 respectively. As for the other commentaries: they are either lost or very little is known about them.

such studies we would like to urge that interpreting and delineating the various aspects of the philosophy of Tiruvalluvar is an equally important work which deserves to be undertaken. The numerous translations - both in other Indian languages and in non-Indian languages that have been made of the Kural (see Bibliography) as also the commentaries that have appeared on the work stand testimony to the importance of the theme of the work itself.

Coming now to an outline survey of the ground to be traversed: it seems to us that the Kural is extremely illuminative of the Indian view-point<sup>1</sup> on matters concerning the individual and his precise role and place in society inasmuch as it is highly suggestive of a philosophic approach<sup>2</sup> to the good life which needs to be based ultimately on an analysis of the personal and institutional aspects of human life and on the situation of continual interaction between the individual and society.

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1 We are mentioning this even at the commencement of the thesis to 'put the Kural in perspective'. Though the thrust of the argument of the thesis is that the Tamil classic contains an analysis of the good life which differs from that of Sanskritic ethical works in many respects, it needs to be emphasized here that the Kural is as much representative of the Indian view-point as are the other Sanskrit works which have received more serious attention from both Indian and non-Indian scholars. We shall, wherever necessary, refer to the view-point taken in the Sanskritic writings to indicate both similarities and dissimilarities between the two approaches.

2 While the Sanskritic philosophical literature under the heading of darśanas are attempts to answer questions like: "What is the nature of Reality?" "How do we know?" etc., the philosophical approach implicit in the Kural is more of the nature of answering

The metaphysical aspects of man in such a view are considered significant since the good life is a lived effort at achieving the ideal constructed and projected. Ideal-construction and projection of such an ideal constructed seem to be taken as being symptomatic of the metaphysical aspirations of man, and the approach to the individual's personal and institutional life gets modified as a result. It is this aspect of Tirukkural which seems to us to give us a clue to its philosophy of good life, which is in a nut-shell, a process of transforming one's life in the light of ideals envisaged and aimed at.<sup>1</sup>

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2 (of the previous page) (contd.) questions like: "What are the norms of moral life?" "What is the meaning of good life?" etc. It is needless to say here that in both the cases the term philosophy is understood as synonymous with religion, not only at its periphery but at its core.

1 Hans Mol, in his recent book Identity and the Sacred, Oxford: Blackwell, 1976, offers a significant frame of reference for understanding the sociological significance of man's religious aspirations. He defines religion as sacralization of identity (p. 1) and maintains that the sociological aspects of man's religious life have deeper significance than it is generally construed. Our interest in Mol's theory stems from the fact that it seems to be highly suggestive of an approach to the good life which balances the claims of the metaphysical and the social approaches. And, particularly from the point of view of the study of the Kural, Mol's making a distinction between the Sacred and the process by means of which it can be attained is extremely significant, for it seems to us that a distinct feature of the Kural's philosophy of good life is its concern for the process of transformation of the raw, unregenerate aspects of man's social living than for the 'end product' of a perfected spiritual life.

cf. the language of exhortation that the Kural often adopts as well as the language of designation: 4. 3-6; 6. 10; and 7. 4-6. These are a few among the scores of illustrative couplets which indicate the intention of transformation.

The effect of the transformation on social life (or attitude towards life in society) is obvious and offers us an insight into a methodology which would do justice both to the metaphysical and the social dimensions of human life while philosophizing on the good life. But the aspect which has been more seriously considered in the Sanskrit Indian tradition is the metaphysical dimension of human life. Because of this, the metaphysical approach has popularly come to be considered as the philosophic approach.

What seems to us to be important is considering both the social and the metaphysical dimensions of human personality not as two realms which can be compartmentalized and treated as if they do not have any influence whatever on each other but as two aspects of the same problem - the problem of analysing man and his significance to the wider reality of which he is an integral part. Over-emphasizing either the social or the metaphysical - however important and significant each of them may be - needs to be scrupulously avoided, and the pitfalls inherent in the approach of over-enthusiastically exhorting the contribution of either of the approaches to the total understanding of man ought to be carefully guarded against.<sup>1</sup>

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1 This seems to be Mol's view as well (though his context is different) as is evident from his recording his difference with Emile Durkheim: "To Durkheim the sacred was completely separate, even antagonistic to the profane. It was something given. Although I agree with Durkheim that almost anything can be sacred, the emphasis in this book will be on the process, on the fluid transition from the profane

(sometimes raised) whether the social or the metaphysical aspect of man is more important for philosophizing about man is meaningless. For, on analysis it becomes evident that they are so inextricably woven together in the texture of human nature that it is only by a dogmatic assertion that either of them may be said to be more predominantly significant than the other in analyses of man.<sup>1</sup> The peculiarity of human nature is that it projects itself now in the social, now in the metaphysical realms and each time it seems to be exhausted in such projections. The meaning that we read into this is not that it is a projection of eternal contradiction in human nature but that the social and the metaphysical are organically related and hence also that we can meaningfully refer to the metaphysical roots of the social and the social significance of the metaphysical.

The reciprocal nature of the relationship between the social and the metaphysical aspects of human life further points

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1 (of the previous page) (contd.) to the sacred."  
(op. cit., p. 6.)

Apart from the fact that Mol's approach to sociology of religion is symptomatic of a concern with the deeper aspects of the human personality, it is significant in another important respect, viz., that it seems to lend support to our view that the metaphysical foundations for building a philosophy of good life become extremely meaningful in so far as they have an effect on the patterning of social life itself.

1 That this is the understanding of human nature according to Tirukkural can be borne out by scores of references. However, in one significant phrase "vaiyatthul vālvāṅku vālpavan" the



to the fact that in considering the human situation the purely social and the essentially metaphysical necessarily intersect and yield a realm of analysis in which the metaphysical dimension of the human personality is accepted without overlooking the social dimension. Though our intention here is not to go into the relationship between the social and metaphysical approaches to human life, reference was made to them because of (i) our concern in indicating the perspective from which we propose to study the concept of good life in the Kural, (ii) the distinction between two approaches to society that the Classic seems to draw and (iii) the philosophical thrust of the Kural in its treatment of the individual and society.

In regard to (i) we would like to reiterate that a perspective which does justice both to the social and the metaphysical aspects of human existence holds in it the key to unravelling many problems concerning human life which seem to be elusive of our grasp. If the metaphysical and the social dimensions of man are important in our search for meaning and purpose of human life itself, neither of them can be disregarded without leaving the imprint of an incomplete analysis. Conversely, the treatment of both as intrinsic to human nature has an effect on the metaphysical as well as the social analyses of man.

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1 (of the previous page) (contd.) author implies the inter-wovenness of the two natures in man when he describes human life on earth as 'participating in heaven' when it is led in the light of the ultimate ideal. (5.10)

What is perhaps more important in our context is that the Kural's emphasis on the social cannot be appreciated fully either by considering it as a purely secular text or by approaching it merely as a metaphysical treatise. We get the cue for our approach from the great concern for social weal expressed in the Classic by 'fixing the responsibility' on every individual in society. It is in referring to individual responsibility that the metaphysical aspects of the philosophy of the Classic becomes evident. But the characteristic feature of the Tamil work is that it emphasized the social aspect - what in Indian discussions of the Classic is referred to as the this-worldly as against the other-worldly aspects of human life - almost to the point of making the cursory reader of the Classic believe that metaphysical analyses of man are significant by their absence in it. Whatever might have been the historical reasons for such an emphasis being laid by the author, it is significant to observe here that the metaphysical roots of social life are clearly indicated by him. By a skillful synthesis of a social and a metaphysical analysis of man and his ultimate significance the author has indicated both the importance of the social aspects of human life and the deep metaphysical significance of individual and social living.

In regard to (ii) it needs to be stated that we shall be taking the normative rather than the empirical approach to society. In an important sense this approach is dictated by the approach of the Classic itself. Constant reference to society and its

institutions is a characteristic of the Classic, but it is scrupulously mentioned in many significant couplets that the institutions themselves are made what they are and shaped and reshaped by the disciplined aspirations and actions of the individuals who contribute to and are part of them.<sup>1</sup> The individuals' subjective appropriation of the objectives envisaged for the institutions is emphasized in the Classic without any ambiguity and the resulting view of society is idealistic without its losing sight of the empirical aspects of life on earth.

The inter-twining of the normative and the empirical approaches to society found in the Classic seems to be intriguing especially if we pose to ourselves the question: "Is the Kural's approach to man and society empirically oriented or is it normative-idealistic?" For, some of the couplets clearly indicate an empirical approach to society and its institutions, whereas in some, the idealistic approach of the author (to man and society)

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1 Mol's making a distinction between sacralization and institutionalization is interesting in our context. Though the distinction is only indicated in the earliest reference to this subject by him (op. cit., p. 2.) and explicated in some detail a little later (p. 4.) the significance of both the references seems to be to point to the way institutions may degenerate unless 'taken care of by individuals'. Mol writes: "... I should like to use sacralization when institutionalization acquires qualities of untouchability and awe, qualities which reinforce the rock (or better, which cement the sand) on which the house of identity is constructed. Sacralization is the inevitable process which safeguards identity when it is endangered by the disadvantages of infinite adaptability of symbol-systems." (ibid., pp. 5-6.)

is quite evident. But when we consider that understanding the substance of any work involves not a consideration of just any section or chapter of it in isolation from the rest of the work, but considering the sections and chapters as forming an integrated pattern and one continuous argument, we get at the proper approach to the Kural. The couplets with the positive overtone will then not be immediately interpreted as revealing the empirical approach of the author and, similarly the couplets which sound idealistic will not be taken as indicating the 'normative preference' in the work. In this sense the normative-empirical approach of the Kural seems to be adequate to the human situation, acknowledging respectively the metaphysical and social dimensions of human personality. Due emphasis is laid in the Classic on both the aspects of human personality and hence we find a careful avoidance of laying too much stress on either of them. Our suggestion, therefore is that an appropriate <sup>method</sup> (indicated above) of studying the Kural be adopted.

In regard to (iii) a word of caution seems to be necessary. The emphasis on discussing life in this world rather than considering a world to come (that we find in the Kural), while being symptomatic of the concern with the social ought not to be mistaken as completely non-philosophic in character. We have already indicated our view<sup>1</sup> of the usage of the term 'philosophical' and, in the light of that it

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1 vide supra, pp. 20-22.

will be conceded that the social ethic which the Kural offers us, is a clear pointer to the philosophic approach of the Classic. The approach of reflecting about the significance of the institutional structures as also of interrogating the impact they have on individual values, aspirations and development that we find in the Kural also points to its philosophic approach. If reflecting about the meta-physical categories of Reality is philosophic in the traditional Indian sense, reflecting about the near-at-hand inter-personal relationships characteristic of human living is no less philosophic, suggests the Classic. Furthermore, the emphasis on the normative as against the positivistic approach to which reference was made in the last section<sup>1</sup> explicates the philosophic orientation of the Kural but the philosophic view of life which forms the backdrop of the argument of the Kural requires to be highlighted here.

The Kural, as reflective of Indian culture, bases its view and way of life on many significant traditional Indian philosophical concepts. The type of intimate relationship that we find between the 'purely' philosophic concepts and the patterning of life that we find in the Sanskritic Indian tradition is also found clearly in the Kural. From the point of view of this study it is not necessary for us to go into the historical question whether (and if so, how) the Sanskritic Indian tradition influenced, in one way or the other,

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1 vide supra, pp. 25-26.

the Tamil tradition as reflected in the Kural, notwithstanding the similarity of approaches to the problem of the end and the means in human living that we find in it. Our main concern will be to offer an axiological analysis of the views on many of the important questions that are considered in the Kural as constituting the good life. The differences of stress that we find in the Kural in some places and also the positively critical approach of it to certain currents of thought prevalent at that time will also be considered.

The Indian philosophical background against which the Kural could be approached - not merely for the sake of convenience but because of the 'rootedness' of the Kural in Indian philosophy and culture - needs some specific reference here. In an important sense Indian philosophy itself could be described as a philosophy of values. From the point of view of a social analysis of the Indian philosophical argument especially, the method of axiological analysis is extremely significant inasmuch as it has the merit of keeping track of the metaphysical ideal even when the purely ethico-social values are exhorted upon. The highest ideal that is accepted in Indian philosophy referred to as paramapurusaartha, liberation or self-realization (moksa) is a value to be realized. That is why it is referred to as value for man (purusa artha). It is an end (siddhi) to be achieved (realized) and achieving a siddhi, in the Indian terminology, is possible only through adopting the appropriate means (sadhanas). In an oversimplified way, the purusaarthas (the human aspirations) of dharma (righteousness), artha (material well-being) and kama ('pleasure')

may be referred to as the sādhanas.

In terms of the terminology of the siddhi and the sādhanas (the 'end' and the means): our point (socially analysing the Indian philosophical argument) may be expressed as emphasizing the efficacy of the latter in order that the former becomes actualized in the life of the individual and <sup>is</sup> not ~~be~~ construed merely as a theoretical concept which could be referred to for purposes of academic discussion.

sādhana, in its more specific meaning in Indian philosophy, is discipline so that, applied to human life, it signifies disciplining oneself continually in order that the ideal is actualized. In terms of the puruṣārthas (human aspirations): the paramapuruṣārtha (the supreme human ideal), to be realized, requires the instrumentality of the other puruṣārthas and, as the end to be actualized, requires that they be realized as well.

The 'ultimate value' has, in Sanskrit Indian philosophical works, received specific treatment just as the other values have been elaborately dealt with in works specifically dealing with them. We have, for instance, the Dharma-Śāstras, the Artha-Śāstra and the Kāma-Sūtra respectively dealing with the values (puruṣārthas) of dharma, artha and kāma. For the sake of convenience a distinction between these treatises may be made by referring to those which are predominantly concerned with mokṣa as metaphysical works and those dealing with the other three values of dharma, artha and kāma as

non-metaphysical works.<sup>1</sup>

More specifically here we want to emphasize that the description of Indian philosophy as a philosophy of values signifies precisely that the metaphysical characteristic of the highest value coheres with the other values which are instrumental to its realization. It is because of the integral nature of the relationship between the Supreme value and the other values that we can identify the metaphysical orientation of the instrumental values and the empirical significance of the intrinsic value. From this point of view it may further be argued that dwelling on the instrumental values, studying their social and metaphysical implications and drawing out their reciprocal involvement clarifies the spirit of Indian philosophy itself. And, the study of the Kural becomes significant in this context.

The procedure of axiological analysis adopted is thus to consider man in quest of values as our focus of concern and <sup>to</sup> study ~~the~~ the pattern of life that it offers to him. The axiological approach

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<sup>1</sup> This is only for methodological convenience. In actuality every śāstra (treatise) including the Kāma-Sūtra understands its goal eventually to be in the service of realizing the paramapurusaṛtha (the Supreme value). These treatises indeed do not refer to mokṣa as a label of legitimation in conformity with good practice but conceive the relation of their respective values to the highest value, mokṣa in a positive sense. Despite this one cannot ignore the fact that the real and the professed aim remain other than the metaphysical.



is also a pointer to considering man as the individual 'bearer of values' who has the responsible function of 'sustaining' the various institutions of which he is an integral part. Individual values are thus the sustaining elements in the institutions in which the individual participates. The philosophy of values in the Indian tradition is in this sense basic to its philosophy of institution. The point to notice here is that the Kural's philosophy of good life can be appreciated better in the light of the Indian philosophy of values sketched above. The argument in the Indian philosophical tradition (which is also accepted by the Kural) is that both in terms of a view of life and in terms of a way of life, the value-aspiring and institution-building activities of man are organic to each other.

Such an intimate relationship between the subjective and the objective aspects of the individual's life that the Indian tradition accepts is perhaps accountable in terms of the close relationship between philosophy and religion. In our context we note that there is a clear reflection of this idea in the Kural. We may further state that the intimacy of relationship which stems from their both being concerned with 'exploiting' the potentiality (for spiritual perfection) with which man is endowed is indicated by the Kural by its critically analysing religion while attempting to spell out the true meaning of religion. Looked at from this point of view, we may consider that the Kural spells out its philosophy of good life by getting at the essence of religion. That our suggestion here is not born out of a penchant for tracing the doctrine and argument

of Indian philosophy in the one thousand odd couplets in the Kural would become evident in the thesis wherein we shall point to the affinities (expressed as well as implied) of the author to the three religious traditions of India, viz., Brahmanic Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism. Our endeavour in this connection would be to show that the non-sectarian tendency of the Kural is found reflected in its accepting Brahmanism, Jainism and Buddhism on the one hand and, on the other, refusing to be reduced to any one of these religions, in their narrower meaning.

One significant point that emerges when we look at the Kural from the point of view of the three religious traditions of India is that the author of the work has explicated the meaning of religion, not by abstractly referring to it but by concretely illustrating principles of it. The best way of doing this, it must have occurred to the author, would be to refer to religions current in the Indian scene during his time and, through an appreciation and criticism of aspects of them, indicating what true religion meant to him. On a study of the text of the Kural and the various commentaries that have been written upon it by classical as well as modern scholars it becomes evident that the views expressed by Tiruvalluvar ~~lend~~ *make* themselves easily acceptable to the Hindus, the Jainas and the Buddhists. The views expressed are also such that the adherents of the three different traditions claim the Kural to be a work reflecting the views of their traditions. On a deeper analysis, however, it becomes clear that the Kural incorporates within itself

principles which may be described as Hindu, Jaina and Buddhist, no doubt, but at the same time it goes beyond the three traditions, or may be, it has diligently distilled principles of religion from the three traditions near at hand and has projected a perspective which could be described as universal. We should not, however overlook the fact that the other three traditions too contain universalistic elements, but the characteristic feature of the Kural is that the social perspective is thrown into bold relief in it, without cutting the metaphysical roots of the ethical. The social perspective being more easily comprehensible than the metaphysical, the Kural has naturally had the advantage of appealing to the common man as well as to the scholar.

## CHAPTER TWO

### TIRUKKURAL AND THE INDIAN TRADITIONS

The suggestion in the last chapter that the philosophy of good life as we find it in Tirukkural can best be understood in terms of its rootedness in Indian philosophy raises the question as to which school of Indian philosophy it bears affiliation<sup>to</sup>. It seems to us that due to some specific reasons - historical and philosophical - Tirukkural eludes a simplistic description implied in the 'quest for categorization'. Though it is true that a historically precise date for the Kural is yet to be fixed, from the available data about the history of the Tamil people<sup>1</sup> it seems to us that to categorize the

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1 The Tamils are considered to be one of the most ancient peoples of the world, with a very old literary tradition. Kanakasabhai (*op. cit.*, pp. 2-3) writes: "The vast field of ancient Tamil literature is like an unknown land into which no traveller hath yet set foot. Many of the ancient classical works in Tamil have but recently seen the light. Hitherto they were preserved in manuscript on palmyra leaves and zealously hidden by those ... into whose hands they had fallen. ... Most of these manuscripts lay neglected in the libraries of Saiva or Jain monasteries: and there they would have crumbled to dust but for the enterprise of a few scholars who have, with considerable labour and research, rescued most of them from oblivion and published them ... Several valuable works however still remain in manuscript, accessible only to a few individuals."

The Tamil civilization was perhaps co-existent with that of the Indus Valley Civilization dating back to the third or the fourth millennium B.C. The recorded history of the Tamils goes back to

philosophy of Tiruvalluvar in terms of the well-known schools of Indian philosophy is to do him scant justice. On the philosophical side too, we find that only by overlooking important aspects of the three traditions of Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism can we 'claim' the allegiance of the Kural for them, or conversely, only by abstracting aspects of the Tamil classic from the point of view which we want to favour can we give it such a categorical description.

The similarity between the ideas in the Kural and in the Sanskritic works of Indian philosophy and religion are indeed so many and so striking that it is quite often maintained that the Sanskrit works are themselves rendered into Tamil and that their terms and concepts have influenced more or less completely the philosophy of the Tamil classic. Without making specific references to such views and without going into all the details here (since we shall be discussing the issues at some length and making references in the next two chapters of our thesis, to the Sanskrit works to indicate parallels) we deem it sufficient to suggest that the seminal ideas which we today associate with Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism, were all probably

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1 (of the previous page) (contd.) at least 2500 years. As Natarajan, op. cit., p. 58 observes: "The earliest work in Tamil now extant is the grammar of Tolkāppiyam, the date of which is placed generally by scholars around 500 B.C. But Tolkāppiyam reveals a civilization already mature and organized in many ways. It refers to numerous literary works that had existed before and postulates that grammar is the distillate of literature... The literature that went before the grammar of Tolkāppiyam should have taken several centuries to evolve."

present in a germinal form in the hoary past of what we today call the Indian tradition. Especially when we remember that the three major religious traditions of India (Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism) in their formative stages are more or less indistinguishable from one another and are understandable only in terms of the earliest phase of the Indian religious tradition (what has come to be referred to as Brahmanism), maintaining categorically that the Kural ideas are clear 'borrowals' or mere 're-productions' of the Sanskritic ideas seems to need a careful reconsideration. In view of the fact that the Tamil literary tradition has had a long past as indicated above, it seems to us that we can well visualize an earlier phase in Indian thought which may be referred to as proto-Hinduism.<sup>1</sup> This might have been the stage that contained ideas which were later on to take a more definite shape in Brahmanism and contained in them also seeds for the more precise development of later Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism.

The term proto-Hinduism may be effectively used to refer to the world of ideas which were linguistically pre-Sanskritic (not non-Sanskritic), culturally pre-Aryan (not non-Aryan) and religiously pre-Brahmanical (not non-Brahmanical), since the ambiguities associated with the terms Hinduism and Brahmanism are conveniently

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1 I owe this expression to Professor K. Sivaraman of the McMaster University. His views on this issue are extremely significant since he has done extensive work both in Tamil philosophy and in Sanskritic thought.

got over by the usage of the expression. We should not, however, be mistaken as introducing a term which is 'less loaded' and 'more acceptable' for getting over the difficulties involved in the linguistic debates about the Tamil and the Sanskritic traditions. What we are suggesting is that since the terms Brahmanism,<sup>1</sup> Aryan<sup>2</sup> and Hinduism<sup>3</sup> have acquired vast meanings, thanks to the painstaking researches of

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1 See for instance, the Article on Brahmanism in The Encyclopaedia Americana, 1973, Vol. IV which refers to Brahmanism as "the most ancient and orthodox core of traditional Hinduism as expressed in the religious scriptures known as the Veda and related materials." The important point about the Article in our context is that it maintains that the post-Vedic era which exhibits the growth of religious and philosophical ideas under the over-arching authority of the Veda also be considered Brahmanism and instances Manu Dharma-Sastra to be representative of classical Brahmanism.

R.Weiler, in his Introduction to the section on Hinduism in Sources of Indian Tradition, ed., Wm. Theodore de Bary, New York: Columbia University Press, 1958, pp. 3-4 writes: "Brahmanism, while not necessarily representing the most ancient religion of the Indian subcontinent, is that system of belief and ritual practice to which Indians have, historically, looked back as the source of their religious traditions. Whether in later Hinduism, which tenaciously holds to much of the Brahmanical tradition, or in Buddhism, which rejects much of it, there is presupposed this highly conscious and articulate cult, the central feature of a way of life made known through the ages by the earliest body of formal literature, the Veda... Though it is difficult to establish a definite continuity in the development of religious ideas in India dating from the Indus civilization to modern times, it is, however, possible to distinguish a clearly non-Aryan - which may or may not be pre-Aryan - source for many of the concepts which characterize that religion which is known as 'Hinduism' in India today."

2 It is now increasingly being realized that the terms Aryan and Dravidian probably stand more for groups of languages than for divergent races pitched against one another for asserting their superiority.

3 Wilfred Cantwell Smith, The Meaning and End of Religion, New York: The New American Library of World Literature, Inc., 1964

serious scholars, the usage of those terms have quite often to be delimited to particular phases of the development of Indian thought while discussing specific issues. It is indeed symptomatic of a paradoxical situation that while the research-findings referred to just now are valuable in indicating that extreme caution is to be observed while using the terms to explain the development of Indian thought, they are by themselves less helpful for an unambiguous

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3 (of the previous page) (contd.) brings out the complexities in the usage of the term Hindu. He writes: "The term Hinduism is, in my judgment, a particularly false conceptualization, one that is conspicuously incompatible with any adequate understanding of the religious outlook of the Hindus. Even the term 'Hindu' was unknown to the classical Hindus." (p. 61) "The term 'Hindu' and its dialectical alternative sindhu, are the Indo-Aryan words for 'river', and, as a proper noun, for the great river of the north-west of the sub-continent, still known locally as the sindh and in the West through the Greek transliteration as Indus. As a designation for the territory around that river (that is, meaning roughly 'India') the word was used by foreigners but not internally, and indeed it ... is still primarily an outsiders' name for the country ... The use of Hindu in the meaning 'Indian' survived in popular English into the 20th Century; I can remember as a boy that in Canada we discriminated Red Indians from Hindu Indians and I have heard the phrase a 'Hindu Muslim' as distinguished from an Arab or Turkish Muslim." (p. 249) "... the classical Hindus were inhibited by no lack of sophistication or self-consciousness. They thought about what we call religious questions profusely and with critical analysis. But they could not think of Hinduism because that is the name that we give as a totality to whatever might be that they thought, or did, or thought worthwhile doing." (p. 61) "The term 'Hindu' as a religious designation was developed by the Muslims after they had invaded the country in the second millennium A.D. For the Muslims it served to designate these aliens whom they conquered, and whose not being Muslim was now for the first time significant. It retained for some time its geographical reference: 'Indian', 'indigenous', 'local', virtually 'native'. And the indigenous groups themselves also began to use the term, differentiating themselves and their traditional ways from these invading Muslim foreigners. It covered all such groups: those whom we now call Hindus, but also Jains, Buddhists and all the others." (p. 62)



appreciation of the fact that <sup>there was</sup> an earlier phase of development of Indian thought, when perhaps ideas, especially on ethical issues, co-existed, and there was also a freer flow and a more whole-hearted acceptance of certain ideas from 'different sources'.

It is significant in this context to refer to the couplets in the Kural itself which clearly echo the voice of Valluvar that knowledge, from whichever quarter it comes, should be accepted. In an important chapter entitled 'Knowledge of the True', Valluvar says: " True knowledge is the perception concerning everything of whatever kind, that that thing is the true thing."<sup>1</sup> In a later chapter entitled 'The Possession of Knowledge' the idea is put forth even more emphatically: "Though we learn diverse things from different sages' lips, wisdom consists in discerning the truth in each of them."<sup>2</sup>

In the light of these sentiments expressed by Valluvar himself and in the light of our theory of proto-Hinduism, it is not surprising at all to find in the Kural ideas which may be identified either as typically Brahmanical, or as characteristically Jaina, just as they may also be referred to as basically Buddhistic. More important in our present context is the need to avoid expressions like 'borrowal' and 'reproduction' when we find similarity of ideas among the ancient classics or between the philosophies or religious views of great

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1 36.5

2 43.3

sages and thinkers of the past precisely because it never occurred to them that accepting worthwhile ideas from wherever they originated was 'wrong' or 'undesirable'.<sup>1</sup> This is not to suggest that there are no differences at all between the ideas of the Kural on the one hand and those of the three religious traditions of India, on the other.<sup>2</sup>

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1 It is indeed heartening to note that a recent writer who is not well-known for his sympathy for the Sanskritic tradition, has emphasized the necessity for a more sober and objective approach to the question of parallelism of ideas between the Sanskrit and Tamil traditions. Bharati, op. cit., p. 22 brings out the futility of taking extreme stances when he observes: "A morbid passion to deduce or derive everything good in Tamil literature from a Sanskrit original will be as unreasonable or unacceptable to sober thought, as the equally culpable modern craze in evidence in some quarters to deny to Sanskrit literature all originality, and try to convict all Aryan writers of plagiarism and perverse vandalism, and proclaim all Sanskrit books to be second-hand translations of non-existing or imaginary Tamil originals said to have been deliberately destroyed by the plagiarists to prevent discovery of their sins and to pretend originality." As a typical instance of the former craze we do not have to go anywhere but to point to the celebrated commentary of Tirukkural by Parimēlālakar and its modern apologists like P.S. Subramania Sastry. As instances of modern craze which Bharati condemns, the literature, particularly in Tamil, originating in the 20th Century in protest of Parimēlālakar is in legion, but special mention must be made of the works of Maraimalai Adikal and K. Subramania Pillay. The latter, not with much textual support, tried to turn the table and impute borrowal to all Sanskritic writings.

2 It is also interesting to note that a devout and pious Christian as he was, Pope unfailingly spotted the sayings of Lord Christ in the Kural. The ten couplets constituting the fourth chapter entitled 'Commendation of Virtue' fascinated him most and he wrote: "I translate the ten couplets of which it is to be noted that they are perhaps on the whole the most polished in the book; absolutely perfect, flawless gems in Tamil. The teachings of this chapter are obviously to some extent that of the 18th chapter of the Gītā: action is not to be forsaken: great as are ascetics, it is in the performance of virtuous deeds that men are to partake of the highest enjoyments and merit the greatest rewards ... And since the writer (1) was an avowed eclectic (2) was unfettered by caste, (3) was an inhabitant of San Thome and so in the midst of Christians,

What might have been the reason for the different traditions according such great significance to the Tamil work, it is difficult for us to precisely point out. But, if we can hazard an inference: the quietness of the highest and the deepest any religion might want to stress is probably presented in the Kural in such a lucid and clear way that no religion can help looking to it as a book of inspiration and a source of light. The deepest desire in the human heart is perhaps to get over the imperfections and limitations of the existent state and project for the future the highest ideal in which the contradictions of human life are once for all got over.<sup>1</sup> Hence we can

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2 (of the previous page) (contd.) it seems to me a natural supposition that he had heard the Sermon on the Mount. To such a man the lives and words of our blessed Lord and of his holy Apostles, especially St. Paul, would have a peculiar charm." (Cited in Kamaliah, op. cit., pp. 3-4.) Kamaliah also refers (ibid., p. 6.) to Pope's seeing in the Kural Mohammedan influences as well and remarks: "It is patent that the Kural is acceptable to all strata of people in the community of mankind, irrespective of their religious persuasions, social status and even political affiliations. But verily can it be said that the Kural is forthright in appeal, never compromises on fundamentals, with its affirmation of truth and negation of evil."

1 Mol's view (op. cit., p. 15) of objectification as one of the mechanisms of sacralization is here helpful in understanding this aspect of religion. He defines objectification as the projection of order in a beyond where it is less vulnerable to the contradictions, exceptions and contingencies ... The projection is a process by which the manifold elements of empirical existence are made to appear more orderly and systematized in the transcendental realm. Looked at from the empirical level, the transcendental provides a reference-point which helps transformation of personality. The structural aspect of the category of the transcendent provides it with a functional significance, viz., providing a conception of reality, a system of values and a meaning structure, which by its very difference can create a sense of awe and reverence, consequently also inspiring the possibility of overcoming the corruption and the contradictions which characterize

visualize two levels in man's attempting to realize the good in his life - the level of actuality (the realm of imperfection) and the level of the ideal (the region of perfection). The significance of the Kural consists precisely in steering clear of the two extremes here - dwelling only on the 'actual' and flying into the 'ideal' - by presenting religion not as a flight into the ideal but as an attempt at transforming the actual in the light of the ideal.

The transformation-potential that religion as an instrument of integration offers, has significance both for personal and social aspects of human life. It results in postulating an ideal code of conduct for individuals and an ideal-pattern for institutions, delineating the ideal code to meet the realities of all major situations in life. If this can be referred to as attempting to effect transformation of human life, religion signifies precisely that, the Kural seems to maintain.<sup>1</sup> How exactly the Kural offers an analysis of this type is to be considered in the next three chapters of the thesis but before entering into such a detailed analysis of it

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1 (of the previous page) (contd.) empirical existence.

Mol's anticipating and resolving a difficulty (ibid., pp. 209-210.) is equally significant in our context. The difficulty is that logically a 'dialectic' between the sacred and the profane entails the closed system which the conception of 'other' may provide. Mol says that paradoxically, the otherness (read along with the dialectical relationship between them), far from contributing to the 'closed systems' would indicate that there is scope for openness that the vagueness provides.

1 See also chapter 6.

we shall consider aspects of the Classic which are deemed to represent the Brahmanical Hindu, the Jaina and the Buddhist views, for they offer us an insight into certain aspects of the Classic itself.

One of the most popular notions about the Kural is that its author is a spokesman of Brahmanic Hinduism.<sup>1</sup> To some extent this opinion is based on the Section (pāl) and Chapter (athikāram) divisions of the work<sup>2</sup> and to a major extent, on the elaborate commentary on the work by Parimēlaḷakar.<sup>3</sup> Scholars are agreed that Parimēlaḷakar's is the most comprehensive commentary to this day. Even the critics of Parimēlaḷakar concede the profound influence this commentary has had on studies relating to the Kural, though they add strong dissenting notes to the thesis of Parimēlaḷakar.

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1 For the sense in which the term is used in this thesis see p. 38, f.n. 1.

2 Chapters 1-38 constitute Section I entitled Arattuppāl which is considered to correspond to the Section on Dharma in the Sanskrit works like Manu Dharma-Sāstra; chapters 39-108 form Section II with the heading Poruṭpāl and this group of chapters is interpreted as the counter-part, in the Tamil classic, of Kauṭilya's Artha-Sāstra; chapters 109-133 grouped under Section III, Kāmattuppāl, are considered to be modelled completely on the Sanskrit work, Kāma-Sūtra, by Vātsyāyana. Suffice it to state at this point that we do not accept this type of interpretation in toto.

3 This estimation of Parimēlaḷakar is the basis of the critique by Iraiyanar, Valluvar Kolkaiyum Vadavar Kolkaiyum, Trichy: Tamilakam, 1949; Namakkal Kavijnar, Valluvarin Ullam, Madras: Inpa Nilayam, 1963; Sethu Pillai, op. cit.; T.P. Meenakshisundaram, "Philosophy of Tiruvalluvar" in TSEL; and M. Somasundaram Pillay, Tiruvalluvar And Brahmanism, Madras: Avvai Illam, 1969.

The critics maintain that Parimēlaḷakar reads into Tirukkural all the Brahmanic ideas. The task of those who want to contend this idea is indeed stupendous and hazardous, for even though there were nine other classical commentaries, they have all paled into insignificance after Parimēlaḷakar wrote his commentary. The striking thing about the popularity of Parimēlaḷakar's commentary is that it is seldom remembered that it was written nearly fourteen centuries after the original was written and that therefore there is room for misunderstanding of the original import of the author of the Kural even in the classically accepted commentary.

It becomes therefore necessary to take a closer look at the whole question of the Kural being considered a purely Brahmanical work. We do not, however, propose to review all concepts of Brahmanic Hinduism for the reason that our prime concern here is examining the question whether the philosophy of good life as we find it in the Kural was derived solely from Brahmanic Hinduism. In more precise terms: for our purposes here we need to consider whether the concepts of aram, porul and inṇam of the Kural are based on the concepts of dharma, artha and kāma (which are also referred to as the 'group of three' or trivarga) of Brahmanic Hinduism, since the philosophy of good life of the Kural is explicable mainly in terms of 'muppāl',<sup>1</sup>

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1 Just as the term trivarga is used to refer to the values of dharma, artha and kāma in Brahmanic Hinduism, the term muppāl may also be used to refer to the values of aram, porul and inṇam of the Kural. This is the sense of the expression 'muppāl based on trivarga' which is sometimes used.

a term which is also used in Tamil classical writings to refer to Tirukkural.

The fact that the term Muppāl is used synonymously as standing for the name of the Classic, Tirukkural is quite significant and suggests, even to start with an important difference between the Kural on the one hand and the Brahmanical Hindu works dealing with the puruṣārthas, on the other. The difference referred to here is that an analysis of all the human values (aram, poruḷ, inṇam and vīṭu<sup>1</sup> in the terminology of the Kural) and their significance are found in the former whereas the focus of concern in the latter group of works is limited to one or the other of the four puruṣārthas.<sup>2</sup> What is significant here is that the works dealing with the puruṣārthas have chosen for special emphasis, specific puruṣārthas, as their names would reveal. The Dharma-Sāstras attach considerable significance

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1 It has already been noted that vīṭu is not analysed explicitly in a separate section in the Kural. (vide p. 5.)

2 This will be seen from the fact that the writing of treatises on each of the puruṣārthas has been a characteristic of Brahmanical Hinduism. Among the treatises on the concept of Dharma, Manu Dharma-Sāstra, Yājñavalkyasmṛti, Vasiṣṭha Dharma-Sūtra, Baudhāyana Dharma-Sūtra, Apastamba Dharma-Sūtra, Gautama Dharma-Sūtra and Parāśara-smṛti are particularly important. Though only Kauṭilya's Artha-Sāstra is well-known as a source-book for Artha, it should be noted here that in the very opening section of his treatise Kauṭilya observes (I. 1) that his work is made as a compendium of almost all the Artha-Sāstras. Similarly it is not often remembered that Vātsyāyana's Kāma-Sūtra is at best an abstract of a whole series of works on the concept of Kāma. In the introductory invocation in the Kāma-Sūtra (I. 1) we read: "The Kāma-Sūtras written by Nandi in one thousand chapters were compressed by Svetaketu in five hundred chapters. These five hundred chapters were further reduced to one hundred and fifty chapters by

to dharma and similarly the Artha-Sāstra accords importance to artha, just as the Kāma-Sūtra and the mokṣa-sāstras concern themselves primarily with kāma and mokṣa respectively. In this connection the fact that the philosophers who have considered mokṣa as the subject-matter of their treatises are great in number needs hardly any mention. It may be noted, however, that this great concern with mokṣa resulted in the emergence of divergent schools of thought on the subject, often sharply differing both in their conceptions of the nature of mokṣa and in their analyses of the means to be adopted for realizing mokṣa. This situation of the Kural dealing in detail with all the values and the Brahmanic Hindu treatises not doing so may appear on the surface to be but a minor structural difference between them, but it will be shown later on that it is not so. Suffice it to state here that the Kural's concern with the values of āram, poruḷ and inṇam does not connote merely that it 'treats them all' in one work, but has a deeper significance, viz., that all the values are considered as extensions of one basic value, āram.<sup>1</sup>

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2 (of the previous page) (contd.) Babhravya. These one hundred and fifty chapters were classified under seven heads and seven authors wrote on the seven topics but these works became unobtainable in the course of centuries. Therefore Vātsyāyana composed this work in a small volume as an abstract of the whole of the works of the above-named authors and authorities." The various source-books on the six systems of Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, Sāṅkhya, Yoga, Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā and Uttara-Mīmāṃsā may be referred to as important in connection with the concept of mokṣa.

1 vide infra, pp. 82-86.



This takes us on to the other distinguishing feature of the Kural, viz., its including vītu, the fourth value (corresponding to mokṣa of the puruṣārtha-scheme) within the first three values of āram, poru and inṇam. The reason for such a treatment of vītu is perhaps that Tiruvaḷḷuvar wants to indicate his concern with life as it ought to be lived in this world.<sup>1</sup> He probably suspected that the concept may be totally mistaken as an exhortation to the people to lead a life characterized by a negative attitude towards the world. His view is that leading a good life (defined as following the principle of āram in every aspect of one's earthly existence) in this world results in spiritual perfection referred to as vītu. Parimēlaḷakar suggests that since vītu is beyond words and mind Tiruvaḷḷuvar did not allot a separate section for discussing the concept.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, a careful consideration of chapters 35, 36 and 37 of the Kural entitled respectively as "Renunciation", "Knowledge of the True" and "Extirpation of Desire" will also reveal that there is a definite acceptance of the idea of spiritual perfection in the Kural.<sup>3</sup>

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1 This is referred to by the Kural as vaiyattu vālvānku vāltal. (5. 10)

2 See his Introduction to chapter 1 of the Kural.

3 V.A. Devasenapathi in his "Ethics of the Tirukkural", in TSEL, p. 323, commenting on the importance accorded to the concept of vītu in the Kural writes: "If Heaven or release is not necessarily a post mortem state but can very well be here and hereafter, if Heaven is the quality of our life, if the Kingdom of God is within us and, if release is a matter of release from egoism and self-centredness, from the sense of 'I' and 'Mine', I submit that this Heaven or State of Release is the underlying theme of the whole work."

It may then be maintained that Tiruvalluvar dealt with all the four values in the three concepts of aram, poruḷ and inṇam. This is indeed an original contribution of the Kural, a difficult task for accomplishing which it has received encomiums.<sup>1</sup> But we have to be careful not to make an over-statement here on behalf of the Kural. While it can claim originality for the conception and the elaborate analysis of the three values of aram, poruḷ and inṇam and also for a remarkably novel way in which the three ends are interpreted so as to convey the meaning of the fourth end of viṭu as well, a similar originality in regard to the conceptualization of the three-fold (or four-fold) scheme itself cannot be claimed for it. As Meenakshisundaram, referring to the puruṣārtha-scheme as the Pan-Indian framework aptly observes: "It is itself a product of the common efforts of the intellectual world of India spreading from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin and therefore there is ... a common heritage and a common harvest."<sup>2</sup> The very modification made by Tiruvalluvar in the

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1 "This is the book of sweet kural venṇās, composed by Valluvar, so as to explain the rules of the four great truths ending with mokṣa, within the three-fold (classification of his)." (Tiruvalluṇṇamālai, 40) See also Tiruvalluṇṇamālai, 4 and 44.

Tiruvalluvar is praised as one "who expounded within his trivarga the four puruṣārthas." (ibid., 19) and as "the great Lord of Speech who has classified the four great truths which are difficult of achievement, and expounded them as three." (ibid., 22)

2 op. cit., p. 234.

value-scheme would show that he did not accept the puruṣārtha-scheme (the four-fold value scheme) in its entirety.

Though a reference to the celebrated Āśrama<sup>1</sup> and Varna<sup>2</sup> theories (the stages-in-life theory and the theory of the social classes) of Brahmanical Hinduism is perhaps not necessary here

1 According to this theory the life of an individual is divided into four graduated stages known as the Āśramas. The first is known as brahmacaryāśrama (the stage of the student), the second is referred to as gṛhastāśrama (the stage of the house-holder, which entered into after the brahmacarya stage by the individual by getting married and setting up a home), the third is vānaprastha (the forest-going stage, the stage in which the individual, after leading a married life, gradually 'withdraws from the world' and starts developing a sense of non-attachment) and the fourth āśrama is saṁnyāsa (the stage of renunciation in which the individual seeks spiritual perfection or mokṣa). The first may be described as the stage of preparation for life, the second may be considered as the stage of civic life, the third may be called the stage of the recluse and the fourth stage may be designated as the ascetic stage. The idea behind the theory, it is generally accepted, is that the ultimate ideal of self-realization (mokṣa) can be attained only progressively by passing through the various stages which help the individual in his quest after spiritual perfection. For our purposes here the only point which needs to be noted is that the Āśramas are four clearly demarcated stages through which the individual should pass before he can attain mokṣa. It may also be mentioned that the theory allows exceptions - permitting, under extraordinary circumstances, 'instant renunciation'. For a detailed treatment of the subject see Prabhu, op. cit., pp. 284-335.

2 This refers to the four-fold division of society into the brāhmaṇa-varṇa (the 'intellectual' class), the kṣatriya-varṇa (the martial class), the vaiśya-varṇa (the trading class) and the sūdra-varṇa (the 'commoner class'). Without entering into a detailed discussion of the scheme here, we note that in the Dharma-Sāstras a clear demarcation of the duties of the various varṇas is found. It is extremely difficult to say whether functional division of society was all that was meant (with no superiority-claim attached to any class) or whether the social classes connoted a hierarchical division (with the idea of privileges built into it). Opinion is

to maintain that the Kural does not accept totally all the major ideas of Brahmanical Hinduism (for a detailed consideration of aram, porul and inppam in the three chapters of our thesis will show more than ample evidence in this regard), in view of the importance of the two schemes, a passing reference may be made to them as well.

Taking up the Āśrama-scheme (the stages-of-life scheme) first: we find that Tiruvaḷḷuvar, in his own ingenuous way, reconceives it. The system of entering one āśrama after another till the final stage is reached towards the fourth quarter of one's life does not seem to be acceptable to Vaḷḷuvar. This is evident from the 'modifications' effected by him. The first āśrama as the initiation stage into civic life proper is not mentioned anywhere in the Kural and, naturally we do not find an enumeration of the obligations one has to fulfill in it. The Classic does not espouse the ideal of brahmacharya understood either in the sense of student life or in the extended sense of sexual continence.<sup>1</sup> The illaram-state (the state of the house-holder) of the Kural resembles the second stage

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2 (of the previous page) (contd.) sharply divided on this. For the two opposing interpretations, see Prabhu, op. cit., pp. 284-335 and K.M. Panikkar, Hindu Society at Cross Roads, London: Asia Publishing House, 1961, pp. 29-50.

1 The thirteenth chapter of the Kural is on self-control understood in terms of control over one's thoughts, words and deeds. the sixth couplet of the chapter which refers to the 'fruit' of self-control may be stretched to refer to sexual continence.

in the Āśrama-scheme of Brahmanical Hinduism, but is not its exact equivalent or counter-part. The way in which the house-holder's stage is conceived of in the Kural<sup>1</sup> seems to us to connote that Tiruvalluvar considers it more as an 'autonomous' 'stage' than as a stage of preparation for entering the ascetic mode of life. In effect then, asceticism, according to the Kural, does not connote the idea of the individual isolating himself from society for the sake of attaining self-realization. It seems to us that apart perhaps from noting the fact there was the stage of the recluse,<sup>2</sup> Valluvar does not discuss it as an independent stage in life, i.e., as a stage which the individual needs to enter into after leading a house-holder's life.

Coming now to a consideration of the Varna-concept: In the Kural we do not find a delineation of the duties of the different sections of society, unlike in the Dharma-Śāstras wherein clear demarcation of the duties of the various social groups is found. This absence of a spelling out of the duties of the social classes offers us the indication that the Kural's approach to the whole

1 Vide chapters 5-24.

2 It is an open question whether the first couplet in the fifth chapter of the Kural which refers to the house-holder's 'sustaining' 'the three orders' is at all a pointer to the 'three other āśramas', for, the very next couplet (5.2) refers to another set of three, viz., the forsaken, the poor and the dead.

question is different. The Kural simply takes note of a hierarchical division of society as the given but does not anywhere plead for its maintenance or for its subversion.<sup>1</sup> Whatever might be the type of interpretation that is given to certain Kural-couplets which denounce caste,<sup>2</sup> there can be no two opinions that the type of controversy we referred to earlier<sup>3</sup>, in connection with the Dharma-Sāstra views on Varṇa<sup>4</sup> is significantly absent in regard to the discussion of the Tamil classic's views. The type of denouncement of caste found in the Kural may be accepted in the same spirit in which it is meant, viz., that mere birth-criteria without the high ethical qualities cannot and ought not to be played up in a just social order.

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1 Certain couplets, for instance, 98.2 which reads: "All men that live are one in circumstances of birth and diversities of works give each his special worth" and 14.4 which reads: "A brahmin, even if he forgets the Vedas can recover it by reading, but if he fails in propriety or good conduct, even his high birth is destroyed" may be interpreted as iconoclastic and intentionally revolutionary.

2 The two couplets cited above may be considered typical instances of denouncement of caste.

3 vide supra, p. 50, f.n. 2.

4 The controversy stems from two considerations; (i) in terms of the purport of statements found in the Dharma-Sāstras and (ii) in terms of the animosity feeling being entertained by people belonging to the various castes and the consequent climate of disharmony witnessed in some parts of India. In regard to (i) it may be stated that while there are certainly some statements in the Dharma-Sāstras which refer to varṇa purely in terms of qualities (rather than in terms of mere birth), as for instance Manu, X. 65 there are also certain statements which go counter to them, as for example, Manu, VIII. 268, 271 and 276. In regard to (ii) Injustice done to certain sections of society in the name of varṇa-dharma are pointed out. Some of the modern apologetic writings on

Coming now to consider the Kural in relation to Jainism and Buddhism, we suggest that the entire question be approached, keeping in view the difficulties involved in referring to Jainism and Buddhism, especially in their early stages of development, as two distinctly different traditions of India alongside Brahmanical Hinduism.<sup>1</sup>

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4 (of the previous page) (contd.) caste tend to overlook this feature of invidiousness and the stratification in terms of higher and lower castes.

One of the ways in which the whole question may be reconsidered may be to draw a distinction between varna as an ideal of a social organization and caste as the actuality which has failed to even approximate the grand and noble ideals enshrined in the Hindu tradition. (See the present author's The Hindu Philosophy of Social Reconstruction, Madras: Centre for Advanced Study in Philosophy, 1970, pp. 24-61, for a detailed discussion on the concept of varna.) This would account for the injustices some sections of society have been subjected to, though the difficulties in reconciling conflicting passages in one and the same Dharma-Sāstra would still remain.

1 Smith, op. cit., pp. 250-251 is quite appreciative of this aspect and in clear and unambiguous language throws valuable light on the whole issue of the three traditions. He writes: "That the Buddhist and Jain communities constituted separate religions outside, rather than particular movements within, the total complex of 'Hinduism' is, I would hold, impossible to maintain with either historical or logical consistency. One would hardly even attempt it except from purely arbitrary or anyway purely modern premises. By formulating this sentence on the basis of 'communities' I have taken sides on an important issue, but the same position would stand if one set it forth in terms of Buddhist and Jain doctrines. Let us suppose someone reasonably well informed about such movements as these and those of the Ajivikas and of the Buddhist saṅgha, the subsequent development of Buddhist separatism, the later intermingling of Buddhist and Shaiva motifs ..., the final dissolving of 'Buddhism' without 'Hinduism' in India, and emergence of 'Buddhism' without 'Hinduism' outside India. I doubt that any such person could seriously maintain or would even wish seriously to maintain that the history of the fifteen hundred years preceding the Muslim invasion of India can best be conceptualized in terms of three separate religious entities labelled Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism ..."

No doubt, when we today refer to the three traditions, it is difficult to keep this in view since Jainism and Buddhism are now established as two autonomous religious traditions. It seems to us that observing this caution will yield us rich dividends in the matter of understanding the contents and the thrust of the thoughts contained in the Kural, for it will effectively prevent the situation of arriving at conclusions (as regards the religious persuasion of the author of the Classic) which may not be warranted on the basis of internal evidence. Markedly dominant strands of thought which may seem to pin down the Kural to one or the other of the religious traditions may then be reconsidered both in the light of the intimate relationship between the three traditions in their early beginnings and in the light of the contexts in the Kural in which they occur<sup>1</sup> - the latter being understood as connoting not merely the section or sections in which the presence of the ideas in question are 'detected' but as signifying their meaning in the total context of the philosophy of the

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1 It is a truism to state this, it may be pointed out here, for it is widely understood that the Kural contains strands of thought which may be identified either as symptomatic of Brahmanical Hinduism or of Jainism or of Buddhism, but it seems to us that a specific mention of this fact is called for at this stage in view of the 'claims' on the Kural made by scholars belonging to or in sympathy with, the different religio-philosophical traditions of India. Furthermore, the 'claimants' also give us the impression that they mean to deny the presence of other strands of thought as well in the Kural. (Of course, such an extreme claim is not made from the side of Buddhism.) It is hence important to underline the fact that the Kural cannot be reduced to be a book of one particular tradition in the narrow sense of the term.



Classic as a whole. The presence of the same or similar ideas in the 'othār' traditions will then not merely be not overlooked but acknowledged positively and this again will pave the way for an unbiased analysis and interpretation of the Kural. And, more importantly, the 'caution' will help us to appreciate that the originality of the Kural itself did not consist in its completely breaking away from all the religio-philosophical traditions prevalent in India at that time but in its standing aside from them not with a view to rejecting them wholesale but with a view to accepting aspects of them which did not smack of a sectarian approach.<sup>1</sup>

Since there have been 'stronger claims' from the side of Jainism than from the side of Buddhism, we shall consider the issue more elaborately in regard to Jainism than with reference to Buddhism. The difference between the assertion that the Kural is a Jaina work and the view-point that there are reflections of the early Buddhistic ideas in the Classic, is indeed great and warrants a more lengthy discussion of what we would prefer to call 'the Jaina ideas in the Kural'. There are a number of arguments put forward by a particular

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1 Emphasizing this aspect of the Kural, Winternitz observes: "Tiruvalluvar's Kural ... is one of the gems of world literature. Buddhists, Jains, Vaiṣṇavas and Śaivas have claimed ... the poet of the Tamil land as their own. But he belongs to none of them or rather to all of them. For he stands above all races, castes and sects, and what he teaches, is a general human morality and wisdom. No wonder that the Kural has not only been much read, studied and highly prized in the land of its origin for centuries, but has also found many admirers in the West, ever since it has become known." (Cited in Robinson, op. cit., p. lvi.)

scholar in support of his view that the Kural is an out and out Jaina work. We shall consider it both from the point of view of the internal evidence available in the text of the Classic and also in terms of the presence of similar ideas 'outside' the Jaina tradition. The arguments themselves are so strong that we also deem it necessary to refer in brief to the general philosophical position of Jainism itself to show that the 'claim' gets weakened, as a result. We shall not consider all the arguments put forward in this connection but shall be selective since our aim, in this section, is to prepare the canvas to project the philosophy of good life as found in the Kural rather than to take sides on the issue whether or not Kural was a Jaina work. Our task with regard to early Buddhism is comparatively simple since we have only to cite the presence of similar ideas in it and to indicate the significance attached to them in the Kural.

A. Chakravarthi, a renowned Jaina scholar of the early part of the present Century argued at length that Tirukkural was a Jaina work.<sup>1</sup> Two of the many points he makes deserve close scrutiny here. Firstly he relies very much on the historicity of the first Tīrthaṅkara<sup>2</sup>, Rṣabha, a position which is hard to sustain. Secondly he

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1 See Tirukkural by Thevar, Madras: Sadhu Press, 1949, pp. 5-32; see also his Presidential Address to Tiruvalluvar Kural Conference, Madras: Mercantile Press, 1949, pp. 1-15.

2 This is a Jaina term which is used to refer to those who have 'crossed the ocean of existence'. (lit., one who has crossed the waters.) According to the Jaina tradition in every

refers understandably to Jainism as the religion of Ahimsā<sup>1</sup> (non-violence) and argues forcefully that only a person belonging to that faith could have authored a classic like Tirukkural. Our basic difficulty with regard to this argument is that emphasis on non-violence was not peculiar to Jainism and as such Tirukkural cannot be referred to as a Jaina work on this count. In addition we also notice certain differences between the doctrine of non-violence as propounded in Jainism and as it is found in the Kural.

Chakravarthi maintains that Jainism (he prefers to use the term Ahimsā Dharma) was revealed to the world by Lord Ṛṣabha, the first of the twenty-four Tīrthaṅkaras, who was the son of Nābi Mahārāja. Relying on the Jaina myth that there was long long ago a time when everything man wished for could be obtained because of the presence of Kalpaka trees (which are believed to have given to people whatever they wished for) and that during Ṛṣabha's days people were put to a lot of difficulty because of the disappearance of the Kalpaka trees and because people did not know how to produce food, Chakravarthi maintains that people approached Ṛṣabha who taught them agriculture as well as the method of distribution of

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2 (of the previous page) (contd.) yuga (long period of time in human history) there are twenty-four Tīrthaṅkaras. Ṛṣabha is considered to be the first Tīrthaṅkara of the present age referred to as Kali-yuga, and Mahāvīra is believed to be the twenty-fourth.

1 He gave the title of Religion of Ahimsa to his book on Jainism, published in Bombay: Ratanchand Hirachand, 1957.

the produce by traders. Furthermore, Ṛṣabha is believed by the learned author to have taught society the method of setting apart able-bodied people for defense and also the principle of non-violence after he himself realized omniscience (kevala-jñāna).<sup>1</sup> Reliance on the historicity of Ṛṣabha is also shown by the author while accounting for an actual event that is believed to have taken place in the history of Jainism, the migration of eight thousand Jaina monks, under the leadership of Bhadrabāhu during the 12-year famine experienced by Magadha during the reign of Chandragupta Maurya (around 310 B.C.). The author accounts for the migration of the monks by stating that unless Jainism was already popular in South India, "entering into an alien country would have been a fool-hardy adventure."<sup>2</sup> The sum and substance of the whole argument here is that Jainism was the prevailing religion in Tamil Nadu at the time Tirukkural was written and the Classic naturally reflected the prevailing religion.<sup>3</sup>

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1 Tirukkural by Thevar, p. 5.

2 ibid., p. 6.

3 Chakravarthi (ibid., p. 11) also maintains that the Kural was written by a Jaina saint Kundakundācārya (known also as Ēlachārya) around the 1st Century A.D. The term thēvar in Tamil, referring to a Jaina saint also referred to Kundakundācārya. The misunderstanding that Tiruvalluvar was the author is due to the fact that he was delegated by Kundakundācārya to introduce the work to the scholars assembled in the Caṅkam at Madura, maintains Chakravarthi. (ibid., p. 13)

Since Chakravarthi relies on the historicity of Ṛṣabha for upholding his thesis,<sup>1</sup> it seems to us that we should point to the fact that the historicity of the last two Tīrthaṅkaras, Pārśva and Mahāvīra alone has been established. The Kalpa-Sūtra,<sup>2</sup> an important Jaina work mentions the fact that Pārśva came to a hill in Patna before his 'release from bondage'. The hill is named 'Pāraśnath Hill' and it seems to be a monumental evidence in regard to the historicity of Pārśva. From a number of references to Pārśva and the Jainas in the Uttarādhyana-Sūtra, another important Jaina classic it seems certain that Jainism was certainly older than Mahāvīra. The Jaina classic records the meeting of Keśī (a follower of Pārśva) and Gautama (a disciple of Mahāvīra) and also the discussions they had regarding the differences between their two creeds.<sup>3</sup> The dispute is mentioned as having ended by the former accepting the latter's views.<sup>4</sup>

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1 We are well aware of the fact that in the Jaina canons mention is made by name, of all the twenty-four Tīrthaṅkaras in the order in which they appeared and about their life-span. Ṛṣabha, the first Tīrthaṅkara, is believed to have lived for 8,400,000 years (one traditional Jaina year is considered to be equivalent to 70,560,000,000,000 years), the twenty-second Tīrthaṅkara, Nemi, for 1000 years, the twenty-third Tīrthaṅkara, Pārśva, for 100 years and the twenty-fourth Tīrthaṅkara, Mahāvīra, for 72 years. (See Kalpa-Sūtra, 147, 168, 182 and 227.) Hermann Jacobi's reference to the first twenty-two Tīrthaṅkaras as belonging to mythology rather than to history is quite significant here. (See, "Jainism" in Akshaya Kumar Jain, ed., Lord Mahavira in the Eyes of Foreigners, New Delhi: Meena Bharati, 1975, p. 18.)

2 168.

3 XXIII. 9.

4 ibid. On this a great Indian scholar writes: "The story in

The renowned authority on the subject, Jacobi has also maintained categorically after his extensive researches, that the historicity of only Pārśva and Mahāvīra can be established.<sup>1</sup> In view of all these facts Chakravarthi's first argument gets weakened.

With regard to Chakravarthi's view of Jainism as a religion of non-violence (ahimsā), it should be conceded that no one can dispute it. The ethics of Jainism attaches supreme importance to non-violence and makes it the focus of a whole doctrine. The great significance attached to non-violence in Jainism can be seen from the fact that there is an insistence on mental purity (what may be referred to as 'renunciation of the will to kill or damage other beings') in addition to the exhortation to giving up the actual act of committing violence. In the Tattvārtha-Sūtra we read that himsā is injury or violence caused by the living organism due to carelessness and negligence, and actuated by passions like pride, prejudice, attachment and hatred.<sup>2</sup> It is clear, the physical act was not considered in isolation from the mental attitude.

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4 (of the previous page) (contd.) the Uttarādhyayana that a disciple of Pārśva met a disciple of Mahāvīra and brought about the union of the old Jainism and that propounded by Mahāvīra seems to suggest that this Pārśva was probably a historical person." (See Surendranath Dasgupta, A History of Indian Philosophy, Cambridge: University Press, 1963, I. 169.)

1 op. cit., pp. 16-17.

2 VII. 8 : "Negligence brings sin; and the soul is defiled even though there may not be any actual injury to life. On the contrary, a careful and a pious person who is not disturbed by passions

The strict adherence to the principle of non-violence advocated by Jainism is perhaps most evident from its doctrine of jīva (the principle of consciousness)<sup>1</sup> which emphasizes that there is continuity of consciousness from the lowest of animate beings<sup>2</sup> to the highest stage of perfection in which purity of consciousness is regained, - the stage which is clearly far above the ordinary human level. The logic of such a theory of consciousness is that at no stage is any jīva to be despised, looked down upon or injured. The Jaina theory of non-violence is thus reflective of its 'reverence for life', in the terminology of Albert Schweitzer.

Turning now to the importance accorded to the principle of non-violence (the word used in the Kuraḷ is kollāmai) in the Tamil

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2 (of the previous page) (contd.) and who is kind towards animals will not suffer the sin of violence, even if, by accident, injury is caused to life."

1 It is important for a proper understanding of the theory of non-violence of the Jainas, to note that the term jīva in Jainism does not refer to the human soul alone but to the principle of consciousness in general. Consciousness is discernible in four states of existence, the different 'levels' representing the states of existence of the animals (tiryāñc), the humans (manuṣya), the infernal beings (nāraki) and the celestial beings (devata). These stages represent the progressive steps through which the jīva passes before attaining perfection.

2 It is significant that the Tattvārtha-Sūtra (IV. 28) refers to animals as "those beings which remain in the celestial, the infernal and the 'human world'." This definition of animal read along with the concept of continuity of consciousness explains the rigorous doctrine of ahimsā which excludes injury even to plants and seeds that we find in Jainism.

classic: no one would contend the idea that there is an insistence on the principle here which bears a remarkable resemblance to the Jaina view-point. It must be conceded here that the Kural does not compromise at all on the principle of non-violence as is evident from its rigorous views on meat-eating. The uncompromising attitude of the Kural very much reminds us of the Jaina attitude which was critical of the compromise introduced by Buddhist teachers who came after Gautama the Buddha by ordaining that the Buddhists must not kill any animal but that they need not necessarily reject meat as food, i.e., they could purchase meat from the butcher. The Kural, almost in the words of the Jainas points out: "If the world does not buy meat in order to eat, there will not be available those who would sell it."<sup>1</sup> Meat-eating is considered sinful, whatever may be the circumstances and, the Kural's emphasis on non-violence is unqualified.<sup>2</sup> In another important respect too, there is a similarity between the Jaina attitude and the attitude of the Kural, viz., that great importance is attached to the mental attitude by the Kural as well.<sup>3</sup> Whether these striking resemblances in the views on non-violence, by themselves can be taken as conclusive evidence for maintaining the view that the Kural was a Jaina work is an open question. For, we find no less an emphasis on

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1 26. 6

2 33. 1: "Never to destroy life is the sum and substance of virtue. The destruction of life leads to evil."

3 4. 4



non-violence in the Brahmanical Hindu tradition as well.<sup>1</sup>

One possible objection here may be that in so far as there is an important difference between Brahmanical Hinduism and the couplets of the Kural, viz., that killing animals for sacrifice was permitted by the former, reference to the concept of non-violence in the Brahmanical Hindu tradition is not of much value as far as the study of the Kural is concerned. The objection would signify that differences in regard to some details even, while listing the various acts or deeds which may be deemed to be non-violent, would straight away disqualify the 'claim' of a tradition on the Kural. It is in the light of possible objections like these that a qualitative difference between the Jaina teaching of non-violence and the Kural's view becomes extremely important.

A deeper analysis of the Jaina philosophy of non-violence would reveal two strands of thought which are not easily distinguishable at first sight. On the one hand the doctrine of continuity of consciousness (referred to above)<sup>2</sup> connotes that no jīva (conscious being) has any right to impede the progress of any other jīva. This would certainly imply the necessity to develop an other-regarding

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1 Manu, X. 63; Yājñavalkya, I. 122; Vasiṣṭha, IV. 4; and Āpastamba, I.8.23.6; cf. Mahābhārata, 12. 256. 6.

2 vide supra, p. 62.

ethic. On the other, the principle of non-violence is considered to be essential for attaining one's own spiritual perfection - what is referred to as the attainment of purity of consciousness in the Jaina tradition.<sup>1</sup> Probably Albert Schweitzer has this in mind when he writes that the origin of the ideal of non-violence in Jainism does not lie in the material feeling of compassion and sympathy, but in the idea of keeping the purity of the undefiled.<sup>2</sup> His opinion is that Jainism belongs to the ethic of becoming more perfect, and not to the ethic of action.<sup>3</sup>

The Kural's attitude towards non-violence shows a qualitative difference in that killing is shunned because it is not kindness.<sup>4</sup>

1 For a more detailed discussion of the concept of purity of consciousness, see the present author's Outlines of Jainism, New Delhi: Wiley Eastern Private Ltd., 1973, pp. 98, 171-172 and 188.

2 Indian Thought and Its Development, trans., Mrs. Charles E.B. Russell, London: Hodder and Stoughton Ltd., 1936, p. 80.

3 ibid. It is interesting also to note here that Ācārya Tulasi, one of the living Jaina saints of India who has inaugurated a movement for regeneration of mankind (known as the Anuvrata Movement) emphasizes that even in this movement, considerations of spiritual evolution characterizing classical Jainism are not replaced by social concern, but that the beneficial results for society are clearly envisaged. Explaining his point of view he writes: "A devotee at the time of initiation takes a holy vow that for the good of self he accepts five mahāvratas ('great vows') as his discipline throughout life. The end of a vrata is freedom from bondage. Its incidental result is also the control of society, but this is not the main consequence of it." See Can Intellect Comprehend Religion? Churu: Adarsh Sahitya Sangh, 1969, p. 18.

4 For a more detailed discussion of this idea, see K. Appadurai, The Mind and Thought of Tiruvalluvar, Madras: Sekar Pathippakam, 1966, p. 90.

No doubt, in the Kural also we find the idea that killing has a retributive effect in a future life<sup>1</sup> but that is not the chief preoccupation. This is evident from another couplet which emphasizes that the advantage which may accrue from destroying life in a sacrifice is dishonourable to the wise even though it may be said to be productive of a great good.<sup>2</sup> There is thus a broader meaning and a positive significance attached to non-violence.<sup>3</sup>

We may therefore distinguish between two types of positions in regard to the ethics of non-violence. The first type suggests a mere avoidance of certain actions like killing animals as also an avoidance of certain types of attitudes like not hurting the feelings of other people, harbouring no ill-feeling towards anyone, etc. The second type contains within it root-ideas of a positive norm of social

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1 33.5

2 33.8

3 This aspect of the Kural is noted by Schweitzer when he writes: "In the ethics of the Kural as in those of the Laws of Manu the idea of reward has a place. The way of virtue is recommended because it leads to a better reincarnation or to liberation from rebirth ... Nevertheless, ethics in the Kural are not so entirely dominated by the idea of reward as in Brahmanism, Buddhism and the Bhagavad-Gītā. We already find here the knowledge that good must be done for its own sake. It shines out from various maxims ... Whilst the Bhagavad-Gītā in a forced and chilly manner gives as a motive for remaining in active life that it is in accordance with the order of the universe, the Kural justifies it - what an advance - by the idea of ethical activity. Work and profit place man in a position to do good." (op. cit., pp. 201-202.)

action. Here it is not the withdrawal from certain temptations and self-denial of certain norms that connotes non-violence but the cultivation of certain virtues in the behaviour of man.<sup>1</sup> In this type of ethics of non-violence love becomes the prime-mover of the 'cultivated' man. The Kural's philosophy of non-violence belongs to the second category and hence the tone and tenor of the work shows a marked deviation from the Jaina attitude.

One other important difference may be pointed out here to show that Tirukkural, though it contains ideas cherished by the Jainas, is not probably a Jaina work. The Kural makes a clear reference to God as the creator of the world<sup>2</sup> whereas Jainism opposes the idea of a Creator-God vehemently.<sup>3</sup> It is no doubt true that the

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1 T.K.N. Unnithan and Yogendra Singh, Traditions of Non-Violence, New Delhi: Arnold Heinemann India, 1973, p. 12.

2 107. 2 Probably no other couplet in the Kural can be more opposed to the Jaina idea than this. One of the most important philosophical tenets of Jainism is that the world is uncreated and indestructible. The tradition dispenses with the idea of a Creator-God altogether in this way.

3 Some reference to the strong arguments of the Jaina philosopher against accepting God as the Creator of the world here is necessary to point to a basic philosophical difference between Kural and Jainism. In one of the Jaina texts we read: "If God created the universe, where was he before creating it? If he was not in space, where did he localise the universe? How could a formless or immaterial substance like God create the world of matter? If the material is to be taken as existing, why not take the world itself as unbegun? If the Creator was uncreated, why not suppose the world to be itself self-existing? ... Is God self-sufficient? If he is, he need not have created the world. If he is not, ... he would be incapable of the task ..." - Jīnasena, Ādipurāṇa, Chapter 3 (Cited in C.J. Shaw, Jainism in North India, London: Longman Green & Co., 1932, p. 35.)

Jainas are not totally against the usage of the term god<sup>1</sup> but our main point here is that the Jainas are completely opposed to the idea of a Creator-God and hence that it is difficult to concede that the Kural was a Jaina work.

A similar argument can be put forward against the interpretation of scholars (supporting the Jaina 'claim') citing the very opening couplet of the Kural<sup>2</sup> wherein the term āthi pakavan is made use of. The interpretation from the Jaina side is that the term refers to the

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3 (of the previous page) (contd.) The Jaina philosopher Hemacandra asks: "If every existent object must have a maker, that maker himself would be explained by another - his maker, etc. To escape from this vicious circle we have to assume that there is one uncreated, self-explaining cause, god. But then, if it is maintained that one being can be self-subsistent, why not say that there are many others also who are uncreated and eternal similarly?" Hence "it is not necessary to assume the existence of any first cause of the universe." - Syādvādamanjari, 6

R. Garbe draws a significant distinction between naive atheism and philosophical atheism: "The former, far from indulging in any philosophical reflection simply refuses to believe what it cannot visualize. Traces of it are found in many passages of the Rg Veda (II. 12.5; IV. 24.10; VIII. 100.3; X. 119) and in a marked form, in the materialistic system of the Lokāyatas. The latter is one which has grown into a conviction as a result of serious philosophical speculation", he maintains. (See his Article "Atheism (Ancient Indian)" in James Hastings, ed., Encyclopaedia of Religion & Ethics, II(1910),185.)

It is obvious, Jainism needs to be classified under the second type of atheism and poses a serious difficulty in regard to categorizing Kural as a Jaina work.

1 The term 'god' is used in Jainism to denote a higher state of existence of the jīva or the conscious being. Jainism believes that this state of godly existence is only a shade better than that of the ordinary human beings, for it is not free from the birth-death cycle.

first Arhat of the Jaina tradition, Ṛṣabha. Chakravarthi maintains that the term ulaku which occurs in the opening couplet refers not to the world but to society, obviously anticipating the fundamental philosophical objection raised above, viz., that according to Jainism the world was not created by god. We certainly concede the point that the term ulaku in Tamil does not refer merely to the world of objects but also to human society. We would also accept that in the Kural the term quite often refers to human society. It is obvious, then, that Chakravarthi relies mainly on the second meaning of ulagu as human society while interpreting the opening couplet. We would like to counter the argument on two counts. Firstly, though it is not stated explicitly, there is again a reliance on the historicity of Ṛṣabha - this time not maintaining that he taught society agriculture and non-violence but that he created society. This is clearly inconsistent with Chakravarthi's own references to Ṛṣabha as the 'first revealer of ahiṃsā-dharma to the world' and as 'the ruling sovereign of the land at the time.'<sup>1</sup> Secondly the term Arhat in the Jaina tradition signifies more a state of the individual who has 'gone beyond society' (and who is hence not affected by what happens in it) than the 'creator' of society. Due to all these considerations we find it difficult to accept the view that the Kural was a Jaina work.

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2 (of the previous page) Āthi pakavan refers to the 'first Being' as the cause of the world. Chakravarthi takes the 'first Being' to mean Ṛṣabha, the first Tīrthāṅkara.

1 Tirukkural by Thevar, Introduction.

With regard to the relationship between Buddhism and the philosophy of Tirukkural, our observations will be confined to a discussion of some of the ideas of early Buddhism, and especially to those which can be gathered from the Dhammapada.<sup>1</sup> We may adopt the term normative Theravāda Buddhism as used by M.E. Spiro<sup>2</sup> (and, for convenience' sake, use the expression normative Buddhism) to refer to early Buddhist thought, since it offers us the advantage of averting ambiguities while referring to such a complex tradition as

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1 It is well-known that early Buddhist thought is to be found in what is referred to as the 'three baskets of tradition' (Tripitakas), the Suttapitaka, the Vinayapitaka and the Abhidhammapitaka. These three 'baskets' respectively deal with the ethical teachings, the monastic doctrines and certain advanced Buddhist theories. Our interest in Dhammapada is in its forming part of Suttapitaka and reflecting the early Buddhist ethical teachings.

Though the Dhammapada, unlike Tirukkural, is not a systematic treatise written by its author but is only a collection of the Buddha's ethical utterances on various occasions, it seems to us that its value does not get diminished by this fact. As such the comparison offers us some insights into the ethical precepts of normative Buddhism and of the Kural.

2 Buddhism and Society, New York: Harper & Row, 1970, pp. 6-7. Spiro defines normative Theravada Buddhism as the doctrines contained in the Theravāda canon, which may or may not correspond with the teachings of the historical Buddha. He observes that the question of the historical Buddha is 'irrelevant' because the distinction itself is foreign to believing Buddhists, for, to them all the words which the canon attributes to the Buddha are indeed his words and all the doctrines contained in the canon represent the teachings of the Buddha.

Buddhism. One of the ambiguities we have in mind here is regarding the teachings of the historical Buddha. As Spiro observes (though in a slightly different context):

even if Buddhist historical scholarship were unequivocally successful in distinguishing the teachings of the Buddha himself from those which represent later additions and emendations to Buddhism, the 'quest for the historical Buddha' is irrelevant to our inquiry<sup>1</sup>

since our aim here is just to examine comparisons and points of contrast between the Tamil ethical work Tirukkural and the canonical Buddhist ethical work Dhammapada.

As there is no 'claim' as such from any Buddhist scholar that Tirukkural was a Buddhist work,<sup>2</sup> we do not propose to go into a detailed discussion of any of the fundamental tenets of normative Buddhism to show its differences from the philosophical position of the Tamil classic. We shall only indicate 'dissimilarities' and 'similarities' purely with a view to continuing the thread of the argument that the Tamil classic has certain unique features - in our immediate context - features not possessed by normative Buddhism.

1 ibid.

2 Some scholars have indicated that in the Kural we do find Buddhist ideas. We may mention the following: S. Venkataswamy, "Buddhism and Jainism in Tirukkural" in N. Subba Reddiar, ed., Symposium Papers on Tirukkural, Tirupati: S.V. University, 1974; Ramachandra Dikshitar, op. cit.; Poppley, op. cit.; K. Natesa Udaiyar, Tirukkural Tiravu - 2, Salem: Salem Tiruvalluvar Society, 1955. It is important to note that none of these scholars maintain that the Kural was a Buddhist work. This is in clear contrast to the 'Jaina claim' which was considered in some detail by us.



Interestingly enough, some scholars have claimed that the religion of the Buddha was unique<sup>1</sup> in many respects, and these features themselves may be referred to here to show the dissimilarities between normative Buddhism and the philosophy of Tirukkural. We shall refer to four of the features delineated by Bateson and the one referred to by Spiro.

The first of the unique features listed by Bateson is 'materialism'. This has reference to the doctrine of non-soul. Man is an aggregate of five material factors which disintegrate at death, leaving no residue.<sup>2</sup> Edward Conze offers us an analysis of the implications of this doctrine for the transformation of the life of the Buddhist. Only the last part of his analysis needs to be referred to here to prevent any misunderstanding of the serious Buddhist philosophical teaching:

Those who look to Buddhism for startlingly new and unheard of ideas on the problem of self, will find little. Those who look to it on how to lead a selfless life may learn a great deal. The great contribution of Buddhist philosophy lies in the methods it worked out to impress the truth of not-self on our reluctant minds, it lies in the discipline which the Buddhists imposed upon themselves in order to make this truth into a part of their own being.<sup>3</sup>

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1 Spiro; op. cit.; J.H. Bateson, "Creed (Buddhist)" in the Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, IV(1912), 234-237.

2 Dhammapada, XI. 147&148; XX. 279.

3 Buddhism, Its Essence and Development, New York: Harper & Row, 1959, pp. 20-21.

It is obvious, though the term 'materialism' is used here, it does not have the same connotation as it has in the Cārvāka materialist thought of India, for instance.

The Kural does not at all enter into a discussion regarding the soul, and offers a clear contrast from normative Buddhism in this respect. This is in keeping with Vaḷḷuvar's method of avoiding elaborate metaphysical discussions in his treatise. The existence of a soul, however, is clearly presupposed in the Kural.<sup>1</sup>

The second feature of normative Buddhism, according to Bateson is 'atheism'. Buddhism does not believe in the existence of God as the Creator of the universe.<sup>2</sup> In the Kural, however, God as the Creator is assumed and, in fact clearly referred to in some couplets.<sup>3</sup> The Kural also avoids, - and in this respect it resembles Buddhism - detailed discussions regarding the origin and creation of the universe, but this absence of discussion does not seem to be because of preoccupation with 'deliverence'.

Bateson mentions 'nihilism' as the third feature of normative Buddhism. Everything in the universe, including the universe itself

1 Couplets 21.1 and 36.4 are particularly significant.

2 Conze, op. cit., p. 39 maintains that the Buddhist tradition does not exactly deny the existence of the Creator, but that it is not really interested to know who created the universe.

3 1.1 ; 107.2.

is impermanent.<sup>1</sup> There can be no Supreme Reality since anything that is 'real' - anything that exists - is in a perpetual flux, in a constant state of creation and dissolution, of coming into and passing out of existence. In the Kural we do not find any trace of nihilism. Just as the nihilistic doctrine in Buddhism is attributed to its not accepting a (permanent) soul, we may maintain that the acceptance of an enduring soul, by the Kural, was responsible for its not contributing to the nihilistic position.

Pessimism is referred to as the fourth characteristic of normative Buddhism. This aspect of Buddhism points out that even the happiest man is not free from painful experiences. Suffering is ingrained in the very texture of life.<sup>2</sup> In the Kural we do not find a description of the world or human life in comparable language. Certainly the Kural exhorts man to do good deeds and avoid evil ones. The exhortation to do the good is on the count that that alone befits man and the discouragement to do evil is on the ground that the evil man has to himself suffer the consequences. The Kural's view that the ultimate value of viṣu (release) is automatically realized when the individual leads a life of virtue and pursues poruḷ and inppam in an ethical way would go to show that there is no suggestion at all that

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1 Dhammapada, XI. 146.

2 ibid., III. 41; V. 72; VI. 85; XI. 146; XIII. 174; XVIII. 234-238; XX. 278, 286-289; and XXV. 369. Conze (op. cit., p. 21.) concedes that according to Buddhism this world is wholly evil, is wholly pervaded with suffering, is something to be rejected totally,

this world is evil. The Kural's view seems to be that man's uniqueness and duty consists in leading a virtuous life and giving no room for evil.<sup>1</sup>

Spiro adds renunciation as the fifth characteristic of Buddhism. It consists in rejecting the world since worldly life is a major obstacle to the attainment of the goal of salvation. Viewing attachment to the world as the cause of suffering, Buddhism emphatically maintains that suffering can only be escaped through detachment from and renunciation of the world.<sup>2</sup> We should not, however, overlook the fact that the Buddha, while referring to renunciation, was insisting on cultivating the inner springs of it rather than merely conforming to its outward forms, and this is evident from the Dhammapada.<sup>3</sup> But the institution of the Sangha<sup>h</sup> and the insistence that one should take refuge in it just as one should take refuge in the Buddha and in the

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2 (of the previous page) (contd.) abandoned totally, for the one goal of nirvāna (spiritual perfection) though he disagrees with the usage of the term pessimism on the count that if the world is a vale of tears, "there is a joy in shedding its burden."

1 This would also explain the general thrust of the Kural's philosophy, viz., its insistence on man's doing virtuous deeds in this world. In a significant couplet Valluvar says: "If men acquire ample glory in this world by doing virtuous deeds, the world of the gods will cease to laud the sage who has attained that world." (24.4.)

2 Dhammapada, V. 75; XIV. 181; and XVI. 211-214 would be the basis for this interpretation.

3 I. 9; X. 141 & 142; XIV. 184; and XXII. 312.

Dhamma go to show that actual (in the sense of physically renouncing everything) renunciation formed the core of the Buddha's philosophy of renunciation.<sup>1</sup> In the Kural we see an entirely different approach to renunciation. May be, the implicit critique of renunciation as an institution that the Kural contains was itself born out of the observation of the spirit behind the institution being lost sight of, but the most outstanding characteristic of the treatment of the subject of renunciation in the Tamil classic is its not considering renunciation as a definite 'stage' (in the sense of the individual giving up his status as a house-holder). This consistent emphasis on the renunciation-spirit<sup>2</sup> as against renunciation as a formal 'stage' (involving the abandonment of home and kith and kin) makes for a totally different kind of philosophy of renunciation.

In spite of this difference in the treatment of renunciation

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1. Explaining this aspect of the Buddhist philosophy, Conze (op. cit., p. 53.) writes: "The core of the Buddhist movement consisted of monks. A monastic life alone will normally provide the conditions favourable to a spiritual life bent on the highest goal ... The monks ... are the only Buddhists in the proper sense of the word ... The life of a house-holder is almost incompatible with the higher levels of the spiritual at all times. This has been a conviction common to all Buddhists at all times. They differed only in the strictness with which they adhered to it. The Hīnayāna was, on the whole, disinclined to grant any exceptions."

2 3. 1; 28. 2, 6 & 7; 35. 6-10.

in the Dhammapada and Tirukkural, it is amazing to find more or less identical couplets in both: Dhammapada's couplet: "Not by shaven head does an undisciplined man, who utters lies, become an ascetic. How will one be an ascetic who is full of desire and greed?"<sup>1</sup> is more or less identical with the Kural couplet which reads: "There is no need of a shaven head nor of long hairs if a person abstains from the deeds condemned by the wise."<sup>2</sup>

Similarly the Dhammapada couplet: "What is the use of your matted hair, O witless man! What is the use of your antelope garment? Within, you are full (of passions), without, you embellish."<sup>3</sup> reads like the couplet of Tirukkural: "There are many men who bathe in holy waters but leading defiled lives; they are of masked conduct and 'appear' great."<sup>4</sup>

Likewise there is a close similarity between Dhammapada and Tirukkural<sup>5</sup> in regard to their views on desire. In this case more or less the whole chapter of the one shows a parallel to almost a full chapter in the other. The key-note in the Dhammapada is that desire

1 XIX. 264.

2 28. 10.

3 XXVI. 394.

4 28. 8.

5 Chapter XVI of the Dhammapada and Chapter 37 of Tirukkural are remarkably similar to each other.

is the spring-board for all suffering. Grief and fear, the symptoms of suffering can be got over only by cutting at the root of desire. The parallel chapter in the Kural is entitled "The Extirpation of Desire" and points out that desire is the factor responsible for the round of births and deaths. The most significant point about the parallels between the Kural's and the early Buddhist's ideas seems to be that the former took note of the latter.

Before concluding this chapter and passing on to a detailed consideration of the theme of good life as presented in the Kural it may be helpful to reiterate our position in regard to the relationship between the Kural and the three Indian traditions. We have, by pointing to the differences between aspects of the Kural's philosophy of good life and those of Brahmanical Hinduism, Jainism and early Buddhism, endeavoured to maintain that the distinctive features that the Kural offers do not warrant a simplistic reduction of them purely in terms of any one of the Indian traditions. In this task we have naturally had to highlight the 'dissimilarities' rather than the 'similarities'. No doubt, we have pointed out, in the course of the present chapter, that the Kural does not reject in toto ideas characterizing and ideals enshrined in, the 'three traditions'. Yet, it seems worthwhile to reiterate that the 'elements of commonality' are as significantly important as 'aspects of dissent', to get an insight into the philosophy of good life in the Kural.

The 'ethics of responsibility' that we find in the three traditions is indeed helpful in understanding the Kural's idealistic-activistic philosophy of the good life. Exhorting the individual to do the good and achieve the Good that we find in the Kural may not be explicable only in terms of a law of causation at the spiritual level, yet the importance accorded to the causal principle is considerable and the moral tone that the philosophy of good life reflects is largely due to the acceptance of the principle that a person reaps as he sows.

The transcendental aspect of the good life (as a necessary corollary of the law of enjoying or suffering the fruits of one's own actions) that we see in the three traditions is also accepted in the Kural, though by reconsidering and reformulating the whole ideal. The characteristic way in which the transcendent goal is interpreted in the Kural accounts both for the normative treatment of the theme of good life and for the insistence on the positive-affirmative approach to life in the world. The latter is responsible for the social orientation of the Classic and the former provides the metaphysical roots of its social ethics.

It is because of such a careful blending of the normative and the positive approaches to the good life that the concept of asceticism gets differently interpreted in the Classic. Here again the necessity of cultivating the ascetic virtues that the Kural reiterates, is reminiscent of the exhortations found in the three



traditions. The attitudinal changes that are considered essential for the good life by the three traditions are neither obliterated nor underplayed, but are in fact given a more positive significance in the Kural. In brief, the attitudinal change can be described as 'developing altruistic love' as the positive virtue, though a state beyond altruism is clearly envisaged by the Kural on the ground that even in altruism there is still a trace of the ego which comes in the way of 'complete self-giving'. While the genius of the Tamil classic has expressed itself in highlighting the significance of the former in the context of life in the world, its affinities with the three traditions <sup>are</sup> apparent in its accepting the latter as providing the 'system of meaning' for altruistic love.

It is needless to point out that our referring to certain converging aspects of the three traditions should be read along with the uniqueness of approach of the Kural to make possible a proper appreciation of the richness of its analysis. It is in the light of such a glimpse of the intimate relationship between the Kural and the three traditions that we just had, that the study of the philosophy of good life in the Kural becomes extremely significant. To this task of delineating aspects of the philosophy of good life we shall now turn.

## CHAPTER THREE

### ARAM AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF GOOD LIFE

Our examining the rootedness of the philosophy of Tirukkural in the fertile soil of the religio-philosophical traditions of India has indicated certain subtle but significant lines of deviation that are apparent in the Tamil classic. The acceptance of certain of the ideas characterizing Brahmanical Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism on the one hand and the modification of certain ideas as also a total rejection of some others have indeed given us a pre-view of the philosophy of the Kural. Still it may be helpful to state more explicitly though briefly, a few points which make for the uniqueness of the Kural's view-point since that would set the bearings to have a closer and clearer look at it.

The three values of aram, porul and inppam are dealt with separately in three major divisions of the Kural entitled Aṟattuppāl, Poruṭpāl and Kāmattuppāl, no doubt, but the way in which the three values are treated indicates at once the originality of Tiruvaḷḷuvar in reconceiving them against the backdrop of the scheme of the four-fold values (puruṣārtha)<sup>1</sup> of Brahmanical Hinduism. We have

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1 Please see the next page.

already indicated<sup>1</sup> that the aram-porul-inpam pattern of analysis of the philosophy of good life that is found in the Kural is not to be considered as a proto-type of the dharmā-arthā-kāma-mokṣa pattern of mapping out a life-ideal that is found in works like the Dharma-Śāstras. Apart from the fact that the Kural re-structures the four-fold value-scheme in terms of three values while re-conceiving them (reference to which was made earlier) it makes yet another important modification in the treatment of the values. The modification is in terms of replacing the integrated pattern of the four-fold value-scheme by envisaging one key-concept, viz., aram in such a way that the other two values, viz., porul and inpam become but extensions of aram.

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1 (of the previous page) It may be helpful to state briefly the general philosophy of the puruṣārtha-scheme here. The scheme is generally considered to be based on the principle that the ultimate aim of human life (mokṣa) can be achieved progressively and not at one stretch. It is based on sound psychological principles and hence significant. If the ultimate goal in life is attainable only by bringing under control the various sense-organs, and not by simply suppressing the various desires, what is required is a healthy subordination of certain desires to certain others, which are higher. The Brahmanical Hindu scheme of working towards the goal of mokṣa is based on this principle of gradually making man realize the importance of pursuing certain ends in order to elevate himself on the spiritual plane. Artha (material wealth) and kāma (pleasure) are the lower values and are normally sought by man. A definite place is accorded to these in the Hindu scheme since these represent the natural inclinations or cravings of man. Killing of these values is not advocated. Yet, the subordination of these to the ultimate spiritual value of mokṣa through the regulating value of dharma (the ethical principle) is insisted. The idea behind the whole scheme seems to be that a healthy subordination of the basic human urges is much more effective from a longterm standpoint than a mechanical repression of them.

1 vide supra, p. 46.

Looked at from this point of view the concept of aram holds in it the key which unlocks the philosophy of good life in the Kural. The subtlety of the presentation and analysis of aram that is found in the Kural matches indeed the subtlety with which aram pervades the entire life of man - both the personal and the inter-personal aspects - and makes him truly human.<sup>1</sup> The imperceptible, though not ineffective, presence of aram in the workaday concerns of man paradoxically is responsible for the presence of the warmth of feelings and depth of emotions in man<sup>2</sup> and for the idealistic motivations that are seen in human action,<sup>3</sup> suggests the Classic.<sup>4</sup> The result is that the very idealizations of man are seen presented not as exhortations to man to become seriously and strenuously ethical and spiritual, but as gentle suggestions (though characterized by firm conviction) that extending principles at work at the personal level to inter-personal life-situations constitutes the very essence of the ethical and spiritual life of man.

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1 vide infra, pp. 173, 187, 189, 190, 205, 206, 214-218, 220 & 221.

2 This indicates in brief, the treatment of the theme of inppam as extension of aram in the Kāmatuppāl. See chapter 5 for an elaboration of our statement.

3 The idealization of the economic and political aspects of human life (what we would refer to as extension of aram in the economic and political spheres) are specifically found in the Poruṭpāl, the subject-matter of chapter 4 of the present thesis.

4 8. 7 : "Aram will burn up the man who is devoid of love, just as the sun burns up the worm which is without bone."

The concept of aram extended thus offers us the concept of poruḷ and inṇam. The pervasiveness of aram in them is seen in the objectifications of aram itself in two types of human situations, - one the situation of the individual participating in the economic and political institutions and two the most intimate man-woman relationship.<sup>1</sup> The 'light' of aram which is essential as constitutive of the good life reveals a clear spectrum in which poruḷ and inṇam stand out most distinctly. Looked at from the side of the 'media', viz., economic and political institutions and the face-to-face man-woman-relationship-situations, aram is seen as the principle at work in human life. Looked at from the side of 'light' itself, poruḷ and inṇam are seen as objectifications or panoramic projections of an abstract principle trying to find concrete expressions in real inter-personal situations of human life.<sup>2</sup>

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1 It is to indicate this unique type of treatment that is given to the other two values in the Kural that we propose to title the two following chapters not as 'Analysis of Poruḷ' and 'Analysis of Inṇam' but as 'Diversification of Aram: I' and 'Diversification of Aram: II' respectively.

2 This abstract principle may be termed the Good, and the concretization-attempts made by man may be referred to as indicating aspects of the good life. Aram as referring to the Ideal of the Good is a transcendental category, notwithstanding the fact that it is also definable concretely with reference to man in terms of what is conducive to the enrichment of his life. Both the aspects of aram are derivable from the etymology of the term itself. Etymologically aram is derived from aru, which in Tamil means 'to cut', 'to define' and 'to delimit'. Aram thus signifies what is definitive of what ought to be done.

cf. Our definition of the Good and good life according to the Indian religious traditions in chapter 1 of the present thesis.

The idea of 'extension' is more clearly grasped by asking ourselves what the resulting difference would be for a philosophy of good life if poruḷ or inṣam is considered as the central or core-concern. Considering poruḷ as the chief concern - not only in individual but in institutional life as well - would certainly result in considering aram not as an extension of poruḷ but as an inevitable and indispensable accessory, and would be a true representation of a predominantly materialistic approach to life (if poruḷ is considered as material pursuit) or as a typical treatment of man as a political animal (if poruḷ is understood in its extended meaning). Likewise, if inṣam is looked at as the core-value, it can be described in no terms other than the ancient Indian materialistic philosophy (the Cārvāka view-point). The accomodation of aram in such a scheme of materialistic-hedonistic approach to life can at best make room for an ethical-hedonistic outlook as it happened in the case of the development of the Cārvāka philosophy.<sup>1</sup>

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1 See I.C. Sharma, Ethical Philosophies of India, London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1965, pp. 118-119. for a more detailed treatment of this aspect of Cārvāka philosophy, viz., the 'later' Cārvākas revealing an ethical strand in their thought. cf. C. Kunhan Raja, The Sāṅkhya-Kārika of Īśvarakṛṣṇa, Hoshiarpur: V.V. Research Institute, 1963, pp. 13-14. who points out that propounding a mokṣa-Sāstra (treatise on mokṣa) is not necessarily the way of counter-blasting the Cārvāka view-point, since even in this predominantly hedonistic type of philosophy, 'ethics' was 'admitted'.

The significant point to be noted here is that even the 'ethical reconsideration' of their stand, by the Cārvākas, provided only a secondary place to dharma. Considerations of dharma were resorted to to augment the sum-total of pleasures attainable and enjoyable by man.

On the other hand, considering aram as the nucleus of the good life does not amount to relegating either porul or inpam to a secondary place. Whether we consider porul and inpam 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.<sup>1</sup> In either case each of them will be looked upon as attempts at institutionalizing the value of aram, though in the one case the institutionalization is in the large arena of economy and polity and in the other case, the process (of institutionalization) is in the comparatively smaller area of two human persons coming together in love.<sup>2</sup>

The modification effected in the axiological analysis of life found in the Kural is so subtle that it may be pointed out that the resulting view of life is not much different from that of the four-fold value-scheme of classical Brahmanism. We would concede

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1 We are deliberately stating the case negatively to show how carefully the concept of aram is to be approached and understood. The positive statement of the role and content of aram is, in a sense, the theme of the present chapter.

2 It is important to notice that in such an approach to the good life, sex and love are not just permissive but form integral aspects. The precise significance of this approach to the subject of love will become clear in chapter 5. Suffice it to state at this point that the man-woman relationship is, in this scheme, institutionalized both before and after marriage. The importance accorded to the institutionalization of the 'pre-marital' as well as the post-marital relationships would itself indicate the great significance attached to love in human life in the scheme of good life in the Kural.

that the difference between the two 'approaches' is not easily or at first sight, seen but maintain that the modification effected makes for a different type of emphasis.

To make our point more concrete: the integrated scheme of the puruṣārtha would no doubt have the effect of pointing to good life as also achieving personality-integration<sup>1</sup> through the pursuit of dharma, artha, kāma and mokṣa. We are therefore not under-playing the significance of dharma in the Brahmanical Hindu scheme for

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1 The term personality-integration is not used here in the purely psychological sense of achieving mental health. Personality-integration in the Indian tradition signifies, in addition to attaining equanimity, experiencing a state of being in which 'unity of all' is realized. Notwithstanding the plethora of meaning the term has acquired in the various schools of Indian religious philosophy it may be pointed out that there is a general consensus of opinion that integration of personality has a deeper significance than what 'mental equilibrium' connotes. May be, the deeper meaning of personality is attributable to the non-acceptance of manas (mind) as the ultimate category. The term self (jīva, ātman etc.) (in spite of the varying approaches and definitions that the Indian tradition offers us) offers us an insight into the fact that real integration connotes the transcendence of the level of the mind.

Troy Wilson Organ (The Hindu Quest for the Perfection of Man, Ohio: Ohio University, 1970, pp. 89-91), analysing Hinduism as 'the quest for integration' observes: "... there is one factor within Hinduism upon which she can build, and that is the integrating quest itself. Inclusiveness, not exclusiveness, is the principle of Hinduism ... The Hindu looks for a common element among apparently different things, for the reality below the appearances, for relationships among the 'unrelated'. According to the Hindu there are 8,400,000 forms of flora and fauna; yet his emphasis is not on the multiplicity of living forms but on the fact that the same class of being, the jīva, occupies these species. ... The great strength of Hinduism as integrator of the life of man is its deep sense of the relatedness of things, rooted metaphysically in the concept of the jīva which vitalizes all living forms." Though Organ's observations are made in the context of



effecting the integration of human personality. The supreme role of dharma in human life consists in its function of regulating the pursuit of artha (wealth) and kāma (desire) so that mokṣa (the ultimate goal in human life) could be realized. In this sense surely dharma is the pervasive value in human life. It should also be granted that the very concept of the integrated pattern of the value-scheme stems from the fact that the different aspects of human personality have been carefully taken into consideration. Artha, for example, would connote the acquisitive instinct in man and the institutions of property and state would connote the concrete expressions of this basic instinct in human nature. Kāma would indicate the instinctive and emotional aspects of man and the institutions of marriage and family would be evidences for the instinctive and emotional aspects objectivizing themselves. Mokṣa would stand for the aspiration for spiritual perfection that is deep down<sup>in</sup> the human heart and religion (as an individual pursuit and also as an institutional effort) would be an instance of the spiritual value projecting itself in human concerns. However, in the absence of artha and kāma being regulated by dharma, mokṣa would be difficult, nay, impossible to achieve.

Dharma then becomes the instrument of integration of human

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1 (of the previous page) (contd.) explaining the 'quest' in Hinduism, they are relevant in our context inasmuch as they are aimed at explaining that the quest reveals depths which are not readily apparent and point to an underlying state which may be referred to as the state of self-realization.

personality in the sense that in the absence of its regulating role, artha and kāma may be pursued as ends-in-themselves and mokṣa may not be realized at all. The instrumental character of dharma thus consists in its playing the difficult role of a moderator of artha and kāma with a view to making the realization of mokṣa possible. This also explains the distinction that is made between the puruṣārthas themselves, - naming mokṣa as the intrinsic value and dharma, artha and kāma as instrumental values, designating mokṣa as an end-in-itself and the other three values as means merely.<sup>1</sup> Mokṣa in this sense is referred to as the supreme end in human life (paramapuruṣārtha).

The significant point about the integrated pattern of the puruṣārtha-scheme, in our present context is that in the scheme artha and kāma come to be considered not as extensions of dharma but as its accessories.<sup>2</sup> In this sense "dharma is both the process and the instrument of integration that underlies all modes of association."<sup>3</sup>

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1 It should, however, be noted that in the history of Hindu thought, there was at least one school which considered dharma as an intrinsic value. The Mīmāṃsā school of Prabhākara upheld the view that dharma is an intrinsic value, that it is an end-in-itself. But, it is significant to note in our context that the term dharma was not understood as common morality but as referring to such acts of duty as would lead to success in the life beyond. It should be also mentioned here that the Prābhākara school later fell in line with the other systems of Hindu philosophy in accepting mokṣa as an intrinsic value.

2 See Mahābhārata, 12. 123. 3; 12. 161. 25-26; Āpastamba, II, 8, 20, 19-20; Kauṭilya, Artha-Sāstra, I. 7; Vātsyāyana, Kāma-Sūtra, I.1.

3 1958, p. 24. Keval Motwani, Manu Dharma-Sāstra, Madras: Ganesh & Co.,

It is thus obvious that artha and kāma cannot be considered extensions of dharma.

The concept of āram being considered as the key-value in the Kural shows that the emphasis is on āram itself. The concepts of poru and inṇam are accordingly considered extensions of āram and this accounts for the fact that the this-worldly concerns receive a more explicitly important treatment in the Kural. May be, this is one other reason why the concept of viṭu is not considered expressly as the fourth value but as built-in in the very structure and functioning of āram. Furthermore, just as viṭu gets realized automatically as a consequence of the individual electing āram as value par excellence integration of personality also becomes effected in a natural way. The modification in the value-scheme that the Kural makes is thus not at the cost of ignoring the necessity of achieving personality-integration. It seems to us therefore that the subtle modification effected in re-conceiving the puruṣārtha-scheme has resulted in the Kural's shifting the emphasis on āram completely.

We are thus suggesting that the 'extension principle' is presented in a very subtle way in the first section and is more concretely perceptible in the second and third sections. At this point the expression extension of āram needs some analysis. For, both from the point of view of indicating the nerve of the argument in our thesis and from the point of view of the perspectival difference in the Kural that we are intending to project in our analysis of Tiruvalluvar's

philosophy of good life, we consider the extension-concept significantly important. Without anticipating fully all that we are going to say in regard to our interpretation of aram as the extension-principle we may observe that first and foremost it is proposed as an attempt at getting at the rationale behind Tiruvaḷḷuvar's exhorting man to envelop the whole of humanity and the animate creation through expansiveness of love and secondly to maintain that the extension-principle itself would indicate another dimension of the human potentiality made evident by Vaḷḷuvar in and through the concept of vīṭu. It seems to us that the extension-principle that aram inherently is, if understood in such terms, would be helpful in appreciating the fact that Vaḷḷuvar is not thinking merely in terms of altruism (which certainly is an important ingredient in his philosophy of good life) but goes beyond altruism and conceives the good life neither humanistically merely nor as a state which can be realized only in the hereafter. The Good is thus not just an ethical principle which regulates inter-personal relationships nor is it a 'given virtue', -- 'given' from an external authority totally different from, and outside of, man. This is indeed the perspectival difference we were referring to in the beginning of this paragraph and hinted at when we stated that the aram-porul-inṇam pattern of analysis of good life is not to be understood as synonymous with the dharma-artha-kāma-mokṣa analysis of Brahmanical Hinduism.

In more explicit terms: Aram, understood as the extension-principle, would also be a clear pointer to the metaphysical dimension

of the human personality which is organically related to its ethical-social dimensions, so that considering man as potentially capable of realizing the Good does not merely connote the altruistic possibilities that man should aim at and achieve but entails the position that actualizing the human potentiality is incomplete (i.e., will not be possible) without transcending the altruistic ideal even. The 'transcendence' (which is as difficult of achievement as it is to visualize) may be referred to both as vītu and as actualizing the potentiality that man is inherently capable of. In this sense realizing vītu may be visualized as 'becoming truly human'. By considering vītu as a state potentially realizable (and hence as an ideal which ought to be striven after) by everyone and aram as the one sure means which helps man in actualizing in his own life the inner potentiality, i.e., in raising him to the fullest potential to which he can rise, it may be said that aram reveals its multi-dimensional aspects. Looked at from the point of view of its adequacy to the complexity of human life, aram seems to cohere well with the multi-dimensional aspects of human personality and, in fact reveals the richness of the human potential clearly. Our argument thus is to suggest that just as length, breath and height coexist, complement without contradicting each other and, in the process, contribute to the 'richness of the figure' by revealing its dimensions, aram as the principle of extension in human life is conceived by Valluvar to indicate that the good life is a totality in which the dimension of vītu does not have a tyrannizing effect on porul and inpan.

By understanding 'extension' not merely in a 'linear' or 'horizontal' sense but also in its more deeply 'dimensional' aspect we are also able to get at the content of aram that Valluvar speaks of. Whereas the first aspect of extension (the linear aspect) is helpful in understanding the altruistic content of aram<sup>1</sup>, the second aspect (the dimensional aspect) introduces us to the trans-empirical aspects of aram and may, in this sense, be referred to also as the 'vertical' dimension. It is obvious, the horizontal and vertical dimensions of aram, though distinguishable are not distinct. The intertwining of both the aspects is perhaps as much true in the realm of idealization (of the personal as well as inter-personal aspects of human life) as in the realm of 'actual striving' of man to realize the Good and stands testimony to the very possibility of his realizing the Good.<sup>2</sup> It may not be an exaggeration to

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1 vide infra, pp. 104, 116, 117, 126-127, 132-134, 161, 165-168, 189.

2 This is evident from the methodology adopted by Tiruvalluvar while introducing us to the concept and content of the good life. The presentation of the fundamentals of good life by Valluvar is as interesting as it is illuminative. He indicates the intertwining of the metaphysical and empirical aspects of good life and also outlines his philosophy of good life even at the commencement of his treatise, though suggestively, in the first four chapters. It is important to note that the commentators on the Kural consider the first four chapters to be extremely significant for setting the stage for their own interpretations.

It seems to us that it is not simply in conformity with the literary convention that the author 'invokes' God as Parimēlalakar and other commentators opine. The generality of Hindu literary works, Tamil and Sanskrit alike, invoke the Deity (either of the author's special choice of worship or one specially relevant to the theme of the text) so that the literary writing may be completed

suggest that interpreting the Kural's philosophy of good life in terms of the horizontal and vertical dimensions of aram will pay us rich dividends also<sup>1</sup> from the point of view of delineating the contents of aram and from the point of view of resolving some problems that arise when we consider certain interpretations of the theme.

The dimensional (vertical) aspects of aram may be presented best against the backdrop of the Āsrama-scheme, for it is relevant in our context of indicating the way in which the theme of good life is presented to us by Tiruvalluvar in his core-Section on Aram in

2 (of the previous page) (contd.) 'successfully' without hindrance. There is no invocation intended by the author as one may see from a complete paucity of mention of God in the second person or of himself in the first person.

In the first chapter Tiruvalluvar speaks of God and his nature and the good of 'abiding at His Feet' which is the goal of man. The summum bonum is bluntly stated at the very outset of the treatise as God, as if suggesting that a philosophy of good life without acknowledging God, the alpha of the world, the very apotheosis of goodness and the ultimate refuge from 'the unspannable ocean of birth' will be like Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark. Consistently with acknowledging God's existence one must also accept God's free self-giving nature of Grace, (exemplified visibly and concretely in relation to the world as the Rain) as equally the foundation of good life. Then follows acclaiming of God-men who in relation to the world of mammon can only be described as men who have 'renounced' such a world through opting for the world of God, and of the lead that they provide for good life.

1 We have outlined above the way in which the extension-principle provides us an insight into the institutionalization of aram in the economic and political realms and also in the man-woman relationship situations. We shall be more specifically concerned with these in chapters 4 and 5.

the Classic and has also a direct bearing on the problems we have in regard to certain aspects of the standard understanding 'made available' through the celebrated commentary of Parimēlaḷakar. But before coming to that it is necessary to refer to the 'essentials' of his philosophy which the author himself has indicated, as a preamble to the discussion of aram, and also to his views on the question of freedom of the human will as foundational to good life.

At first the 'essentials' provided by the author are not clear at all for they seem to be nothing but an assortment of topics: the praise of God, the excellence of rain, the greatness of ascetics and assertion of the strength of aram.<sup>1</sup> On a careful study, however, it does become clear that the author indicates the lines on which he proposes to analyse the good life. But since the good life is not something given, an actuality but an ideal that can be realized only through

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1 These topics are also respectively the titles of the first four chapters of the Kural. We are immediately tempted to ask ourselves whether these chapters indicate also an order of priority in the values suggested in and through them. It seems to us that such was not the intention of the author, because if he had intended to speak of a hierarchy of values, or values in the order of their priority, he would have devoted the four chapters either to treat of aram, poruḷ, ippam and viṭu or of God, aram, poruḷ and ippam respectively. From the fact that the introductory chapters are included in the Section on Aram and not as chapters preceding the commencement of the discussion on aram, it is evident that the centrality of aram was all that was intended to be emphasized by the author. This seems to be made clearer by the author by concluding the introductory chapters with a reiteration of the significance of aram in human life, of the necessity of accepting aram as the prime-mover in one's life.



a lived effort, the various factors which help the individual realize the Good are indicated even at the outset by the author.

By not going into any theological argument or philosophical discussion of the concept of God<sup>1</sup> the author seems to suggest that superior to intellectual attainment is 'realizing God'. The description given of God is in terms of perfection of all conceivable qualities. He has no equal.<sup>2</sup> He has no desires nor aversion.<sup>3</sup> He is unaffected by karma.<sup>4</sup> He is the ocean of āram.<sup>5</sup> One of the most striking things about the description is that each couplet containing a description of an aspect of God also suggests that the individual who surrenders unto God gets over his imperfect state. The significance of each couplet incorporating a description of perfection and an exhortation seems to be that man is suggested to seek the ideal of perfection in his life.<sup>6</sup>

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1 The characteristic feature of the opening chapter on God is that without offering any empirical 'proof' for the existence of God nor even by making any appeal to authority (like the Vedas, for example) nor entering into any metaphysical analysis of the concept of God it offers us a philological analogy: "As all alphabets have A as their first, the world has the 'Primal Deity' as its first." (TK, 1.1.)

2 ibid., 1.7.

3 ibid., 1.4.

4 ibid., 1.5.

5 ibid., 1.8.

6. Devasenapathi (op. cit., p. 327.) explains the significance of the chapter on God as stressing the need for attaining integration of personality. This is evident from Valluvar's exhortation to man

The treatment of 'the excellence of rain' shows that Vaḷḷuvar is not suggesting ideals in the air. He shows a clear recognition of the material requirements that need to be fulfilled before an individual can even start aiming at the good life. By dwelling at length on the advantages that accrue if the seasonal rains do not fail and on the difficulties experienced by man when there is no rain or when there are only inadequate quantities of it,<sup>1</sup> Vaḷḷuvar impresses upon us that there must be basic economic stability, for rain is ultimately required for food production.

The emphasis<sup>is</sup> on the necessity for basic material well-being of man - both for his everyday physical routine and for his treading the path of righ<sup>t</sup>eousness.<sup>2</sup> The implication clearly is that since the

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6 (of the previous page) (contd.) to worship God in thought, word and deed, he maintains and draws our attention to the couplet which reads: 'They alone can escape from anxieties of the mind who take refuge in the feet of Him who has no equal' (1.7.).

1 "Rain produces food and itself, as water forms food." (TK, 1.12). "By the continuance of rain the world is sustained; so it is worthy to be called ambrosia" (*ibid.*, 1. 11). "If the rains fail, hunger will stalk over the earth and torment the world; the plough-man's labour must cease; even a nomadic existence will be impossible, for not even a blade of grass can (then) be seen; there will be no religion left; nor will there be any generosity or charity" (*ibid.*, 1.13, 1.14, 2.6, 2.8-9.). "Life is impossible without water; nor is right conduct possible" (*ibid.*, 2.10.).

2 A similar idea is apparent from a significant episode of the great idealist Yājñavalkya going to King Janaka who asked the philosopher whether he desired wealth or debate and victory in it. The philosopher asked for both. It is evident that he desired both material as well as spiritual good; and in spite of his otherwise supremely idealistic teaching, he possibly wanted to set an example by showing

economic well-being of man is an indispensable pre-condition for the satisfaction and realization of his wants, the economic aspect of life is extremely important. The instrumental nature of the material in affording fulfilment of human desires makes it organic to human life. When even the elementary feat of self-preservation and dignified independent living is impossible without a moderate competence, how can one realize the Good? Valluvar seems to ask.

Whether we look at the basic material requirement of man as an innate 'urge' in him (what is sometimes referred to also as the acquisitive instinct) or as pointing to actual acquisition of property, the significance of Tiruvalluvar's emphasis on the economic value cannot be gainsaid. Valluvar's firm conviction in regard to the 'economic base' of good life is evident from his denouncement of poverty in the strongest possible language and also from his positively affirming the importance of 'making' wealth. Poverty is referred to by him as the incomparable since there is nothing which affects one as poverty.<sup>1</sup> He points out that penury, the misery, brings with it many more miseries.<sup>2</sup> He describes poverty also as the matchless

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2 (of the previous page) (contd.) that the consideration of external good cannot be entirely ignored even by idealists as constituting a moment in the conception of the highest good. (Cited by B.G. Gokhale in Indian Thought Through the Ages, Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1961, pp. 51-52.)

1 TK, 105.1.

2 ibid., 105.5. cf. Mahābhārata, 12.8. 16-18 & 21; Śukra, Nītisāra, III. 352-355.

malefactor which blasts the joy of this world and the next.<sup>1</sup> Even one's own mother regards (the person reduced to absolute poverty) as a stranger, he exclaims.<sup>2</sup> The depth of Vaḷḷuvar's feeling on the subject is reflected fully from his observation that one may sleep in the midst of fire but not in the midst of poverty.<sup>3</sup>

It seems to us, therefore, that Vaḷḷuvar is firmly of the view that life must be possible before we can philosophize (even) on the good life.<sup>4</sup> It seems to be a conviction of Vaḷḷuvar that virtues

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1 TK, 105.2. cf. Mahābhārata, 12.8.22 : "From wealth one's merit increases. He that hath no wealth hath neither this world nor the next."

2 TK, 105.7. cf. Bhartrhari, Nītiśataka, 40: "All these identical sense-organs, the same actions, the same undamaged intellect, the same speech; yet without the warmth of wealth, the same man becomes quite different in an instant."

3 TK, 105.9 cf. The Pañcatantra which points out that poverty is a curse which is worse than death and adds: "Beggary is a shrine of wretchedness, the dwelling place of tears, the thief of mind, the soil of doubts, the treasury of fears, concerted meanness, home of woe, honour's knell, a form of death to self-esteem and no different from hell." (Cited in Gokhale, op. cit., p. 53.)

Vaḷḷuvar's positively affirming the importance of wealth is evident from TK, 76.8: "The poor are for ever held in contempt, the rich are always belauded, for the wealthy man is like one who in joy and security witnesses an elephant fight from a secure hill-top, far away from the turmoil."

4 We are deliberately using the Aristotelian terminology here to take note of the remarkable parallelism. The classical defence of property by Aristotle (The Nicomachean Ethics, I. IX.) precisely states the necessity of material possessions in human life. With a stern sense of realism he refuses to look upon possession as a deterrent of the human goal and as a corruptive influence. He defends the institution of property with a humane and psychological touch. He

are impracticable without a moderate competence. It may be that even when the individual has a secure 'economic base' it does not follow that he will grow automatically spiritual. But the implication in Valluvar's theory is that the absence of material well-being is likely to have the effect of retarding moral development in the individual.<sup>1</sup> It may not be illogical to draw the corollary that the chances of a man who is free from worries regarding his basic material

4 (of the previous page) (contd.) argues that personality-development requires a certain amount of material equipment, a supply of external goods without which man would live as animals and expend all his time towards the struggle for existence. It is the business of each of us to provide as far as we can for our own individual requirements and for the whole process of our development. The general unfolding of human personality and the growth of individuality are impossible without the basic material possessions.

1 It is interesting to note that the significance of the 'economic base' is pointed out in clear and unambiguous words by the classical economist, A. Marshall (Principles of Economics, London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1952, Introduction). He writes: "When we consider the lot of the unfortunate who have to live and grow amidst the most unsatisfactory surroundings, it becomes evident that the material conditions of a complete life must be present if the higher faculties in man are to be developed. The most unfortunate section of society has little opportunity to taste the joy of friendship; they know nothing of the decencies of life and very little even of the unity of family life; and religion and philosophy often fails to reach them. There may be other causes than poverty for this unfortunate state of affairs, but poverty is the most important cause. There is another section of society which has men who have only insufficient food, clothing, and shelter, who because of this, have to engage themselves in exhausting toils with imperfectly nourished bodies and consequently also unable to develop their higher mental faculties. Rejoicing in their ordinary affections and common enjoyments, they may still feel that they are leading a life which is far less complete than their more fortunate brethren who have more material wealth. Even when they are well, their weariness often amounts to pain, while their pleasures are few; and when sickness comes, the suffering caused by poverty increases ten-fold; and

needs developing into a perfected man are more than of a man who is in dire need of material wealth. We may thus maintain that according to Valluvar "rains symbolized the substratum of material life and unless that is assumed, ethics, right living, good life and ordered existence (become) impossible,"<sup>1</sup> and also accept the interpretation that since rain is the compendious expression of all economic factors that make for material life, it is the single and the most visible element known for life-affirmation ... in the Kural's philosophy of good life.<sup>2</sup> In addition to indicating that a strong economic base is one of the pre-requisites of good life Valluvar seems also to hint at the content of good life, viz., cultivation of the attitude of benevolence.<sup>3</sup> Valluvar seems to suggest that the benefits we get from the rains point not merely to the necessity of satisfying ourselves

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1 (of the previous page) (contd.) though a contented spirit may go far towards reconciling them to these evils, there are others to which it ought not to reconcile them. Over-worked and under-taught, weary and careworn, without quiet and without leisure, they have no chance of making the best of their mental faculties."

1 Natarajan, op. cit., p. 10.

2 ibid.

3 This is evident from an extremely significant couplet:

"Benevolence seeks no return. What does the world give by way of recompense to the clouds?" (TK, 22.1.)

In his commentary on this couplet Parimēlaḷakar explains that (the great) men who are benevolent, like the clouds, do not expect any reciprocation. Maṇakkuḷavar goes into the meaning of the word kaṭappāṭu in the couplet and comments that it stands for oppuravu (in the context) which word means benevolence. Benevolence

'materially' but also to the fact that benevolence as an attitude in life ought to be cultivated by man.

The possibility of cultivating this quality is also concretely illustrated by Valluvar by referring to the ascetics who may be aptly called the exemplars of good life. It may be pointed out here that just as the discussion of the benefits conferred by the rains on mankind points to the life-affirmation elements in the Kural's philosophy of good life the praise of the greatness of ascetics probably signifies that Valluvar expresses a preference for a life-negating philosophy.<sup>1</sup> We concede that there is definitely a problem here - of determining whether or not the 'affirmative preference' expressed by Valluvar earlier is to be 'taken seriously'. But it seems to us

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3 (of the previous page) (contd.) means an act done without the expectation of a return, he comments. Parithivā opines that an individual's attitude of wanting to return the help done unto him by somebody in the past is comparable to the attitude of one wanting to 'return the courtesy' to the rains. The greatness of the attitude of returning the help is brought out by the comparison with 'trying to do the impossible', viz., recompensing to the clouds. The chapter in which this couplet occurs explains what is befitting man and so this commentary helps us to appreciate the greatness of the person who is benevolent as well as the greatness of the recipient of the help. The greatness of the former consists in not expecting anything in return (for the help he has rendered) and the greatness of the other person consists in his attitude of wanting to return the help. Tiruvalluvar's concept of 'being human' is thus made apparent in this commentary. Kāliṅkar makes a similar comment.

1 This difficulty seems to be unsurmountable since the chapter entitled "Greatness of Ascetics" (ch. 3) immediately follows the one entitled "The Excellence of Rain" (ch. 2) But even a perusal of chapter 3 would show that the difficulty is only seeming and not real. Two couplets especially can be referred to here in support

that certain considerations<sup>1</sup> would not merely reveal the fact that Valluvar is not suggesting the cultivation of a life-negating attitude but, on the other hand, indicates his position on the question of life-affirmation and life-negation. The very context in which reference is made to the greatness of ascetics points to Valluvar's insistence on the necessity of cultivating the spirit of asceticism rather than on renouncing the world. The ascetics, as exemplars of good life, show to the world how it is possible to be in the world but with a sense of non-attachment which connotes not non-concern but the attitude characterizing the state wherein narrow attachments have been transcended. All this become evident from the fact that

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1 (of the previous page) (contd.) of our position, - the one in which the reference to the ascetics is in terms of what they do, implying that they have not renounced the world (TK, 3.6), and the other in which the world is considered to be within the knowledge of the five sense-organs of the ascetics, indicating that the great men (ascetics) are in the world and have not abandoned it (ibid., 3.7).

1 One of these relates to a peculiar difficulty inherent in the text of the Kural, viz., that to understand the significance of a particular couplet, sometimes we have to look for a guide-line in another couplet. The latter may be found in the preceding chapter, in the immediately following chapter or in a chapter far removed from the one in which the couplet under consideration occurs. The result is that the full significance of a couplet (or even a whole chapter) cannot always be understood by considering it alone, i.e., by trying to understand its literal (or even figurative) meaning. The citations from other chapters of the Kural that we have given to suggest what possibly Valluvar signifies by the chapter on the rains have been necessitated precisely by this consideration.

The other relates to the poetic artistry with which the author presents the two aspects of human life - the materialistic and the non-materialistic (also sometimes referred to as the



the description of the greatness of the ascetics is more in terms of what they do in the world than in terms of what they achieve for themselves by renouncing the world.<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, the understanding of the significance of asceticism is to be had both in terms of the reference to benevolence and in terms of the significance of the term aram itself, according to Valluvar. Since aram in its deepest sense signifies benevolence (arul) and since the ascetics are also referred to as aravōr and aram pūntār (which terms signify a person who has accepted aram

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1 (of the previous page) (contd.) life-affirming and life-negating aspects). The curious mixture and the almost imperceptible blending of the two that is found in human life cannot be expressed by putting the life-affirming and life-negating elements in water-tight compartments, suggests the style of the author. (Of course, the term 'life-negating' here connotes the trans-empirical aspirations of man, - his 'looking beyond' the purely empirical level of existence.) Inevitably, therefore, the style has expressed itself not merely in the arrangement of chapters (for the presentation of the philosophy of good life) but also in treating the subject-matter of each chapter.

1 The couplet in the third chapter (3.6) which singles out the ingredient of greatness, viz., 'doing the undoeable' (lit.) is significantly spotlighted by Maṅakkuṭavar in his commentary. He emphasizes that the 'doing' aspect is more primary than renouncing itself. In the couplet the ascetics are described as those who who are able to do what is generally considered to be impossible or extremely difficult. More specifically here: the description of the human ideal seems to sound 'description of the impossible'. The greatness of the ascetics consists in realizing the ideal and by their actions characterized by benevolence, they set the example to the world.

Couplet 3.3 which reads: "The greatness of those who have weighed both the worlds and take their stand in this world shines forth beyond all others" clearly indicates that the greatness of the ascetics consists not merely in experiencing 'transcendence' but in 'exemplifying'.

as his mission), the concept of asceticism needs to be considered as synonymous with Tiruvalluvar's concept of the ideal man. Since the ascetics are considered as the exemplars, asceticism in the sense explained may be considered also as pointing to the ideal of man. The description of the ideal man as one who has renounced thus seems to signify clearly that he is a personification of self-sacrifice. His greatness consists in the very fact that he sacrifices everything for the sake of aram.<sup>1</sup>

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1 In the light of what we have stated already about the concept of asceticism in the Kural it seems to be necessary here to take note of Parimēlalakar's interpretation of an important term occurring in the opening couplet of chapter 3. The couplet (3.1) reads: "The ideal of every code requires, as the highest good, the greatness of them, who, renouncing everything, have stood true to their state." The Tamil word olukkattu nittār which is translated as 'renouncing everything' is interpreted differently by Parimēlalakar and Maṇakkuṭavar.

Parimēlalakar reads the Brahmanical Hindu varṇāśrama ideal (the ideal of the social classes and the stages of life) and interprets the term olukkattu nittār as "one who has renounced, after performing duly, the duties of one's varṇa and āśrama (vide his commentary on 3.1.). He explains at length how, when the duties of one's varṇa and āśrama are fulfilled, dharma will grow, how, with the growth of dharma, adharmā (unrighteousness) decreases, how, consequently, ignorance vanishes and paves the way for a discriminatory knowledge of the abiding and the ephemeral, how, ultimately it helps one to get over the feeling of 'I' and 'Mine'. It is difficult to accept this interpretation in the light of our view that the philosophy of good life in the Kural is not to be understood as based on the varṇāśrama scheme. We have already adduced reasons for our position and hence we shall simply state here that if asceticism, according to the Kural is not an 'isolated station' which is 'reached' after giving up life in society (the house-holder's status), Parimēlalakar's commentary does not seem to reflect the spirit behind the couplet under consideration. Maṇakkuṭavar interprets olukkattu nittār simply as "the great men who renounce everything for the sake of good conduct" (vide his commentary on 3.1.). As Meenakshisundaram

The prime importance accorded to aram is thus clear and, the more significant point to notice here is that by portraying the picture of the ascetics as 'exemplars' Valluvar seems to consider aram as the pervasive principle in human life, for the 'exemplars' would imply that the 'others' are to emulate the examples set. And, in terms of good life, it would mean that the ascetics 'demonstrate' that the Good is achievable in life and suggest that accepting aram as a principle in life would be a sure way of realizing the Good. As such Valluvar's specifically reiterating the efficacy of aram is significant in two respects. On the one hand it seems to be 'addressed' to those who have accepted aram as the 'prime mover' in their lives - to assure them that aram has its own rewards, and, on the other, (the 'reiteration of aram') seems to be meant as a clear preamble to the discussion of the pervasiveness of aram in individual and institutional life. "Virtue begets honour as well as riches and so can there be a greater good for mankind than virtue?" Tiruvalluvar asks<sup>1</sup> and it is obvious, he wants aram to be understood not merely as a trans-empirical but as a supreme human value as well, - 'human' being understood in the sense of applicability to ordinary, everyday-aspirations of man. The

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1 (of the previous page) (contd.) (op. cit., p. 238.) observes, Maṅakkuṭavar's simpler explanation and interpretation seems to bring out the importance of this chapter in relation to the whole of Tirukkural. Hence this commentary is more acceptable to us.

1 TK, 4.1.

assurance itself is in the form of explaining how aram as the inner or moving spirit of of one's actions yield all kinds of wealth (poru), happiness (inpam) and glory (pukal).<sup>1</sup> The pervasiveness aspect referred to just now is epitomised in the words: "Be spotlessly pure in mind"<sup>2</sup>, for, purity of the mind is the sine qua non for happiness 'within' (for the individual) and for ensuring the same in his dealings with the others in society. This is evident from Vaḷḷuvar's spelling out the meaning of the expression 'being spotlessly pure in mind': "That is righteousness which is free from these four things: envy, lust, wrath and harsh word."<sup>3</sup>

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1 It is significant to note here that the concluding part of the section on Illaram (The House-holder's Duties) is on pukal. In that chapter (ch. 24) pukal is spoken of as the this-worldly achievement of the life of virtue.

2 TK, 4.4. There are striking parallels to this idea in the Sanskrit writings, where the 'satisfaction of an enlightened conscience' is referred to as one of the sources of dharma: Manu, II.6 & 12; Yājñavalkya, I.3-5 & 7; Baudhāyana, I.1,1 & I.1, 3-5; Vasiṣṭha, I. 4-5; cf. Mahābhārata, 12.251.3.

Referring to the significant place accorded by the Hindu philosophers to the 'voice from within' and to the importance given to the moral codes themselves in the Hindu tradition, T.M.P. Mahadevan, Outlines of Hinduism, Bombay: Chetana Ltd., 1960, p. 33. writes: "We are not to stifle the inner voice in order to conform to external codes ... As the ears of the generality of mankind, however, are not tuned to this small voice, there is need for law-givers and leaders."

3 TK, 4.5.

Valluvar's insistence on mental purity and his concretely listing the qualities which make for mental purity point to the fact that aram is not something extraneous to the mind of man, that it is only a process whereby mind is cleansed of its accretions of impurity. Aram therefore is a principle of growth in the life of each individual. Such an approach to aram offers us also an insight into Tiruvalluvar's implicit critique on mere 'display of aram' by only adopting the 'ascetic apparel'. It may perhaps be said that the significance of aram in the individual's life may thus be conceded but not in the realm of inter-personal relations, but on a deeper analysis we find that the impression is due to Valluvar's insistence on the development of the basic human quality of aram by each individual. The insistence thus signifies the validity of the principle to all human beings and the applicability of it to inter-personal situations is, by implication, made clear.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> We should not, however be mistaken as maintaining that Valluvar, only by implication refers to the applicability of aram to inter-personal situations. We are only saying here that the appeal to the 'spotless purity of the mind' which may be mistaken, especially because of the way in which we have interpreted<sup>it</sup> as a reference to the individual merely, should be considered to have within it, an important implication for inter-personal life-situations as well. Our long discussion of aram as the principle of extension as conceived in the Kural would certainly have 'conveyed our meaning' that the applicability of aram to human relations was not just a stray thought in Valluvar's mind but was meant as the natural corollary of aram. Furthermore, the content of aram to which we shall make references presently would also show the great concern of Valluvar for the social applicability of aram.

The specific discussion of the efficacy of aram - pointing to the 'benefit it brings' both at the secular and at the spiritual levels - and the insistence on adopting aram as the prime-principle in one's life seems to be a preamble to the discussion of the 'stages' through which the ideal of the Good can be realized and as a preliminary to the discussion of the diversifications of aram.<sup>1</sup>

It seems to us, however, that for a proper understanding of the way in which the theme of good life is developed by Vaḷḷuvar in the Kural we should, at this stage, refer to his views on the freedom of the human will. Rather than proceeding on the basis of a generalization that a system of philosophy which speaks of the ingredients of the good life - the material as well as non-material aspects, the 'exemplars' and the efficacy of aram - must necessarily presuppose the freedom of the human will, we would like to refer to the

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1 This seems to explain why Vaḷḷuvar indicates the importance of aram in many different ways. He exclaims: "There is no greater good than aram nor a greater source of evil than forgetting it." (TK, 4.2). The same idea is slightly differently presented by him in the concluding couplet: "That is aram which one ought to do and that is not aram which ought to be shunned" (*ibid.*, 4.10). The significance of aram is further highlighted by suggesting that the attitude of procrastination in regard to it is to be completely avoided: "Do virtuous deeds now, defer it not to a future date for it will be a never-failing friend at the dying hour" (*ibid.*, 4.6). The idea is driven home more forcefully by the observation that the individual's passing no day without doing virtue is tantamount to his placing a block of stone to the passage to other births (*ibid.*, 4.8). "True joy of living flows only from virtue, all else is sorrow and deserve no praise", Vaḷḷuvar emphatically points out (*ibid.*, 4.9). Parimēlalakar and Kāḷiṅkar interpret aram here as standing for illaram (the aram of the hearth) and explain that the couplet indicates the importance of

question here for two reasons: one, Vaḷḷuvar himself has not left this aspect of good life as an unstated presupposition; and two, we feel that specifically from the point of view of this study the positive, life-affirming aspects of Vaḷḷuvar's theory of good life need emphasis.

Vaḷḷuvar indicates his views on this complex question by offering us the concept of Ū which is sometimes mistaken as fate. The exact scope of this difficult notion and its place in the scheme of values according to the intention of the author is a subject of some debate. The commentators are of some help in determining the meaning of the term. According to one of them the term is to be understood as synonymous with niyati<sup>1</sup> ('law', 'order') which imports the sense of a law according to which the consequences of the two-fold deeds (iruvinaippayan) - good deeds and bad deeds - accrue to the 'agent' (the doer of the deeds) with intransmissible specificity.<sup>2</sup>

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1 (of the previous page) (contd.) the house-holder's life. Maṅakkuṭavar and Parithiyār interpret aram as a general ethical principle here and this seems more helpful in the present context since the chapter sets forth, in general terms, the 'principle' and not concrete illustrations of it which are taken in the subsequent chapters.

1 There was a whole school of philosophy going by the name of Niyativāda which advocated a most uncompromising law of determinism and rejected freedom of any kind. References to this school are to be found in the Hindu, Jaina and the Buddhist literatures. vide A.L. Basham, History and Doctrine of the Ajivikas, London: Luzac, 1951.

2 vide Parimēlaḷakar, Commentary on Ū.

According to another, the term signifies the fact that what was previously done bears fruit later.<sup>1</sup> Regarding the first interpretation we would like to point out that niyati refers to the deterministic aspect of 'law' whereas vinai which is the equivalent of karma (of the Sanskritic terminology) signifies not merely the deterministic aspect of human experience but the aspect of freedom of the human will. Valluvar's understanding of ūl includes carefully the freedom aspect.<sup>2</sup>

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1 vide Maṅakkuṭavar, Commentary on ūl. For explaining the causal relationship between 'deeds' and 'experiences' he refers to the structure of the text of the Kural itself, especially to the fact that the chapter on ūl comes after the chapters on aram but before the sections on porul and inṇam. Without knowing that because of virtuous deeds (aram) wealth (porul) and pleasant experiences (inṇam) result and similarly because of the ignorance of the fact that poverty and unpleasant experiences result from bad deeds, people may consider that their experiences are because of their own efforts. To counter this ūl is explained after aram and before porul and inṇam, he observes. Though the commentator seems to equate ūl with fate it is not really so. What he means is that our present experiences are not directly related to our present attempts. Our present experiences are the results of our past actions and our present actions will bear fruit in the future.

2 This is evident from a significant couplet in which Valluvar emphatically points out: "Those who strive hard, without fear and without getting discouraged, will even see fate (put) behind their back." (TK, 62. 10) Apart from the fact that this couplet reveals that Valluvar was not a fatalist it also points to the fact that Valluvar's views on the question of fate vis-a-vis free-will can be gathered not merely from the chapter on ūl which seems to sound fatalistic but from subsequent chapters as well. It seems to us that Valluvar wants to deliberately sound fatalistic in the chapter on ūl (chapter 38) which comes at the end of the Section on Aram. The 'fatalistic tone' seems to be symptomatic of the author's caution in reminding the individual of the role of karma in leading a good life, a caution which amounts to saying that the individual, by not doing virtuous deeds, is going to be responsible



In this sense ūl is not to be understood as fate but as the law of karma. In this context it needs to be emphasized that though sometimes the term fate is used synonymously with the term karma, they are not the same. The term fate gives us the meaning that the

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2 (of the previous page) (contd.) for building an arsenal possessing destructive potentiality, a power which will come down heavily upon the individual by making him reap the consequences of his own actions.

The following couplets deserve to be cited in full to reinforce the idea that the author is a great believer in the initiative of the individual in doing the good. These may be contemplated in answer to a possible misgiving (that the author subscribes to fatalism) that does arise if attention is confined strictly to the chapter on ūl:

"He is said to 'possess' who is devoted to work; he who is without it, can he be considered to possess anything at all?" (TK, 60.1)

"The strong-hearted will not faint, even in case they fail just as the elephant stands majestically even when wounded by deadly arrows" (ibid., 60.7).

"Exuberance of spirit alone is strength; those who are devoid of it are only trees having the form of men" (ibid., 60.10).

"Let die laziness, the death of effort if you wish the esteem of your house-hold" (ibid., 61.2).

"Shirk not from any work saying: -It is impossible for me', for, strenuous effort yields prevailing power" (ibid., 62.1).

"Do not give up your task in the middle; for the world will abandon those who leave their task unfinished" (ibid., 62.2).

"Before a man who is like a bullock pushing its way through uneven tracks, obstacles meet with obstruction" (ibid., 63.4).

"<sup>they</sup> If those who plan (an undertaking) possess steadfastness of will, will achieve what they want to achieve" (ibid., 67.6).

"Deliberation ends with the resolution (to act) but delay in executing it is wrong" (ibid., 68.1).

cf. also ibid., 61.3; 61.5; 63.3; 63.5; 66.1; and 67.1.

individual is utterly helpless before it, that he himself is not responsible for his own experiences. Probably because of the wrong equation of karma with fate, a belief in the karma theory is considered to imply that man has no free-will and then it is pointed out that a positive, this-worldly attitude towards life becomes impossible (because of the belief). Such a distinction between fatalism and karma would reveal that a belief in the latter does not deter human action. The Kural's acceptance of the karma doctrine needs to be understood against this background, and no wonder, Tiruvalluvar emphasizes the efficacy of human effort:

They say that the black goddess of ill-luck abides in sloth and that the goddess of wealth whose abode is the lotus in the effort of them who are not slothful.<sup>1</sup>

The need for human effort is even more clearly emphasized in another couplet:

To be without a fate that is favourable is no disgrace to anyone, but to be without manly effort based on right knowledge is indeed disgraceful.<sup>2</sup>

In this connection it is significant to note that Schweitzer who is generally critical of Indian ethics writes of Kural:

Maxims about joy in activity, such as one would not expect from Indian lips<sup>3</sup> bear witness to the strength of world and life-affirmation present in the Kural<sup>4</sup>

and refers to two couplets in support of his argument:

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1 TK, 62.7.

Although fate may make one's labour vain, yet the reward may be proportionate at least to the extent of one's bodily exertion<sup>1</sup> and

Who pains as pleasure takes, he shall acquire the bliss to which his foes in vain aspire.<sup>2</sup>

2 (of the previous page) TK, 62.8.

3 (of the previous page) This is too much of a generalization on the 'ethics of inactivity' in the Indian tradition. Probably the failure to appreciate fully the spirit of Indian ethics is due to a misunderstanding of the significance of karma. All the Indian schools which believe in the law of karma maintain that the individual reaps as he sows. Karma in Indian philosophy has two meanings which are not always distinguished. Karma denotes action as well as fruits of action. Karma as action signifies that every action has its after-effects. The after-effect aspect is also referred to as karma and gives us the meaning of fruits of action. The moral responsibility of the individual when he performs an action is emphasized by all the three traditions of Indian thought, Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism. It may also be pointed out here that the moral responsibility aspect of the doctrine of Karma becomes evident from the fact that according to the theory every action produces a predisposition for its recurrence. Once a predisposition is created in the individual (by the individual himself) it becomes difficult (though not impossible) for the individual to go against it.

The exhortation to a life of action as against leading an inactive life which is the theme of the Bhagavad-Gītā is a concrete example of the insistence on leading an active life that we find in Indian thought analogous to the type of activist ethics that we find in the Kurāḷ.

4 (of the previous page) op. cit., p. 202.

1 TK, 62.9.

2 ibid., 63. 10.

The deeper aspect of the life and world-affirmation not referred to by Schweitzer but which gives us the real meaning of karma in the Kural will become evident if we pause here and reflect on what is suggested as an implication for the good life in terms of "overcoming karma". The idea underlying Valluvar's treatment of the theme is one of emphasizing, on the one hand, the inescapability of karma and also of a simultaneous overcoming of it through transmutation. It is in this sense that u becomes an integral factor of good life. In a sense this is also the accepted doctrine of Indian thought, and Valluvar is only reflecting here the maturest understanding of the problem and the resolutions of it attempted by the generality of the Hindu, Jaina and the Buddhist traditions. Karma has its sway in strict proportion to the sense of agency and possession with which one acts.<sup>1</sup> If one does good deeds and abstains from evil ones one surely creates for oneself a 'good fate' just as by doing the opposite, one is only sowing the seeds for an evil destiny. This is the commonplace doctrine of rewards for good actions and punishment for evil ones, constitutive of the very essence of the Law of Karma. The problem with which the different Indian religious systems are faced here is one of resolution of

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1 Devasenapathi (op. cit., p. 343.) referring to this aspect of the karma theory observes: "It is only so long as we act with a sense of agency, trying to claim rewards for good actions and to escape punishment for evil ones that karma can keep us under its control. When through long ages, we realize that duty has to be done irrespective of consequences, ... we cease to be under the control of karma."

karma, for it is only by overcoming karma one realizes the ultimate Good.

Realizing Good life accordingly is described as transcending the cycle of birth and death which is intrinsic to the life of karma. What the author of the Kural seems to suggest in the company of the different religious systems of India here is that if one lives a life of aram in its comprehensive sense and exemplifies this sense of aram in the form of compassion and concern for fellowmen and fellow-creatures and achieves complete conquest over the sense of 'I' and 'mine', the deeds of such a person mean the Good and that he is no longer under the control of karma, i.e., that he is also one who has realized viṭu.<sup>1</sup>

In this sense, realizing viṭu, the ultimate Good may be referred to as the culminating point of the vertical dimension of aram and the practice of aram in the altruistic sense may be considered synonymous with the horizontal dimension of aram. Since realizing the Good involves basically a progressive striving towards overcoming the innate sense of an egotistic approach to life, the

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<sup>1</sup> It is interesting here to refer to the connotation of the term viṭu. Etymologically the term is derived from the Tamil term viṭu which means 'to leave'. Even though etymologically the term imports the sense of giving up, the term viṭu enjoys, in actual, popular and literary usage, the highest positivity of meaning. Viṭu in Tamil also refers to home. 'Realizing viṭu' is therefore like home-coming. Just as in one's own home one is free from any sense of constraint, 'realizing viṭu' in the religious sense becomes a synonym for the ideal of real freedom.

'horizontal dimension' of aram itself gets suffused with deeper meaning and significance. Such a state of coalescence that we suggested above<sup>1</sup> as a plausible interpretation of the philosophy of good life that the Kural offers needs to be reiterated here for two reasons: (i) the reciprocal relationship between the horizontal and the vertical dimensions of aram would point to the fact that the various stages through which the ultimate Good can be realized in human life gets infinite scope for reinterpretation in terms of developing expansiveness of concern for all that is and (ii) the altruistic tone with which the horizontal dimension of aram, as an integral aspect of good life, is expressed, will not be understood as connoting merely the development of the attitude of universalism. Our first suggestion would necessarily relate to the question of understanding Valluvar's theory against the backdrop of the Āśrama-scheme of Brahmanical Hinduism<sup>2</sup> and our second suggestion would bring out the social content of aram and its deeper implications.

In and through his analysis of aram Valluvar suggests that the ultimate Good in human life can be realized through two stages which connote a gradual development. He refers to these as illaram (aram of the hearth) and turavaram (aram of the cloister). This at once raises the question whether such a concept of 'two stages'

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1 vide supra, pp. 92-94, 104.

2 See also pp. 50,94,141,146-147.

is based entirely on the four-fold Āśrama-scheme.<sup>1</sup> It seems to us that the four stages of life recognized by Brahmanical Hinduism were reconceived by Valluvar in terms of illaram and turavaram.<sup>2</sup>

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1 In view of the importance of the basic idea behind the Āśrama theory in our present context we may give a few more details of the scheme here. (We have made reference to the 'structural lay out' of the Āśrama-scheme earlier, vide supra, p.50) In the Āśrama-scheme each one of the āśramas preceding the Samnyāsāśrama is considered to help the individual to become well-equipped to enter into the final stage in life which may also coincide with the 'realization' proper (i.e., attaining mokṣa). The brahmacaryāśrama is the initiation-stage where the individual gets educated on the essentials of good life and taught the significance of dharma as a regulative value in life. The gṛahastāśrama is the stage where the individual, in an ethical way, fulfills also his acquisitive and emotional needs, what is referred to as aspiring and realizing the values of artha and kāma. The vānaprasthāśrama stage sees the individual slowly 'withdrawing' from the world of activity (the individual is to retire into a forest, in this stage), though the withdrawal is not complete in the sense that the individual takes his wife along. In the saṁnyāsāśrama stage the individual leaves his wife behind and concentrates solely on mokṣa. (Vasiṣṭha, VII. 1-2; Baudhāyana, II,6,11,12; Gautama, III.2; Āpastamba, II,9,21,1; Manu, VI.88; Kauṭilya, Artha-Sāstra, I.3.) Exceptions are admitted in the Upaniṣads - of those who are asked to renounce the world the moment they feel fed up. (Jābāla Upaniṣad, 4)

2 The two sub-sections, Illaraviyal and Turavaraviyal under which the chapters under the Section Arattuppāl in Tirukkural are organized, are due to the classical commentator, Parimēlaḷakar. While we have reasons to believe that the chapter arrangements of the entire work with ten couplets in each chapter could possibly be part of the intention of the author we cannot be so sure with regard to the two sub-sections, believed to connote two distinctly different 'stages' of life. We find some basis for distinction in the general tenor of treatment in terms of a mere distribution of emphasis. There is no warrant for acquiescing in the commentator's principle of division and to accept his view that the Section Arattuppāl deals with two dissimilar life-styles or institutions.

All that can be accepted here is that the distinction between illaram and turavaram and especially its significance for good life becomes explicable when viewed in the light of the Āśrama-scheme of

Meenakshisundaram's suggestion that it may not be wrong to consider the illaram-turavaram dichotomy as possibly reflecting the idea behind the four-fold Āśrama-scheme is significant in our context. He writes:

The four-fold āśrama life has not been followed in full in Tamil-land. But the four-fold life is a natural development towards universalism and perfection. There is the life of a brahmacāri - the unmarried student receiving education. Next is the stage reached by the brahmacāri when he marries and leads a family life with all its social responsibilities. The third is the stage of Vānaprastha, where the husband and wife retire to forest seeking perfection. The next spiritual development in this path is that of the saṁnyāsin, the man of the universe.<sup>1</sup>

Thus we can maintain that the Āśrama-scheme as reflective of a concrete suggestion in regard to the way in which the ultimate ideal can be hoped to be gradually realized is found reflected in the illaram-turavaram scheme.

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2 (of the previous page) (contd.) Brahmanic Hinduism. But the relation of Vaḷḷuvar's treatment of agam to the four stages of life accepted in Brahmanic Hinduism is a subject of considerable obscurity, exegetically speaking. Can Vaḷḷuvar's description of the house-holder as the mainstay of "the three others" be considered as a direct reference to the three other Āśramas? (See also p. It is very surprising that not only the brahmanically inclined Parimēlalakar but all the other commentators of old have, with a consensus, thought so. But, it is against the grain of Vaḷḷuvar to introduce numerical expressions without specifying what he means, leaving it to the commentators to fill the gap. What is more, in the present case, the very following couplet specifies "the three", - the forsaken, the poor and the dead. There is no textual basis here or at any other place in the Tamil classic to support the thesis that Vaḷḷuvar acknowledges the Āśrama-scheme as the basis of his philosophy of good life.



But it is important to note that the distinctive feature of Valluvar's scheme is that it does not conceive of a change in the person's status when he 'starts practising turavaram'. The idea is succinctly argued for by Meenakshisundaram when he observes:

... in the Tamil country the four-fold life was looked upon as a two-fold life, of the family man and of the man of the universe, spoken of in terms of illaram and turavaram. Brahmacāri or the student after all belongs to the family. The refusal to divide the non-domestic life into two as Vānaprastha and Samnyāsa is significant in the Tamilian thought. Vānaprastha and Samnyāsa are clubbed together as Turavaram. The emphasis here therefore cannot be laid on living away from one's wife in turavaram. The couple, no longer co-operating for the greatness of the family, now co-operate for the perfection of their universal love. Therefore, 'turavu' is not renouncing the world. One cannot get away from the world of action. What is important is the change in the attitude towards life, that there is no longer an emphasis on the reality of "my family and other families", "my country and other countries". Therefore Tiruvalluvar emphasizes the liquidation of the pride and ignorance involved in one's using the terms, the 'I' and the 'Mine'.<sup>1</sup>

What is perhaps intended by Valluvar is to suggest that the Good can be attained through two overlapping but distinctive attitudes to life. There is no gainsaying the fact that Valluvar does accord recognition to a distinction of two states or stages of life, perhaps as a heuristic device for a comprehensive treatment of good life.

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1 (of the previous page) op. cit., p. 246.

1 ibid., p. 247. The interpretation gets support from the Kural couplet (35.6) which reads: "He who cuts off the pride of 'I' and 'mine' enter a world beyond that of the gods. It is striking

If the ultimate ideal is attaining a state free from narrow attachments, a state which clearly sees the individual transcending the 'I'-feeling and the feeling of 'Mine', certainly various 'stages' can be envisaged as indicating the gradual progress registered in this regard and, in this sense Valluvar may be considered to be referring to illaram and turavaram as two 'stages' but the understanding of the term 'stage' here is clearly in contradistinction to that conceived in Brahmanic Hinduism wherein a definite change of status is clearly envisaged when the person 'leaves' one Āśrama and 'enters' another.<sup>1</sup>

Our position that illaram and turavaram are considered to form a continuum in Valluvar's analysis of good life can be

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1 (of the previous page) (contd.) that Parimēlaḷakar and the other classical commentators here understand the attitude reflected in the shedding of the pride of 'I' and 'mine' as symbolizing the realization of viṭu, rather than as expressive of the ascetic ideal.

1 P.V. Kane, History of Dharma-Śāstra, Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1941, Vol. II, pt. II, p. 930, observes: "We see that Yājñavalkya when about to become a parivrājaka (a wandering ascetic) tells his wife Maitreyī that he was going to leave home and that he wanted to divide whatever wealth he had between her and her co-wife Kātyāyani. This shows that a parivrājaka had even then to leave home and wife and to give up all belongings. The same Upaniṣad, in another place (III.5.1) states: 'those who realize Ātman give up the hankering after progeny, possessions and heavenly worlds and practise the beggar's mode of life!'. The contrast between the Kural concept of turavu and that of the saṁnyāsin is clear. The latter, as much as the former insists on 'inner renunciation', no doubt - but 'physical renunciation' in the sense of the 'renouncer' going away from his kith and kin and worldly possessions seems to be an integral aspect of asceticism as conceived in the idea of saṁnyāsa."

derived from his own premise that the ideal of anpu (love), exhorted to be practised in illaram is the mother of arul (benevolence)<sup>1</sup>, the ideal envisaged for achievement in turavaram.<sup>2</sup> The two ends of the continuum are referred to respectively as illaram and turavaram. In very general terms: the first stands for the duties of the individual as a member of a family and the second connotes the 'duties' of man as a member of humanity. Valluvar's view is that the Good can be realized only by the individual 'growing' ethically and spiritually and in the process experiencing an expansiveness of concern for the 'others', enveloping progressively larger and larger areas of social reality and ultimately encompassing the whole of animate creation.

Yet this transition from a narrower to a broader context for which illaram may be considered as providing a kind of schooling should not be construed merely in terms of a passage from the smaller to the larger groups, for basically they are all similar inasmuch as they are alike hedged in by 'ties' - biological, social and cultural - however large the 'area of concern' may be. The concern and love

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1 TK, 76.7

2 Our using the expressions 'in illaram' and 'in turavaram' needs to be explained even at the outset. It is the predicament of language that forces us to make use of the expressions and give the impression that 'illaram' and 'turavaram' are spatial categories and that the 'passage' from the one into the other involves 'leaving the one' and 'entering the other'. All that we mean here is to indicate that there is a 'movement' from the 'less perfected' to a 'more perfected' stage. Maybe, Tiruvalluvar, by making use of the terms illaram and turavaram wants to indicate that the second is the

that are exemplified even at the level of general humanity may not be of the most spontaneous kind<sup>1</sup> and really context-free unless it be that the operation of the ego-motive is also transcended.<sup>2</sup> This is

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2 (of the previous page) (contd.) 'result' of the individual 'consciously growing' and 'maturing' ethically and spiritually. We shall attempt to bring out this idea by using the expressions 'in illaram' and 'in turavaram'.

1 In our context Albert Schweitzer's critical reflections on altruism are of some interest. He writes: (The Teaching of Réverence for Life, trans. Richard and Clara Winston, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966, pp. 24-25.) "Can altruism be justified within the terms of a world view? Ethical thinkers have constantly endeavored to do this. They have never succeeded. When they thought they had done so, they had in fact been constructing only the requisite naively optimistic world view that would accord with their ethical principles. However, a philosophy that proceeds from truth has to confess that no spirit of loving-kindness is at work in the phenomenal world. The universe provides us with the dreary spectacle of manifestations of the will to live continually opposed to each other. One life preserves itself by fighting and destroying other lives. The world is horror in splendor, meaninglessness in meaning, sorrow in joy.

Ethics is not in tune with this phenomenal world, but in rebellion against it. It is the manifestation of a spirit that desires to be different from the spirit that manifests itself in the universe.

If we attempt to comprehend the phenomenal world as it is and deduce principles of conduct from it, we are doomed to skepticism and pessimism. On the contrary, ethics is an act of spiritual independence on our part."

2 Pitirim A Sorokin's drawing the difficult distinction between the expressions 'altruistic' and 'spiritual' is extremely significant here. In Forms and Techniques of Altruistic and Spiritual Growth, New York: Kraus Reprint Co., 1971, p. v he writes: "'Altruistic' ... refers to man and conduct as close as possible to the standard of the Sermon on the Mount or similar moral norms of great religions and ethical systems. The vague term 'spiritual' signifies ... a man who succeeds - mentally and behaviorally - in identifying his true being not only and not so much with his organism and his unconscious and conscious ego-centered 'mind', but especially with the supraconscious Infinite Manifold, transcending man's ego

what Vaḷḷuvar describes dramatically as the shift in the axis from a life of 'I' and 'mine' to a life which is totally 'free'. This indeed deserves the description of context free love. The context-free disposition of compassion is referred to by Vaḷḷuvar as aruḷ. And, aruḷ as the ideal of turavaṛam signifies thus a total transformation of the human personality. Goodness is considered as the human essence and good life, in its strictest sense, points to the individual having attained the full stature of human perfectibility.

We are mentioning this important point of distinction between illaram and turavaṛam here to suggest that Vaḷḷuvar's theory of

2 (of the previous page) (contd.) indescribable by any words and undefinable by any concepts. Symbolically it has been designated as God, Tao, Chit, Purusha, Brahma, Ātman, Nirvāṇa, Oversoul, Jen, Infinite Love, the Cosmic Mind, the True Self, the Supraessence, the Divine Nothing, the Supreme, the Absolute, the Pure Intelligence, the Coincidentia Oppositorum, the Undifferentiated, the All-Pervading, the Unutterable and so on. As a 'component' of the total man the supraconscious has been called ātman, purusha and the true self by the Hindu; nous by the Greeks; pneuma by some of the Church Fathers. Other names are spirit, soul, the divine in man ...

Whatever the name, it is conceived as devoid of any personal ego, I or me; as basically different from intellect and superior to man's unconscious and conscious mind; and as the fountainhead of man's greatest achievements in all fields of constructive creativity.

For the partisans of the supraconscious, the total man appears not as a diadic creature, consisting of body and mind, but as a triadic being made up of body, and mind, nous, or of body, and mind, and pneuma (or spirit or itself), or of the unconscious, conscious, and the supraconscious forms of being. Accordingly the summit of spirituality is achieved by those who succeed in identifying themselves - in their living, feeling, thinking and acting - with the supraconscious by making their body and their unconscious and conscious mind a mere instrumentality of the immortal self."

good life can be fully appreciated not only from the enormous importance he accords to societal concern (concern for the others) but also for the transformational effect social concern has on human personality. Since the transformed personality also transcends even the state of 'attachment' to humanity at large it may best be described as exuding kindness and compassion in a natural way, i.e., without even a trace of the ego-motive in it. Serving humanity becomes a second nature with this type of a transformed personality, suffering of 'others' comes to be considered as suffering of one's own self and the attitude of discrimination between 'superior' and 'inferior' forms of life is also got over completely.<sup>1</sup> In a word, the term self-sacrifice achieves its real meaning only in the transformed individual. Valluvar refers to the attitude of the pre-transformed and the attitude of the transformed person respectively as illaram and turavaram. In illaram the guiding principle is appu (love)

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<sup>1</sup> What Schweitzer (The Teaching of Reverence for Life, p. 47) writes on the ethics of reverence for life is of great relevance in our context here. He observes: "The ethics of reverence for life makes no distinction between higher and lower ... lives. It has good reasons for this omission. For what are we doing, when we establish hard and fast gradations in value between living organisms, but judging them in relation to ourselves, by whether they seem to stand closer to us or farther from us. This is a wholly subjective standard. How can we know what importance other living organisms have in themselves and in terms of the universe?"

...

To the truly ethical man, all life is sacred, including forms of life that from the human point of view may seem to be lower than ours. He makes distinctions only ... under pressure of necessity ... to decide which life he will sacrifice ... In thus deciding from case to case, he is aware ... he is accountable for the lives (killed)!"

and in turavaram the ideal achieved is arul (compassion). In the first one societal concern predominates - with the ego-motive still at play and in the second, social concern is not replaced by the 'attitude of transcendence' but is purified of its sloth of ego-motives. Probably the most significant point that emerges here is that illaram, as a kind of schooling helps turavaram, and turavaram as purifying illaram of its ego-motives helps it in effecting transformation of human personality. The social aspects of Aram are naturally highlighted by Valluvar under the heading 'Illaram' and the factors which help achieve purity of societal concern are treated specifically under 'Turavaram'. It is obvious, Illaram and Turavaram overlap. We shall illustrate our argument by making a brief reference to the 'content' of Aram in Illaram and Turavaram respectively.

The great significance of illaram is indicated unambiguously clearly by Valluvar by describing what a good household (the home set up by the person after getting married) is;<sup>1</sup> by portraying the ideal picture of the house-holder;<sup>2</sup> by referring to the ideal house-holder

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1 "If the married state possesses love and virtue, these will be its duty as well as reward." (TK, 5.5)

"The married state is rightly called aram. The 'other' state is also praiseworthy if it is blemishless." (ibid., 5.9)

2 The house-holder is described as a firm support of the forsaken, the poor and the dead. (ibid., 5.2) Whatever might be the interpretation that is given to the 'house-holder as being a firm support of the dead' - whether we consider it as indicating a

as "not gaining anything by the ascetic state"<sup>1</sup>, as being the greatest among all who strive for future happiness<sup>2</sup> and as 'enduring' even more than the ascetics who endure pains;<sup>3</sup> and by indicating positively that he who has lived an ideal conjugal life will be 'placed among the Gods' (i.e., will attain spiritual perfection or vīṭu).<sup>4</sup>

The principle of anpu (love) that should permeate the entire life of the house-holder is pointed to by Vaḷḷuvar when he observes that "those who are destitute of love amass everything for themselves but those who possess real love give away even the bones of their bodies for others' sake."<sup>5</sup> It is needless to add that anpu as the

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2 (of the previous page) (contd.) responsibility towards those who die without leaving any money to cremate them (or who have no body who would undertake to do the cremation) or consider the couplet as referring to the traditional Indian belief in offering periodic libations to the dead ancestors, the great significance attached to the house-holder is evident. In the first case the direct social responsibility becomes apparent. In the other case the attitude of cherishing, with gratefulness, the memory of the ancestors is clear.

1 TK, 5.6

2 ibid., 5.7

3 ibid., 5.8

4 ibid., 5.10; cf. ibid., 8.5

The ideal house-holder is also said not to gain anything by the ascetic state (ibid., 5.6). What is meant obviously is that by merely adopting the ascetic 'garb' he doesn't gain. This couplet may be considered to contain also an implicit criticism of false asceticism.

5 ibid., 8.2

The importance of love is emphasized also through various other descriptions:



permeating principle signifies that there should be a clear co-ordination of the mind (in which it originates), speech (through which it is expressed) and body (which actively 'executes' acts of aram). Otherwise, transformation of personality cannot result. Hence the content of aram as the most basic and pervasive principle that makes for the good life is indicated by Valluvar by listing out virtues which have specific reference to the mind<sup>1</sup>, speech and body. Valluvar is emphatic on the point that if there is inner love it will become manifest in sweet words<sup>2</sup> and in righteous actions.<sup>3</sup>

5 (of the previous page) (contd.)

"Aram will burn up the soul which is destitute of love even as the sun burns up the worms." (TK, 8.7)

"The house-holder who is without love is like a withered tree flourishing in an arid desert." (ibid., 8.8)

"Of <sup>what</sup> use are the external members (of the body) to those who are lacking in love, the internal member?" (ibid., 8.9)

"The body alone in which resides love contains a living soul; if not (the body) is a mere bony framework clad with skin." (ibid., 8.10)

1 The evils of envying (ibid., 17. 5,7-8) and covetousness (ibid., 18. 1,2,4,6.&8) are condemned in strong language. The social implications of getting rid of these two evils are apparent (especially) from the following two couplets:

"Of him who does not feel happy at the wealth of others it will be said: 'He desires neither virtue nor wealth.'" (ibid., 17.3)

"Those who have conquered their senses and are free from sordid vision will not covet (others' possessions) with the thought: 'We are poor!'" (ibid., 18.4) cf. ibid., 21.5

2 "Why should a person use harsh words when one can see the pleasure which sweet words spread?" (ibid., 10.9) and compares the preference for harsh words (when sweet words are 'available')

All the same, the possibility of the 'others' not appreciating fully the value of these acts of aram can't be ruled out, there may even be positive harm done to the benevolent person. It is therefore necessary on the part of the individual who is pursuing the path of aram to take note of only the positive responses from the world and not take cognizance of acts of injury done unto him.<sup>1</sup> This is the virtue of gratitude which enables the individual to be steadfast in the pursuit of aram.<sup>2</sup>

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2 (of the previous page) (contd.) to the act of clutching at the unripe fruits when sweet, ripe fruits are available." TK, 10.10)

The uselessness of 'speaking empty' is equally emphasized. (ibid., 20.4,6,7 & 9)

3 (of the previous page)

These are made apparent by the concept of cherishing guests (viruntōmpal). The very purpose of the house-holder's state and laying up (property) is (to be able) to accord hospitality to others, Vaḷḷuvar maintains. (ibid., 9.1)

The importance accorded to hospitality is also evident from the following couplets:

"He who, as a house-holder, has entertained guests and looks out for others will be a welcome guest to the inhabitants of Heaven." (ibid., 9.6) "

"To reckon the advantages that accrue from hospitality is difficult; the measure (of its virtue) of the guests (entertained) is the only measure." (ibid., 9.7)

"Those who have not been hospitable shall come to grief saying: 'We have laboured and laid up wealth and are now without support.'" (ibid., 9.8)

"That folly which does not cherish guests is poverty amidst plenty. It is the property of the foolish." (ibid., 9.9) cf. ibid., 16.1

1 ibid., 16.7&8; cf. ibid., 21.3 &4

But this attitude of gratitude should not become a sentiment merely and colour one's vision of justice and impartiality, for these are important ingredients of aram.<sup>1</sup> Valluvar seems to be suggesting here that the core of aram consists in impartiality and justice. The obligation man owes to aram is greater than an emotional acknowledgment of kindness received.<sup>2</sup> Considerations of friendship or enmity or strangeness should not constrain the sense of justice expressing itself.<sup>3</sup> The importance accorded to inner purity (cleanliness of the mind) is clear here. This is the basic requirement of justice as aram and is more concretely termed possession of self-restraint by Valluvar and is also eulogized by him.<sup>4</sup> Such a person radiates good conduct and propriety and the greatness of this quality, as Meenakshisundaram interprets it<sup>5</sup>, may be also considered to be due to the deepening of social consciousness which is ultimately traceable to the fundamental principle of love.

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"If we evaluate the excellence of a kindly act done without considering the return it gains for us, it is larger than the sea."  
(TK, 11.3)

"It is not good to forget a benefit (received); it is good to forget an injury (inflicted) at the very moment (it is inflicted)!"  
(ibid., 11.8) See also ibid., 11.9 & 11.10

1 "To be tilted to neither side but to remain impartial as the balance-rod is the ornament of the wise." (ibid., 12.8)

2 "Give up the gain even if it should bring (further) advantage, at the very moment (it is acquired) if it is without equity."  
(ibid., 12.3)

It is significant that Valluvar reiterates the mental purity aspect also by drawing our attention to the fact that even though the individual may escape from serious consequences (in the realm of inter-personal relations) by speaking sweet words, avoiding greed and jealousy the danger of the tendency to backbite may still lurk in the mind of the individual. Backbiting is indeed synonymous with the evil of deceit, it is not just pretension and 'living a double life', for, basically the pretension of kindness (in the presence of the 'other') and speaking sugar-coated words (when the 'other person' is present) while really entertaining unkind thoughts and speaking <sup>in</sup> uncomplimentary terms (in the absence of the other) amount to maliciousness. Both from the point of view of the individual's own spiritual evolution and from the view-point of society, backbiting is dangerous because "by sowing discord he (the backbiter) cuts the very root of friendship which binds society together."<sup>1</sup> No wonder, therefore, Valluvar expresses his righteous indignation against the backbiting tendency.<sup>2</sup>

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3 (of the previous page)

"Justice which consists in acting impartially (towards friends, enemies and strangers) is a pre-eminent good." (TK, 12.1)

4 (of the previous page) ibid., 13. 1-4.

5 (of the previous page) op. cit., p. 260.

1 ibid., p. 264.

2 "Let him not speak virtue, let him live in sin, but let him not backbite." (TK, 19.2)

Avoidance of all the mental evils viz., jealousy, covetousness and the malicious tendency of 'chattering' not to speak of the ability to keep off evil deeds will be possible only by 'developing' an instinctive fear of evil (deeds). Attaining mental purity (which has been emphasized so much) is not possible of achievement unless shuddering at the idea of evil deeds (also) becomes a second nature of the individual. Valluvar therefore describes evil to be deadlier than fire<sup>1</sup> and as following the evil-doer as his shadow.<sup>2</sup>

In Valluvar's view it is only the purity of mind so achieved that helps the individual to become 'other-regarding'. It is extremely significant that such a deepening of social consciousness (referred to as oppuravolukal by Valluvar) is highly suggestive of the transformation of personality of the individual in illaram, and offers us an insight into the way in which the principle of anpu (love) at work in illaram helps the individual to get a glimpse of arul (benevolence) which marks the culmination of his ethico-spiritual evolution. The attitude of self-sacrifice, of throwing oneself into the service of humanity, which gradually and

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"This pretentiousness of the slanderer is more heinous than his committing (every other) sin and his destroying (every) virtue." (ibid., 19.3)

"Why does the Mother Earth support the weight of the slanderer? It is because of (Mother Earth's) Compassion." (ibid., 19.9)

1 ibid., 21.2

naturally develops in the individual, is concretely described in terms of the individual sharing his wealth with others.<sup>1</sup> Munificence is the outward expression of the benevolent attitude that the individual is gradually developing, suggests Valluvar and reiterates the necessity to develop the kindly attitude towards the poverty-stricken and the hungry.<sup>2</sup> Benevolence as an attitude of not expecting ...

2 (of the previous page) TK, 21.8

1 "The wise say that wealth acquired by toil is for the exercise of benevolence." (*ibid.*, 22.2) By means of three significant similes (*ibid.*, 22. 5-7), as Meenakshisundaram says, three stages of sacrifice are suggestively pointed to by Valluvar. Meenakshisundaram's beautiful interpretation of the similes is worth quoting in full here. He writes: (*op. cit.*, pp. 269-270) "... three ... similes ... describe three ever increasing stages of self-sacrifice. The water reservoir intended for the village is full and overflowing. The whole village hastens to quench its thirst. Such is the wealth of the great man of wisdom and comprehension. He understands that what he has, like the water in the reservoir, is useful only for others; if not given, it evaporates or it stagnates and putrefies. One has at least to go to the reservoir; but there is another stage of self-sacrifice where the self-sacrifice of its own accord occurs in the midst of and just in front of those who require it. Therefore there is the greater man of self-sacrifice who is full of dharma and love. He is like 'the sweet fruit bearing tree' in the very heart of the village, full of ripe fruits, so ripe in time as to fall into the hands of the deserving many. The tree cannot help ... giving away the ripe fruits. This person is almost unconscious of his self-sacrifice, though it is offered at the very door and at the opportune moment to those who require it... There is still a higher stage of self-sacrifice. There is a tree whose every part is used as a medicine; and that tree, in addition, happens to be in a place, easy of approach at any part of the year, when it cannot escape being easily and completely used away as medicine for curing the sufferings of others. It is an embodiment of absolute self-sacrifice, a complete self-effacement in the cause of love and society. But there is the fulfilment. The smaller existence is dissolved into the universal existence."

2 "The power of the performer of penance is the power of his

any return is clearly emphasized by him when he says that offering gifts to the destitute (alone) is true charity.<sup>1</sup> It is significant that while exhorting the individual to adopt the benevolent attitude Valluvar points also to the individual getting fame (pukal). He insists on the individual living with glory in this world and do<sup>ing</sup> all he can to leave behind him fame by adopting the benevolent attitude towards humanity. Valluvar thus seems to reiterate his point that aram brings its own rewards in this world itself, in addition to 'gaining' for the individual 'that world'.<sup>2</sup>

Passing now to consider some of the dominant ideas regarding turavaram, it may be helpful to state even at the outset that the continuum idea suggested earlier<sup>3</sup> becomes apparent from a deeper consideration of some of the virtues 'prescribed' in turavaram. The accent in turavaram is on 'intensity of achievement', - on not merely expansiveness of concern but on 'consolidating the gains' already achieved in illaram. The individual in the state of

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2 (of the previous page) (contd.)

enduring the pangs of hunger. The power of the one who removes the pangs of hunger is superior still." (TK, 23.5)

"Unshared eating to keep the garner full is more unpleasant than begging." (ibid., 23.9) See also ibid., 23.5,6,8 & 10.

1 ibid., 23.1

2 See TK, 24.1,3,6,9 & 10.

3 vide supra, pp. 117,119-123.

turavaram not only is expected to firm in on the secure foundation laid but is exhorted to 'build up' on it.<sup>1</sup>

Arul or compassion is clearly stated to be the ideal to be achieved in turavaram. It is described as the 'wealth of wealth' and its equation with the Good is indicated by Valluvar by contrasting the 'wealth of wealth' with the 'wealth of property' which can be possessed even by the basest of men.<sup>2</sup> The way in which the ideal of compassion can be 'cultivated' is naturally made specific mention as a leading principle of arul. The principle is to treat others as one would like to be treated by them.<sup>3</sup> The 'accent on intensity' is thus

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1 This idea is implicit of course in the basic principle that appu is the mother of arul (to which reference was made at the commencement of this section) but needs to be reiterated here. The extension-principle discernible in the usage of the terms appu and arul (though with more emphasis on the expansiveness idea constituting the connecting link between illaram and turavaram) is well brought out by F.W. Ellis (Tirukkural on Virtue with Commentary, Madras: University of Madras, 1955, p. 282.) who observes: "appu is explained to mean that special affection which man feels for all connected with him in the several relations of wife, child, kindred, friend, neighbour, etc., and may be rendered love, affection, tenderness, friendship. By the second, arul, is intended that general affection which man in religious or philosophical retirement should feel for all creatures; this corresponds with the terms, benevolence, philanthropy, pity, compassion, charity, mercy. In attributing these virtues to the social and retired man respectively, the Indian moralist does not mean, however, to confine them to either; they must be considered as the special, not as the exclusive qualities of these two classes."

With all the deep insight Ellis shows into the significance of the two Tamil terms there seems to lurk in him the thought that illaram refers to the 'man in society' whereas turavaram refers to the one who has 'retired' from it, i.e., renounced it. However, since the term retirement itself does not signify renouncing society, for all we know Ellis meant to make the point that turavaram is only attitudinal, but did not since his immediate concern was to throw



seen to give a deeper meaning to the social ideal cherished in illaram. The 'expansiveness attitude' is thus not given up but is subjected to a more thorough treatment.

The 'accent on intensity' becomes apparent from the fact that two other ideals suggested, Wisdom and Truth help the individual in getting at the 'rationale' behind aiming at Arul and also to know the nature of arul itself. The right kind of knowledge is stressed by Valluvar<sup>1</sup> to be basic to arul since in the absence of the former the ideal of arul will not even be thought of. True knowledge is defined as getting over ignorance<sup>2</sup> which is the cause of birth and the 'perception' of the true Being who is (the bestower of) Heaven.

1 (of the previous page) (contd.) light on the significance of the two Tamil words anpu and arul.

2 (of the previous page) TK, 25.1

3 (of the previous page) This is evident from the couplet which reads: "When a man is about to approach a weaker person threaten-ingly let him remember how he felt (shook with fear) in front of a stronger person." (ibid., 25.10) cf., ibid., 32.8

The idea is stated slightly differently in the couplet: "The wise observe that the evils he fears, will not be experienced by the man who exercises kindness and protects the life of other creatures." (ibid., 25.4) This couplet is significant in two respects: one, it directly suggests the idea of non-killing which is also equated with arul, and two, it reminds us of the couplets in which the 'dread of evil' was considered to help the individual 'consolidate' him on the path of aram. The overlapping of virtues is obvious.

1 "Those who have a clear vision of things shall obtain deliverance from future births." (ibid., 36.2) The necessity of having a clear vision which is required even in regard to the working of the five sense-organs is also referred to by Valluvar to lay special

Truth is considered to be essential for the purity of the mind<sup>1</sup> which in turn is the basic prerequisite for 'realizing' arul.

It is again from the point of view of intensifying the virtues of kindness and purity of heart that the other virtues (which seem to be negative but which really connote positivity of meaning) are to be understood as integral aspects of turavaram. We can illustrate this especially with reference to non-violence and non-flesh-eating. The positive connotation of non-violence is not at all evident at first because of the negative prefix.<sup>2</sup> Still the positive significance

1 (of the previous page) (contd.) emphasis on the need for a 'discriminatory knowledge' in regard to the ultimate ideal of realizing the Good. (TK, 36.4)

2 (of the previous page) The ignorance referred to here is obviously regarding the 'I-mine' outlook which is to be got over, as we have already pointed out (vide supra, pp. 121 & 124). Getting over such an ignorance would be helpful in attaining the state of freedom from the cycle of birth and death. It is then that the truth of one's own Being is realized and the narrow attachments got over.

1 The emphasis in turavaram is certainly on the purity of mind, and this is not something which is stressed only in turavaram. The various references in the sub-section, Turavaraviyal to the necessity of the pure mind certainly remind us of similar stress in the sub-section Illaraviyal. The intensity in the observation of mental purity and the related virtues is striking in the various chapters under Turavaraviyal. For instance the chapter entitled The Absence of Fraud lays great emphasis on co-ordination between mind and speech as well as outward appearance (TK, 29. 2,4 & 5). The chapter Truth attaches lot of importance for purity of mind (ibid., 30. 4 & 8). The chapter with the title The Not being Angry again stresses the importance of purity of the mind: possession of anger is considered a positive evil (ibid., 31. 2 & 3) and the absence of anger is considered to be a positive virtue (ibid., 31.9). The overlapping of virtues is again obvious. The difference certainly consists in the exhortation for a stricter observance in turavaram.

of non-violence is clear from Tiruvalluvar's equating non-killing with love (aruḷ)<sup>1</sup>. The elaborate and feeling reference to the necessity of refraining from flesh-eating<sup>2</sup> would show that Valluvar's concept of non-violence is a strong evidence to support our view that

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2 (of the previous page) Commenting on the various shades of the philosophy of non-violence in the Indian religious traditions, Unnithan and Singh (op. cit., pp. 12-13) observe: "The common feature that prevails in all these approaches to the meaning of non-violence is the positive attitude in some form or the other, which require of man to add something to his personality by righteous actions and sublimation of self. Merely to refrain from doing certain things and to follow interdictions, is not the cardinal aspect of these conceptions of non-violence, although such interdictions do find some place in the norms of behaviour set by them. For instance, the following of dharma both in Hinduism and Buddhism includes eschewing certain kinds of conduct, eg., falsehood, greed, malice, etc., but these are not central to the doctrine which lies in creative transformation of the whole personality and socio-cultural relations. In other words ... the distinction between the active and the passive forms of non-violence is a relative one and heuristic in nature. In reality, these two categories are inalienable from one another. For example, the idea of 'non-resistance' in Christianity and ahimsā in Gandhian thought, do not only stand for abnegation of certain types of social conduct or emotional conditions, although apparently there is evidence to support it. It is well-known that both Christianity and Gandhian thought have laid great emphasis on the cultivation of positive virtues, e.g., love, fearlessness, emotional power of self-restraint and compassion, etc."

1 TK, 26.4 See also 33.1, 3, 4, 5 & 8 for Valluvar's insistence on refraining from killing any living being.

2 "The mind of man who tastes flesh turns not towards virtue even as the (murderous) mind of him who carries a weapon (in his hand)" (ibid., 26.3).

"We eat the killed! you say, 'by us no living creatures die' 'Who would kill and sell?' I ask, if none came to buy the flesh" (ibid., 26.6)

"Not killing and eating (the flesh of) an animal is better than performing thousand sacrifices in the sacrificial fire" (ibid., 26.9). See also ibid., 26.10.

it is the development of positive, unlimited love that he is insisting as the human ideal.

The other virtues referred to in negative terms are also to be understood as helping the individual in attaining the compassionate attitude. Kallāmai (The absence of fraud) connotes the idea of the individual purging his mind of fraudulent designs which will wreck the attainment of the ideal of arul.<sup>1</sup> Similarly kūtāvōlukkam (inconsistent conduct) signifies that what is positively required of the person adopting tuṟavaram is that the attitude of non-attachment should be cultivated.<sup>2</sup> Cinavāmai (not getting angry) is likewise to be understood as helping the individual to develop the attitude of kindness even towards those who are positively unkind.<sup>3</sup> Innāceiyāmai (not doing evil) signifies positively

1 "They cannot steadfastly walk on the path of virtue who desire fraudulent gains." (TK, 29.6)

"That black-knowledge known as fraud is not in them who desire the greatness of rectitude." (ibid., 29.7)

2 "What is the use of an appearance (of sanctity) high as heaven, if his heart is afflicted by (the indulgence in) conscious sin?" (ibid., 28.2)

"The 'bad' conduct of those who profess to have renounced all desire will bring them grief and will make them cry out: 'Oh! What have we done, what have we done.'" (ibid., 28.5)

"As, in its use, the straight arrow is 'bad' and the crooked lute is 'good', so by their deeds (and not by their appearance) let (the uprightness or crookedness of) men be judged." (ibid., 28.9)

"There is no need of a shaven head nor of long locks of hair if a man abstains from the deeds which the wise have condemned (as wrong)." (ibid., 28.10)

Resisting the temptation to do evil to others even if 'immediate' benefit like wealth may accrue from it.<sup>1</sup>

For making <sup>possible</sup> the cultivation of such an attitude of kindness towards all (suggested in and through the virtues we have just now referred to), tavam ('penance') is suggested. Here again it is important to note that Valluvar's emphasis is not on the mental and physical mortification one can subject oneself to by austerities prescribed in the form of ceremonial observations. The physical and mental torture which tavam in the Kural indicates as having the purificatory effect on the individual consists precisely in the 'experiences' the individual undergoes by means of the various

2 (of the previous page) (contd.)

These should be understood in terms of the definition of renunciation (TK, 35.6) as "destruction of the pride of 'I' and 'Mine'" that Valluvar gives.

3 (of the previous page)

Valluvar's clear implication is that not getting angry is the first step in this direction. "Get over wrath that anyone may arouse in you for (wrath) is the fountain of evils", Valluvar says (ibid., 31.3) and adds: "Though one may subject you to experiences which are painful (to bear) such as a bundle of fire being thrust upon you, it will be well to save your soul from burning anger." (ibid., 31.8)

1 ibid., 32.1

The idea that returning evil for evil is to be avoided is stressed through this virtue as well. (See TK, 32. 2 & 3)

It is also significant to note that returning good for evil is also emphasized: "The just 'punishment' to those who have done evil (to you) is to 'put them to shame' by showing them kindness in return." (ibid., 32.4)

other virtues prescribed (to which we made reference above).<sup>1</sup> To put up with the sufferings that have have been forced on the individual by some wicked men in the world is indeed a torture, but this is helpful in purifying the individual's attitude towards others and in 'training' him to do positive good even in return for evil. That is true austerity and it helps the individual to develop the truly human qualities of kindness and compassion.

We may thus state that the deeper meaning of turavaṛam (viz., that true 'renunciation' is mental or attitudinal, rather than the mere adoption of overtly 'identifiable' 'marks') that the Kural offers is the basis for our view that the substance of the philosophy of Good life according to Tiruvalluvar can be symbolized by the illaram-turavaṛam continuum idea. Such an interpretation of 'illaram' and 'turavaṛam' is also synonymous with our position that they are not to be understood purely in terms of the Āśrama-scheme which envisages a 'graded ascent', involving simultaneously, a status-change for the individual (when he enters successively the different āśramas, until finally he enters the sainnyāsāśrama - the 'stage of renunciation - and hopes to realize mokṣa).

We anticipate, however, two fundamental objections to our thesis that illaram and turavaṛam are not to be considered as two definite āśramas through which the individual must pass before

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1 vide Parithiṅār's Commentary on TK. 27.1

attaining spiritual perfection: one, the fact that the Kural maintains two distinct sub-divisions, Illaram and Turavaram and mentions illaram first and then turavaram would after all indicate that Tiruvalluvar modelled them on the āśrama-scheme; two, even a perusal of the virtues prescribed for turavaram would go to show that they are not the same as those prescribed for illaram.

We shall consider the second objection first since that would not merely help us to explain the principle of extension already referred to at the commencement of this chapter but also to indicate the background against which the successive enumeration of the virtues of illaram and turavaram as found in the Kural, is to be understood.

It seems to us that the second objection can be met by showing that the radical dichotomy read into illaram and turavaram is not exegetically sustainable. The chapter entitled Inconsistent Conduct comes under Turavaraviyal (the sub-section on turavaram) no doubt, but the thrust of the whole chapter is to insist on the development of the proper attitude of turavaram.<sup>1</sup> Tiruvalluvar clearly states in a couplet in this chapter that there can be no one who is more hard-hearted than a person who appears to have forsaken desire, while he has actually not done so.<sup>2</sup> This is a critique of false

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1 vide chapter 28. None of the couplets in this chapter give us the meaning that turavaram involves a change of status.

asceticism and unambiguously points to what asceticism is not.<sup>1</sup> In the light of this it is obvious that turavaram can be practised also by a house-holder.

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2 (of the previous page) TK, 28.6

1 We do appreciate that the Dharma-Sāstras too insist on the development of ascetic virtues and not merely on taking on the external appearance of an ascetic. They all point out that truthfulness, not depriving another of his possessions, absence of wrath (even against one who harms), humility, purity, discriminatory knowledge, steadiness of mind, restraint of the senses, knowledge (of the self) constitute the essence of dharma and have to be acquired most of all by the ascetic, since the outward signs, viz., the scanty clothing, the water-jar, etc., are not the real means of discharging the real duties of saṃnyāsa, as any one can possess these outward signs. (Manu, VI. 66, 92-94; Yājñavalkya, III. 65-66; Vasiṣṭha, X. 30; Baudhāyana, II,10, 55 & 56.). Thus it will be apparent that we are not maintaining that the Dharma-Sāstras were concerned only with formal renunciation by suggesting a mere change in one's status (by the individual entering the saṃnyāsāśrama). All the same we want to insist on the distinction between the Dharma-Sāstras on the one hand and the Kural on the other. The Dharma-Sāstras, after prescribing the four āśramas to be entered into one after the other, insist that entering into the saṃnyāsāśrama should not be considered a mere formality whereas the Kural insists throughout that turavaram is attitudinal rather than formal. There is no mention anywhere in the Kural that turavaram can be 'entered into' only after illaram.

We have remarkably similar ideas - insisting on the necessity of true renunciation - in the Jaina book Upāsakadaśāh, I. 2,7,9-12 & 63 and the Buddhist text Dhammapada, XIX. 261-266. These again suggest that asceticism proper is much more an attitude of the mind than anything else, a point which the Kural makes explicitly clear.



The chapter which bears the title The Absence of Fraud has two extremely significant couplets which would show that the 'address' is not merely to turavaram but also to illaram. Reference in couplet 29.5 to 'those who aim at universal love and achieve the blessings of limited love', as Meenakshisundaram suggests, seems to be to the people of illaram since love (appu) is the ideal of illaram and benevolence (arul) is the aim to be realized in turavaram.<sup>1</sup> Similarly the Tamil phrase alavinkan ninru olukal occurring in couplet 29.6 as Meenakshisundaram suggests, may be taken as referring to the limitation to be observed while aiming at possessions.<sup>2</sup> This will have more relevance to illaram for it is a suggestion of how the spirit of turavaram can be observed.<sup>3</sup>

In the very next chapter (chapter 30) Valluvar speaks of truth as one of the characteristic of the turavi (one who is 'in turavaram') and he drives home the point by contrasting the turavi to one in illaram. The greatness of the turavi consists in his speaking truth with all his heart and this is considered better than the person in illaram who combines tavam ('penance') with tanam (charity).<sup>4</sup> True tavam is considered to be the characteristic

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1 op. cit., pp. 275-276.

2 ibid., p. 276.

3 To have anything more than one's minimum requirements is considered a misappropriation in the case of one who is a turavi.

4 TK, 30.5

feature of turavaram and tānam is always associated with the ideal of the person in illaram. The reference to the combination of both must indicate that the attitude of turavaram can be attempted to be synthesized with the virtue of tānam in illaram. What is of more specific interest in our context is that turavaram is an attitude, otherwise referring to its synthesis with a quality of illaram would be pointless.

While referring to the necessity of getting over anger which is described as the 'killer of kinsmen' in the next chapter (chapter 31) , Tiruvalluvar warns that it will burn the helpful boat of kinsmen.<sup>1</sup> The term kinsmen here indicates that the reference suits better the person in illaram because his love (anpu) has not yet experienced expansiveness. For, if the person has experienced expansiveness of love (arul) he would consider the whole of humanity as 'his own family', - without discriminating between kinsmen and non-kinsmen.

Thus the clear applicability of the virtues listed under the section on turavaram to the person pursuing illaram would indicate that turavaram needs to be interpreted as an attitude which can be cultivated by the individual even while he is 'in illaram'. Though the 'lists of virtues' (for illaram and for turavaram) are not identical, there is a large amount of overlapping. This together

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1 TK, 31.6

with the fact that the way in which turavaram and its virtues are described would show that turavaram, according to Tiruvalluvar, was not an autonomous stage in the sense in which saṁnyāsāśrama was considered to be an autonomous stage in Brahmanic Hinduism.

Coming now to the other objection referred to above, viz., that the very structural division of Arattuppāl into two sub-sections (dealing respectively with illaram and turavaram) and the fact that the enumeration of the virtues of the house-holder first and that of the 'ascetic' next would be evidence enough to explode our theory: we would once again urge that the idea of the 'stages of life' theory is so significant for an understanding of an other-regarding system of ethics<sup>1</sup> that it leads us to think that that is the only way in

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1 This is to concede that the āśrama-theory of Brahmanical Hinduism is not to be taken lightly as connoting a mere division of the individual's life into four distinctly marked stages. Nothing can be farther from the spirit of the āśrama theory than to consider it as either being concerned solely with the individual or wholly with the other world. The brahmacaryāśrama is certainly not to be considered as a stage of life in which the individual is expected to simply restrain his sense-organs but more importantly as a kind of schooling for life itself, as the stage where the individual is initiated into the essentials of good life and as a preparation for the individual's entering the next āśrama - the grahastāśrama (the house-holder's stage) - which transforms him into a social person (man-of-society) and which stands him in good stead in the next stage - the vānaprastha (the forest-going stage) - wherein a more intensive preparation is made for the ultimate transformation of the individual into a man-of-the-world (saṁnyāsin).

Since we do not propose the theory that Tiruvalluvar's illaram-turavaram model of analysing the good life was an entirely original contribution of his to philosophizing on good life, we would not consider it at all as an objection or criticism if it is pointed out that the Kural's philosophy of illaram-turavaram

which the theme of good life as an exemplification of an ever-expanding concern for others (resulting in reverence for life) can be analysed, understood and practised. It is because of this that the Kural's view of illaram and turavaram is considered to be a re-presentation of the āśrama theory after deleting the brahmacaryāśrama and vānaprasthāśrama (the first and the third 'stages') from the scheme. What is important, however, is to appreciate that the Kural retains the idea of the individual passing through different stages of perfection before the ideal of perfection can be realized.

The logical sequence adopted by Tiruvalluvar in his treatment of Aram is now obvious. It is based primarily on the psychology of the development of love. Love may be a purely emotional-feeling phenomenon (to start with) in human life but when subjected to expansiveness and 'converted' into a transforming influence, it becomes a spiritual reality permeating the whole being of the transformed individual. The Section on Aram commencing with a description of family-life and its ideals is extremely significant from this point of view.

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1 (of the previous page) (contd.) reflects the spirit of the Āśrama theory. In fact it would be a welcome comment on our theory since that would amount to accepting the rootedness of the Kural's philosophy in the Indian philosophical tradition, a position for which we have been pleading in this study.

It is now recognized that the other-regarding virtues which are developed (later in one's life) could be traced to their roots in the family life. Co-operation, self-sacrifice, service to humanity, universal brotherhood and love of living beings have all been traced back to their origins to co-operation in the family life.<sup>1</sup> The exposure to which each one of the members of the family <sup>is</sup> subjected as a result of the face-to-face situation they are in, determine, to a large extent, their becoming sensitive to ideas and ideals of love which are deep down their hearts and are capable of reaching unlimited heights with just the proper environment.

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1 C.A. Ellwood, Sociology In Its Psychological Aspects, pp. 213 ff. (Cited in Prabhu, op. cit., p. 209.)

It is interesting to note that four out of the five social relationships that are envisaged by Confucius as basic to the harmonious development of society are concerned with the family. The five social relationships referred to by Confucius are those between: father and son; elder brother and younger brother; man and wife; elders and youngsters; and sovereign and the subject. Confucius maintains that kindness ought to characterize the father and filial piety, the son; gentility should be the characteristic of the elder brother and humility and respect, that of the younger brother; husband's behaviour must be righteous, and the wife's, obedience to her husband; elders must always be moved by human considerations towards the younger ones and the latter should have deference to the opinions of the elders; benevolence should be the dominant aspect of the sovereign's personality and loyalty towards him ought to be the trait of the subject's character. (See J.B. Noss, Man's Religions, New York: Macmillan & Co., 1963, p. 383.)

The reason for Confucius' idealizing the relationships within the family is apparent from his theory of rectification of names, which emphasizes that unless the relationships, in actual day-to-day life, accord with the names attached to them, there cannot be any peace or harmony. See the present author's Tradition: A Social Analysis, Madras: University of Madras, 1973, chapter 4 for a fuller discussion of the question.

In the context of the Kural we might say that illaram provides the occasion and the opportunity for practising, consolidating and pervasively adopting the virtue of love (anpu) in order to ultimately cultivate it as a 'reality' permeating one's whole being (arul). The importance accorded to illaram in the Kural should also be understood from this point of view. No wonder, therefore, the virtues of illaram are treated before the virtues of turavaram are dealt with.

The fact that the Kural treats of illaram first and bestows high praise on the significance of the house-holder's life<sup>1</sup> has been in some quarters interpreted to mean that Valluvar positively expresses a preference for illaram as against turavaram.<sup>2</sup> Though it may sound a good argument for maintaining the view that the Kural stands for an affirmative, this-worldly philosophy it seems to us that by taking such an extreme stand the deeper implications of Valluvar's world and life-affirming philosophy are paradoxically overlooked.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, to say that illaram is better than

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1 See TK, 5.5,6,9 & 10.

2 Namakkal Kavinjnar, Valluvarin Ullam, Madras: Inpa Nilayam, 1963, p. 53.

3 In the earlier part of this section we have pointed out that the continuum idea in the Kural can be illustrated by the fact that turavaram represents the 'accent on intensity'. This 'accent on intensity' is what gives the deeper meaning to the Kural's social theory. By overstating the case for the importance accorded to illaram by Valluvar, unconsciously the mistake of understating the depth of analysis of the 'this-worldly aspects' discernible in the Kural is committed.

turavaram (according to the Kural) would necessarily amount to missing the point again - this time committing the mistake of interpreting Tiruvalluvar to be maintaining that illaram as a 'stage of life' is better than turavaram. For, a 'preference' for illaram over turavaram would entail the position that an absolute standard of judgment was in Tiruvalluvar's mind. But we do not think that Tiruvalluvar addressed himself at all to such a question of analysing which one of the two 'stages' is better.<sup>1</sup>

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3 (of the previous page) (contd.)

Unless the deeper implications of Valluvar's analysis are conceded, the whole sub-section of Turavaraviyal will have to be explained away. Particularly we may mention here that the significance of the four important chapters in Turavaraviyal, - "Instability" (chapter 34), "Renunciation" (chapter 35), "Knowledge of the True" (chapter 36) and "The Extirpation of Desire" (chapter 37) may then be completely lost sight of. Of course, from the point of view of the main argument of our thesis we did not deem it necessary to go into an analysis of these chapters, but the importance of the chapters themselves should not be overlooked.

1 It is topical interest here to take note of the cautious approach to a possible over-statement regarding the Dharma-Sāstras' encomiums on the grahastāśrama (the stage of the house-holder) suggested by a scholar. Writing on the Āśrama-scheme, Prabhu (op. cit., p. 95) observes: "... this special eulogy bestowed upon the grahastāśrama should not be misunderstood; we must try to comprehend its meaning in its proper perspective. The grahastāśrama is glorified, not in terms of absolute superiority of the āśrama over all the others, but from a particular angle of vision and with reference to the particular position which that āśrama occupies in the scheme of life. The ... praise for the grahasta, as the best āśrama emanates, we must not fail to notice, from the point of view of the 'social values' of the āśramas. Otherwise, in general, since each āśrama is regarded as an essential stage for the development of the individual, it is the best in its own place, and any comparison of merits between them on absolute grounds would be surely beside the point. But, from the point of view of a particular

All that he was concerned to emphasize was that turavaram is an attitude to be cultivated and, to the extent that the attitude can be cultivated 'in illaram', illaram itself becomes turavaram. So it would be truest to the spirit of Valluvar's philosophy to interpret his analysis of illaram and turavaram as signifying a presentation of good life as a synthesis of the world affirmation approach (to life) and the spirit of non-attachment.

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1 (of the previous page) (contd.)

aspect, viz., the aspect of social valuation, the grahasta is exalted on the grounds of its lending support to the other three āśramas, the scope it affords for the practice and cultivation of all the three puruṣārthas ... as well as of its direct contact with ... society and the consequent direct contributions made by it to society. On the other hand, from the point of view of the acquisition of knowledge by the individual, the brahmacaryāśrama would evoke the highest praise; while from the point of view of individual salvation the saṃnyāsāśrama would take the place of honour."

This long citation is intended to acknowledge a parallel emphasis laid on the house-holder's life by Brahmanical Hinduism and should not be considered, as it might appear at first sight, as an argument against the distinctiveness of Valluvar's view of illaram since the basic difference between the Dharma-Sāstras and the Kural still remains. The Kural (unlike the Dharma-Sāstras) emphasizes the social significance of illaram neither by considering its value as a 'stage' in preparation to other 'stages' to follow nor by underlining its value in enabling the individual to 'reap' the benefits of the 'other stages', but by considering the effect of leading illaram in such a way that the attitude of turavaram widens and deepens social concern. (Social concern, in this sense is nothing but the logical and psychological culmination of adopting the principle of love as the prime-mover in the individual's life.) Thus it is can appu, the ideal of the person 'in illaram' get transformed into arul, the ideal which is exhorted to be realized 'in turavaram'.



This type of synthesis that needs to be effected in one's life is, in concrete terms, what is indicated by the exhortation to 'cultivate the attitude of turavaram in illaram'. The synthesis is significant both from the point of view of illaram and from the view-point of turavaram inasmuch as the ideal of anpu gets transformed into the more comprehensive and 'purified' love (compassion or arul) and turavaram gets the more positive and affirmative significance.

We may thus maintain that by a thorough analysis of the other-regarding propensities in man and a deep psychological analysis of the human ideal, Tiruvalluvar has indicated that aram provides the surest foundation on which good life rests. Though Valluvar holds that aram as altruistic love ingrained in the very texture of human life can and ought to be developed fully, it is significant to note that "at every stage he points out the corresponding expansion of discernment and comprehension, knowledge and wisdom."<sup>1</sup>

Thus in Valluvar's analysis of good life there is neither a mere reliance on emotional appeal nor on cold intellect. By balancing the emotional and the intellectual aspects, he is able to reinstate the principle of morality to its real dignity in human life without sacrificing the basic human approach.

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1 Meenakshisundaram, op. cit., p. 278.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DIVERSIFICATION OF ARAM: I

Towards the close of the last chapter we observed that in the Kural the moral principle of aram is clearly 'reinstated' to its rightful place in human life by the healthy synthesis suggested by Tiruvalluvar between an ethic of emotions and an intellectualistic approach to the concept of good life. The principle of aram was also maintained as not merely offering us the core-ideas for an understanding of the other aspects of human life (and particularly for institutionalizing them) but also as indicating the possibility of attaining integration of human personality. It was in this sense that aram was described as the nucleus of good life from which all other aspects grew organically. The clear in-built suggestion in our argument was that the principle of growth is also the integration-principle in human life.

In the present chapter we shall be concerned with an analysis of porul (economic-political aspects of human life) as indicating the principle of extension of aram in human life. The principle of aram is seen to be accorded the same amount of importance by Valluvar even while philosophizing on porul, though the specific 'universe of

discourse' viz., the discussion of the economic and political aspects of human life, may not readily reveal the moral principle to undiscerning eyes. It is indeed interesting to observe that the two major aspects of poruḷ delineated by Valluvar<sup>1</sup> evidence the fact that the principle of integration has not been sacrificed by him at the cost of the extension-principle. For, the economic aspect may be interpreted as driving home the integration-principle inasmuch as the absence of economic well-being of man proves a positive hindrance

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1 It seems necessary, even at the outset, to indicate the nature and scope of Poruṭpāl, the second Section of the Kural in which we find Valluvar's analysis of poruḷ. Parimēlalakar's views are indeed helpful here but it seems necessary to highlight a point which is not so clearly apparent in the classical commentator's approach to Poruṭpāl. According to the commentator poruḷ needs to be interpreted in terms of sovereignty which is a necessary condition for securing material wealth. Accordingly he analyses Poruṭpāl in terms of sovereignty and its constituents which help the administration of the country and through it, the consolidation and growth of wealth.

What seems to be more plausible is that Valluvar accords central importance to wealth (which poruḷ literally means) and discusses the prerequisites, sovereignty and citizenship in all their aspects. Tiruvalluvar in this section isolates the dimension of wealth which is integral to āram and is conducive to Happiness both of the immediate and of the more enduring kind. An organized state is a prerequisite for the creation of wealth without which we cannot have either ideal kings or ideal citizens. The king must have a filled coffer and the subjects must produce wealth. That is why subjects like agriculture, industriousness, poverty, beggary, etc. are brought in for discussion by Valluvar. Further evidence for our interpretation will become evident in the sequel but it must be stated here that the significance attached to poruḷ in Valluvar's philosophy of good life can be understood best in terms of the economic and political strands of thought that Poruṭpāl offers, on analysis.

on the path to good life; and the political aspect may be understood more meaningfully in terms of the extension-principle in so far as it represents more directly the institutionalization of aram as a moral principle.<sup>1</sup>

The literal meaning of the Tamil word porul is 'thing', 'object' or 'substance' and the extended meaning is 'possession' and 'enjoyment' of tangible objects that are required by man for his everyday life. In its wider sense it also refers to the activities of production, distribution and consumption of goods besides pointing to the basic prerequisite of economic activity, viz., the political organization of society which makes possible the economic pursuit itself.<sup>2</sup>

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1 It is obvious that we are denying neither the institutional aspects of the economic value nor the role of the political institutions in helping the individual to attain personality-integration. Nothing can be more unrealistic to the human situation than drawing a hard and fast distinction between the economic and the political aspects of life. All the same we are drawing the distinction for purposes of analysis, especially to illustrate our view that the extension-principle does not obliterate the integration-principle in the Kural.

2 It will be noticed that the meaning of the Tamil term porul corresponds to the significance of the Sanskrit term artha. This is evident from the fact that Kauṭilya, the celebrated author of Artha-Sāstra, refers, even at the commencement of his treatise, to both the economic and the political aspects of artha. The intimate relationship between economic activity and the science of government (referred to as Vārta and Dandanīti respectively by the Artha-Sāstra) is clearly indicated by Kauṭilya when he observes: "Agriculture, cattle-breeding and trade constitute Vārta. It is most useful in that it brings in grains, cattle, gold, forest-produce and free labour. It is by means of the treasury and the army obtained solely

Both the aspects, viz., man's economic pursuit and his political aspirations are analysed in detail by Tiruvaḷḷuvar while philosophizing on poruḷ. The intimacy between the economic and the political, or the difficulty in considering the one without taking into account the other is in a way suggestive of the basic foundation of

2 (of the previous page) (contd.) through vārta that the king can hold under his control both his and his enemy's party. That sceptre on which vārta depends is known as danda (punishment). That which treats of danda is the law of punishment or science of government (dandanīti). - Artha-Sāstra, IV. 9)

The extended meaning of artha is explained by Heinrich Zimmer (Philosophies of India, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1953, p. 35.). He observes that the word artha connotes "the attainment of riches and worldly prosperity, advantage, profit, wealth", also "result": in commercial life "business-matter", "business-affair", work, price and in law 'plaint, action and petition." With reference to the interior world of the psyche: "end and aim, purpose, object, wish, desire, motive, cause, reason, interest, use, want and concern."

The similarity of the connotation of the two terms, poruḷ and artha and the consequent similarity in the contents of the two treatises dealing with them have led to the view in some quarters that the Kural's approach to poruḷ is modelled completely on the Artha-Sāstra's approach to artha. Despite obvious similarities the Kural's treatment of poruḷ has many distinctive features. The most obvious slant of distinction characteristic of Poruṭpāl is its understanding the concept of poruḷ as aram in extension which provides an air of idealism to the treatment. This is in addition to the equally obvious structural difference between Poruṭpāl and Artha-Sāstra : the former expressly addresses itself to the economic as well as the political aspects of human life whereas the latter proceeds differently in the analysis of its subject-matter.

both, viz., aram.<sup>1</sup> This is not to say that the Kural, only by implication, maintains the importance of aram, but rather to suggest that the presentation of the two aspects in the Classic is done in such a way that it impresses upon us that the idealized conception of good life which is pressing for recognition and realization in human life cannot but be taken seriously by a reflective being. Thus it is that the idealizations about morality and righteousness that we came across in the analysis of aram are seen to lead us naturally and directly to their extensions which may here be referred to as their institutionalizations. Morality is thus not an abstract concept in the Kural and the analysis of it shows a realistic appreciation of human aspirations and a careful appraisal of the frailties of man.<sup>2</sup>

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1 It is fruitful to remember that even in the West the term political economy connoted the intimacy between economics and politics and that only after the publication of Adam Smith's Wealth of Nations in 1776 that economics became an independent discipline. Even then it was political economy and an aspect of moral philosophy. It may not be irrelevant to point out here that Adam Smith's Classic was written when he was holding the chair of Moral Philosophy in the University of Glasgow. Only a century later, during Alfred Marshall's days economics launched on an independent career. Marshall's own student Keynes questioning the value of such an autonomy for economics and expressing a preference for going back to 'political economy' would again point to the fact that the moral implications of the economic pursuit are not to be brushed aside as unimportant.

2 That we are not just reading a distinction between the ideal of goodness and institutional morality can be made evident from the fact that we find Tiruvalluvar using the term aran instead of aram in many couplets in the Poruṭpāl (vide TK, 39.4; 45.1; 64.5; 65.4 & 76.4 ). It must however be admitted that the terms aram and aran are used interchangeably in the Arattuppāl (eg., TK, 5.9; 15.2,7 & 10). This would add strength to our argument that the institutionalization-possibility is ingrained in the very structure of aram.

It should be conceded however that institutionalization of ideas and ideals may not always be successful, i.e., ideals propounded may not always be realized fully and in that sense institutional morality may be considered 'qualitatively of a 'lower type'<sup>1</sup> but, such a statement, if not explained properly, is bound to lead to misunderstandings both about the value of having ideals and about attempts at institutionalizing them; ideals may then be considered to be pure theorizing and institutionalizing them may be cynically viewed. In our context: the result of such a statement regarding 'institutional morality' may be that the wholesome effect of Valluvar's building up a philosophy of good life is completely nullified.

Our view that Valluvar accorded great importance to institutionalization (and hence that he did not consider it 'inferior') is based on his insistence that morality and institutionalization of it should not be considered as two distinct 'processes'.<sup>2</sup> It is

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1 N. Murugesu Mudaliar, Polity in Tirukkural in TSEL, pp. 537-538 makes a significant point indeed by drawing a distinction between aram and aran in the Kural but his reference to aran as being of a lower order may be mistaken and hence we feel the distinction needs to be carefully interpreted and understood.

2 This can be substantiated in terms of the significance of all the couplets referred to in foot-note 2 on p. 157 (first set of reference to Kural couplets), but we shall illustrate it with reference to just two of them to make our point. It is significant that even in the 4th couplet of chapter 39, though the term aran is used, Valluvar is carefully using the term aracu (which refers to the institution of kingship) rather than aracan while defining 'king' as one who does not swerve from virtue and refrains from vice. The obvious intention of Tiruvalluvar in using the abstract term aracu in this

on this premise that we suggest that poruḷ according to Tiruvalluvar represents a natural extension of aram in human life. An even more significant point that emerges (by considering the importance of institutionalization) is that the political aspects of the section, Poruṭpāl which refer to the 'king' have a deeper significance,<sup>1</sup> viz., that the suggestions and exhortations that we find in it are

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2 (of the previous page) (contd.) couplet (even though he uses the term aran instead of aram to indicate morality or the institutionalization of it) is to impress upon his readers that even when he is referring to the application of the grand ideal of aram to the day-to-day life of a society, he wants not to be mistaken by them as dealing no longer with the ideal of goodness but only with the actuality of an 'ethics of the king'. (vide Parimēlalakar's commentary on TK, 39.4)

Similarly in the 1st couplet of chapter 45: when the 'prince' is asked to acquire the friendship of the virtuous and the supremely wise, the reason, as Parimēlalakar comments, seems to be that virtue or aran is to be known not merely through the sacred books but also through coming into contact with those who ~~have~~, through maturity and good conduct, possess a knowledge of it. (vide Parimēlalakar's commentary on the couplet.) It seems to us that the clear meaning of this couplet is that society is a definite source of morality. The insistence on the maturity and good conduct of those who are the sources of morality again signifies that it is not just following the social codes blindly that is meant here. It is in a similar light that couplets 64.5, 65.4 and 76.4 are to be understood, viz., that institutional morality as such is not considered inferior by Tiruvalluvar.

1 It will become evident from the sequel that the economic as well as the political aspects of the discussion in the Poruṭpāl are to be considered as equally significant for any individual in society but the political alone is specified above since the usage of terms like king, minister, etc., in the relevant chapters in the Poruṭpāl may be taken to refer to a monarchical system alone. The tenor of discussion of the 'political' in the Poruṭpāl is such that the applicability of the moral principle of aram to the social/political aspects of man's living can be clearly seen.



relevant to any individual (i.e., significant for human life in general)<sup>1</sup> and therefore by a special application, for a democratic set-up as well. The clubbing together of the economic and political aspects of human life that we see in Vaḷḷuvar's analysis of poruḷ may also be understood as standing for a presentation of the good life in which the integrality of the economic and political aspirations of the individual as also the social (or institutional) significance of the values pursued are accorded importance, without in the least sacrificing the principle of morality. The significant point

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1 This is the upshot of the interpretation given by Meenakshi-sundaram (op. cit.) to the Poruṭpāl and we consider it extremely significant from our own point of view of bringing out the philosophy of good life in the Kural. For, if the good life of man consists, as we have maintained, in having moral ideals as guidelines for living, the substance of good life should surely consist in extending the principle of morality to every aspect of his life and the political aspect is extremely important. And, when we consider that the great political ideals of a society can be achieved only by every one of its individuals contributing to them, the deeper meaning underlying the Poruṭpāl becomes especially evident. Furthermore, whether we first consider āram as the most important principle in human life and then consider other aspects of life - in our immediate context, the political - as but extensions of the moral or consider the political to be meaningful only when the individual's own moral resources are brought out for real 'political participation', we see the organic relationship between the Arattuppāl and the Poruṭpāl.

C. Rajagopalachari, (Kural the Great Book of Tiruvalluvar, Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1965, p. iii) also holds a similar view. The second book (Poruṭpāl) is described by him as "dealing with policy in worldly affairs including state-craft." He also maintains: "The chapters are not addressed only to princes and those around them. They contain principles of conduct that should guide all persons engaged in secular affairs."

to notice here is that Tiruvalluvar lays as much emphasis on the economic-social aspects<sup>1</sup> of human life as on the observance of ethical principles in pursuing them.<sup>2</sup>

These two aspects need some elaboration here. The emphasis on the necessity of accumulation of wealth is born out of the realization that "it is the unfailing lamp whose light reaches the regions desired (by the king/ the individual) and dispels the darkness,"<sup>3</sup> (i.e., it is extremely useful in the everyday life of man) and that it helps a society to attain immunity from diseases, adequate stock of food grains, a high standard of living and a strong defence.<sup>4</sup> The importance accorded to the economic prosperity of a society<sup>5</sup>

1 This is clearly apparent from the 4th couplet of chapter 74 of the Kural in which Tiruvalluvar indicates that a good country (society) is one which is free from hunger, disease and fear of external aggression and internal conflict.

2 See TK, 76.5 which reads: "(Kings) should rather desist from accumulating wealth that does not flow from compassion and love!" This points to the necessity of observing fair means of realizing the 'three freedoms'.

3 TK, 76.3

4 ibid., 74.8

5 Our usage of the two terms 'country' and 'society' as the equivalents of the Tamil term nātu needs some explanation here. The term nātu is extremely comprehensive in significance and the exclusive usage of either of the two terms (country and society) as the equivalent does not adequately bring out its meaning. Maybe, Tiruvalluvar wanted to impress upon his readers the 'social' and 'political' dimensions of the life of a group of people living together in a geographical location that he prefers the specific expression nātu to more general terms like ulakam. Moreover, the context in which

is further evident from Vaḷḷuvar's categorical statement that "that alone is a country which is self-sufficient in regard to its economic resources and that is not a country which has to depend on external aid."<sup>1</sup> The value of a state or country reaching a very comfortable resource-position referred to by Vaḷḷuvar in unmistakable terms furthers our view that he was deliberately emphasizing the economic aspects of social development: "That is a country which can withstand the burdens pressed on it (from adjoining countries) and (yet) pay its taxes regularly (to the King/ the State)"<sup>2</sup> Tiruvaḷḷuvar reiterates.

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5 (of the previous page) (contd.) we find the chapter entitled nāṭu in the Kural as well as the relevance of the statements that appear therein to human society in general also warrant our usage of the two English equivalents.

It is also important to notice how our earlier statement that Poruṭpāl should not be understood as connoting merely 'advices to the prince' but as incorporating Tiruvaḷḷuvar's considered views on human society in general is corroborated by the ideas found in the chapter on nāṭu.

1 TK, 74.9

2 *ibid.*, 74.3 Parimēlaḷakar brings out this meaning clearly in his commentary by his explanation that the real country is one which, in spite of having to withstand the 'burden' (caused by other countries) is able to pay off the taxes in full. We might add here that the ability of the country to pay off the taxes in full would indicate that its people could well afford to do that and not ask for remission of taxes from the King/ State/ Government. Parimēlaḷakar's commentary brings out another meaning of the term nāṭu, viz., that it refers not merely to the geographical or territorial description of a state but also its peoples.

The implication that a society is what the people make it is too clear to need any specific mention, yet we find Tiruvaḷḷuvar dwelling on the qualities that an individual should possess to produce wealth (and thus make the country self-sufficient). The most important of these is industriousness, for it is that which paves the way for lasting prosperity.<sup>1</sup> The obvious corollary of the quality of

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1 What Tiruvaḷḷuvar means by 'lasting prosperity' is that if an individual is possessed of the quality of industriousness it is going to be a perennial 'source' of augmenting his material resources. The point is made by contrasting the mere 'possession of material wealth' (which can easily be squandered away) with 'real mental wealth' (energy and the undaunted spirit of enterprise): "The possession of (an energetic) mind is real property; the possession of (material) wealth passes away" (TK, 60.2).

It is significant to note that Tiruvaḷḷuvar reiterates the importance of hard work both by referring to the necessity for cultivating a proper disposition to put in lots of effort and also by his criticism against laziness.

His exhortation to put in 'manly efforts' is evident from the following couplets:

"Wealth will find its own way to the person possessed of vigour and unfailing energy." (TK, 60.4)

"Effort will produce wealth; absence of effort will produce poverty." (*ibid.*, 62.6)

"They say that the goddess of misfortune dwells with laziness and the goddess of fortune, with industriousness." (*ibid.*, 62.7)

"Bad fate is no disgrace ... To be without effort ... is disgrace." (*ibid.*, 62.8)

"Although it is said that fate may make your efforts wasted, effort will yield its own reward." (*ibid.*, 62.9)

"The stalks of water-flowers are proportionate (in length) to the depth of water; likewise, men's greatness is proportionate to their minds." (*ibid.*, 60.5) This couplet, coming as it does, under the chapter on efforts as conducive to wealth, signifies, by implication that only by sheer hard work can a person hope to acquire riches.

hard work, viz., the strong heart which will be able to overcome the temporary set-backs the individual may experience in the course of his endeavours to 'make wealth' is also emphasized by Valluvar.<sup>1</sup>

As for the means to be adopted for acquiring wealth, Valluvar categorically states that an unswerving ethical means is necessary.<sup>2</sup>

1 (of the previous page) (contd.)

Valluvar's 'tirade' against indolence is clearly reflected in the following couplets:

"The darkness called indolence extinguishes the bright lamp of family honour." (TK, 61.1) cf TK, 61.3-4 which also reiterate the point that the laziness of the individual will destroy his family's reputation and dignity. It is also stated that by getting over laziness the reproach that is on the family can (also) be got over. (*ibid.*, 61.9)

1 "They who are possessed of enduring energy will not despair saying: 'We have lost our property'" . (*ibid.*, 60.3)

"If you encounter trouble, laugh (at them); there is nothing else which can drive troubles (away)." (*ibid.*, 63.1)

"A flood of troubles will be overcome by the 'courage' of the wise even while (they are) in sorrow." (*ibid.*, 63.2) See also TK, 63. 3-5)

2 TK, 76.5

It is important to note that adopting fair means in the acquisition of wealth is a cardinal principle in Hinduism, and the latter in turn is explicable in terms of the means-ends question in Hinduism. The great Indian statesman, Jawaharlal Nehru who stood for the ethical approach to national and international problems made a significant reference to the traditional Hindu view on the question of means and ends when he observed: "... there is always a close and intimate relationship between the end we aim at and the means adopted to attain it. Even if the end is right, if the means are wrong, that will vitiate the end or divert it into a wrong direction. Means and end are thus intimately and inextricably connected and cannot be separated. That indeed has been the lesson of old taught us by many great men in the past but unfortunately it is seldom remembered." - Extract from his speech at the time of his receiving the Degree of Doctor of Laws conferred on him by Columbia University on 17.10.1949.

What is striking in Valluvar's economic theory is that while on the one hand he pleads for a dynamic action-oriented work ethic, giving as its watch-words 'virility' and 'the spirit of enterprise' and suggesting perseverance to keep the tempo of work and for overcoming the obstacles incidental to a strenuous attempt at attaining economic well-being, not even once does he suggest that scruples could be thrown to the winds to better one's economic prospects in life. As a recent writer has pointed out:

While the need for a perpetual struggle in the face of odds as the sine qua non for success receives great emphasis, what Valluvar delineates is not a society where everyone is for himself and the devil takes the hindmost, such as was pictured by some economists, about the capitalism of the early 19th Century, and which brought it into contempt by men like Ruskin and earned for it the odium of the Science of Mammon.<sup>1</sup>

The extension of aram that porul is, according to Valluvar, it is not considered except in terms of its social utility.<sup>2</sup>

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2 (of the previous page) (contd.) The Kural's insistence on the ethical means to porul may thus be considered to be well in tune with the general Hindu view on the question.

1 Natarajan, op. cit., p. 99.

2 "Those who have no strength of mind will not enjoy telling the world: 'We have been munificent.'" (TK, 60.8) What is significant about this couplet is that it is found in the very chapter which exhorts the individual to work hard in order to get wealthy. The suggestion clearly is that 'making wealth' is not for enjoying it oneself but is intended to share it with the needy.

cf J.A. Hobson (Property and Improperly, London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1937) who maintains that only wealth acquired through

The social purpose of acquisition of property<sup>1</sup> that Valluvar is referring to here is explicable in terms of two principles of aram we have already referred to, viz., that morality consists in treating the others as one would like to be treated by them and that the ideal of compassion (arul) which, in the ultimate analysis, is true morality, can be only gradually developed.<sup>2</sup> In terms of the first: the empathetic appreciation of the 'plight of the others' (in the light of one's own feeling the necessity for basic material well-being) is the motivating factor for sharing one's wealth with

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<sup>ly</sup> 2 (of the previous page) (contd.) right means and used for social good purposes deserves to be called property, and wealth acquired through improper means and utilized for purposes which do not conduce to the good of society, deserves to be designated improperty.

1 It may be that Valluvar's insistence that porul be considered as a means and not as an end in itself was born out of the realization that otherwise the human tendency to assume the superiority-feeling that wealth brings in will be hard to get over. Cliffe Leslie points to how this superiority-feeling develops out of wealth: He observes: "We do indeed hear of people who pursue money for its own sake without caring for what it will purchase, especially at the end of a long life spent in business; but, in this as in many other cases, the habit of doing a thing is kept up after the purpose for which was originally done has ceased to exist. The possession of wealth gives such people a feeling of power over fellow-creatures and insures them a sort of envious respect in which they find a bitter but strong pleasure." (Cited in Marshall, op. cit., p. 18.)

2 It is significant also to note that arul (compassion) itself is described as the child of anpu (domestic love) which is reared by the wet-nurse called porul (wealth) (See TK, 76.7). It is obvious how this couplet brings out the moral purpose behind the pursuit of wealth. The deeper implication of this couplet is that the gradual unfoldment of compassion is possible only if the individual enjoys a certain amount of basic material well-being.

others. In terms of the second: the psychological fact that the immediate family circle, to start with, and a little later, one's own society, provide the training ground and the opportunity to practise altruistic love, gives us the logic of the exhortation to share one's wealth with one's relatives.<sup>1</sup>

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1 In a sense the one central theme that runs through the earlier and the later parts of the Section on Aram is the gradual unfoldment of the true moral ideal exemplified in the espousal of the ideal of compassion.

This idea seems to be repeated in a subtle but significant form in chapter 53 entitled Cherishing one's Kindred (Cuttrantolāl). We see in this chapter Vaḷḷuvar realistically putting forward basic considerations towards effecting a harmony between the individual and society. Rajagopalachari (*op. cit.*, p. 81.) suggests that the cuttrantolāl idea needs to be understood against the backdrop of the ancient Indian idea of society as providing certain built-in mechanisms to avert the danger of clash of interests. His detailed comments are worth referring to here: "Individualism with competition as the socio-economic basis of life was neither rejected nor entirely accepted in Indian culture. The man and all his relatives formed an unit, and all such units together formed society. The members of a unit shared among themselves equally. Each was expected to toil also under the chief's instructions and moral influence, upto the measure of his capacity. He had the right to be maintained, in equal status with everyone else in that group independently of the measure of his ability to contribute to its wealth. There was thus 'communism' within this limited sphere. There was thus recognition of the principle of property and competition ... For a man with a larger earning capacity to leave the fold, with the selfish object of excluding his relatives from sharing the fruits of his toil, was considered a shameful sin against the culture of the land. There was thus a semi-coercive basis for the system. The modern conception of communism is a state-wide and state-enforced freedom of the individual and a ruthless state-wide application of the principle of competition. The cuttrantolāl idea is a very old compromise between the two systems. The problems are millenniums old, and the varying solutions too are of like age."



Hoarding of wealth naturally comes in for severe attack.<sup>1</sup>

To say the least, it is, even from the point of view of the individual who does it, not desirable since the value of wealth is then not realized, the fruits of it are not enjoyed.<sup>2</sup> Secondly, hoarding is an anti-social act. Valluvar expresses this mildly at first by referring to the hoarder as a burden to the earth<sup>3</sup> and then quite emphatically by stating that it can be positively detrimental to the common good even as the fruits of a poisonous tree in the heart of a village.<sup>4</sup> His undisguised anger at the mean people is forcefully expressed when he says that they won't even shake the clinging grains from their moistened hands till a clenched fist breaks their jaws<sup>5</sup> and by describing them as not being ready to do charitable acts till they are tortured to death.<sup>6</sup>

From the forceful language used by Valluvar, however, it should not be hastily concluded that he would wholeheartedly

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1 This is evident from the whole of chapter 101 of the Kural entitled Wealth Without Benefaction in which Valluvar strongly condemns the selfish attitude of those who do not want to share their wealth with others.

2 TK, 101.5

3 ibid., 101.3

4 ibid., 101.8

5 ibid., 108.7

6 ibid., 108.8

welcome the violent methods sometimes suggested, for, he is firmly of the opinion that only such means should be adopted which will not hinder the progress of others. A philosophy of good life which emphasizes so much the necessity of developing the quality of affection and compassion can hardly be expected to lend support to such a view which would advocate abolition of the 'owning class' by force. Moreover, the whole tenor of Valluvar's philosophy of society would suggest that if social interests are at stake as a result of adopting a particular method of acquisition, it should at once be abandoned. That is, the very basis of Tiruvalluvar's criticism against the irresponsible and unscrupulous attitude of those who do not have the heart to share their wealth with others, would itself preclude the conclusion that he is unconcerned with the repercussions that a violent approach to the question of abolition of the miserable plight of the 'have-nots' will have on society. And, as a recent writer maintains:

Valluvar, a moralist and a votary of truth and non-violence, could never entertain such a dangerous idea; (for), he categorically says that the have-nots have no right to get angry against those who do not give.<sup>1</sup>

It should however be remembered that in trying to draw out the implications of Valluvar's philosophy for modern thought, we should not over-state the case by claiming that Valluvar anticipated all the

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1 Arasu, op. cit., p. 41.

problems concerning the relationship between the 'have-s' and the 'have-nots' of today. It should not be claimed that Valluvar, even twenty centuries earlier, anticipated all the evils that the twentieth century might experience and visualized exactly the state of disharmony it will experience as a result of adopting unethical means to the institution of property.<sup>1</sup> For, it seems more plausible to state that Valluvar's philosophy of society stems from his basic view that 'individual re-making' under all circumstances is . . . . . necessary<sup>2</sup> than interpreting him to have considered the corrective measures to cure an ailing society. Not that he felt that state

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1 Hence we find it difficult to accept Arasu's suggestion (Kural and Democratic Socialism, Madras: Thayakam, 1971, p. 4) that Valluvar heralds a socialistic pattern of society. Arasu writes: "Valluvar is heralding a socialistic pattern of society, where there must be progressive increases in production by industrious farmers and equitable distribution of things produced by traders of integrity, who loathe to indulge in profiteering or hoarding to create any artificial famine, supplemented by substantial help on the part of the rich or the capitalists (consisting of farmers and traders who through their unremitting toil, valuable expertise and honest means acquire wealth and turn out to be industrialists) who are prepared to hold their wealth or capital in trust for the benefit of the society with a view to eliminating poverty." All that can plausibly be said is that the root-ideas of some of the solutions suggested at the present time for some of the problems that modern societies face, were probably germinally present in Valluvar's philosophy. This is far from saying that Valluvar was vociferously arguing for a type of solution that is seriously suggested today.

2 This is in keeping with his general philosophy regarding the efficacy of the individual's self-efforts in being able to even countermand the effects of destiny. No doubt, in the earlier section, in the chapter on U Valluvar says that there is nothing more powerful than destiny, because it would antecede and thwart all efforts directed against countermanding it. But, later on in the Section on Porul, in chapter 62 entitled "Manly Effort" , the concluding couplet

action in this regard was unnecessary or ineffective (the very inclusion of chapters dealing with this subject under 'politics' would be proof positive for this) but rather that he was convinced that unless the welfare ideas are really ideas in the individuals' minds and ideals which would be cherished and worked for, unless, that is, the individuals really participate in the process of translating the grand principles into positive social welfare programmes, state action itself cannot accomplish much.

In view of such an interpretation of Tiruvalluvar's approach (to problems of man and society) that we are suggesting, we would agree with Natarajan who suggests a cautious appraisal of Valluvar's economic theory - without being tempted to find a kinship between the 'economics' of the Kural and the over-saving and under-investment theories of later day economists like Malthus, J.A. Hobson and John Maynard Keynes and exclaim how very modern Valluvar is.<sup>1</sup> The type of distinction drawn by Natarajan is extremely significant in our context and we find it worthwhile quoting him here:

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2 (of the previous page) (contd.) strikes an optimistic note. In the light of a general understanding of his exhortations for good life not only at the ethical but also at the social, economic and political levels we are led to conclude that the second of the above statements (seemingly contradicting the first) really expresses his convictions in the matter. See also our discussion of U<sub>1</sub>, pp. 110-116. In this respect Valluvar's view typifies the general Hindu view regarding social reconstruction which does not dwell on the institutional aspects of the question alone. See the present author's The Hindu Philosophy of Social Reconstruction, Madras: Centre for Advanced Study in Philosophy, University of Madras, 1970, chapters III & IV for a more elaborate treatment of the subject.

He writes:

Such temptations must be resisted. For, the contexts are entirely different. The modern theories of over-saving and under-investment are born of the analysis of a particular economic situation and at a particular point of time. There is nothing of the moral flavour about these theories when they are offered as solutions to the unclogging of the economic mechanism. Valluvar, on the other hand, had all along, the moral values in the background. When he condemns hoarding miserliness, the doctrine assumes the attributes of seminality and timelessness about it. It is always wrong to hoard; and that because it clogs the springs of charity. Perhaps ultimately the doctrines of both, Valluvar and the neo-classical economists arrive at the same point and same goal, ... better consumption and better production ... All that we have to see is that the standpoints are different, the thinking process different, the tools too, but not the goal.<sup>1</sup>

Two other topics which are discussed by Valluvar, viz., beggary and the importance of agriculture for the economy of society need to be interpreted in the same spirit, ie., by cautiously avoiding strained interpretations to the couplets dealing with them (to find later-day ideas into them). Here again, it may be 'fashionable' to consider Tiruvalluvar as a social reformer and an agricultural economist as we understand the terms today, but a deliberate caution is necessarily to be exercised to delineate the approach of Valluvar to these topics.

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1 (of the previous page) op. cit., p. 86.

2 ibid., pp. 86-87. Recognition of the moral tone of the economic doctrine of Valluvar by an economist like Natarajan is indeed significant since it furthers our argument that the

We have already referred to Valluvar's views on poverty<sup>1</sup> and have seen how it is condemned for its degrading effect on man. This in a sense gives us an idea of the basic views of Valluvar on beggary as well. For, if poverty is synonymous with pushing a man into the pit of indignity, beggary cannot be a dignified way of mitigating the suffering caused by the indignity. No wonder, therefore, we see Valluvar not conceding that beggary is inevitable or as decreed by a ruthless fate. With righteous indignation he says:

If He that created the world desires that men should go begging, let Him go begging and perish.<sup>2</sup>

The obvious meaning is that Valluvar is convinced that poverty is not god-made but definitely man-made, that it is man's inhumanity that is responsible for the miserable plight of the countless number of his fellowmen. This is the reason why, on the one hand Valluvar extols the value of munificence and, on the other, exhorts the

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2 (of the previous page) (contd.) moral principle in the Kural's view of good life is extended and applied to the important social and political institutions.

1 vide supra, pp. 98-100.

2 TK, 107.2

The egalitarian fervour of Valluvar is clear from this couplet. If it is said that in Creation it is inevitable that some will have to make their living by begging - Valluvar is expressing his wish that there should be no more such creation. If Creation means inequality, let there be no creation (so that there would be no scope for inequality), Valluvar seems to say. It is obvious, the couplet is not to be interpreted as a sacrilegious statement made by Valluvar.

people who are poverty-stricken, to seek to overcome their plight by sheer hard work, relying on their own ability to eke out an honest and dignified living.

It may appear on the surface that the two suggestions contradict each other: the suggestion, on the one hand, that 'giving is good' and, on the other, the equally strong suggestion that 'receiving is bad'. For, it may be asked how, if there were no one to 'beg' there can be at all the beneficent act of philanthropy. A careful consideration would, however, reveal that the whole issue is to be understood in terms of the realistic appraisal of the human situation that we find in the Kural and also in terms of its seminal moral argument (making it imperative on man to develop the attitude of compassion towards all beings) which makes for societal concern. The realistic appraisal is that human nature being what it is we neither find all human beings so benevolent that there is no need at all for exhortation in this regard<sup>1</sup> nor (do we) see every 'needy' person honestly trying to work out a solution to get over his need.<sup>2</sup> And, the very discussion of the necessity for developing the altruistic attitude would imply that it is something which has

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1 This is evident from TK, 106.1,2 & 10; 107.7-10; 108.8 & 9.

2 TK 106.5 and 106.7 clearly contain this idea. The point is slightly differently expressed in 107.4 by saying that the world is not capable of praising adequately the dignity that goes with the attitude of not begging even in the midst of destitution.

to be deliberately cultivated just as the exhortations to man to work hard imply an implicit acceptance that indolence even in the state of indigence is not absent in man.<sup>1</sup> The moral argument may then be considered either as being capable of effecting a 'change of heart' on both sides (i.e., on the part of the rich as well as the poor) or as being grounded on the frailties as well as the fascinating aspects of human nature.

Thus Valluvar's views on poverty and beggary point to his steering clear of the two easy alternatives while philosophizing on the good life: (i) merely idealizing on the goodness of man and (ii) cynically pointing an accusing finger at the devil in man which avowedly prevents any voluntary sharing of good things by those who have them in abundance.<sup>2</sup> Reference to poverty in the Kural is thus to be understood not purely in terms of Valluvar's taking up the cudgels, on behalf of the poor and the down-trodden, against the rich and the well-placed but as an extension of the principle of aram to concrete life-situations-- in our present context, to a reflection on the problems posed by poverty, beggary and related questions.

1 This is the significance of TK 107.1 which suggests that the ideal would be not to beg at all even from those generous persons, who, without a second thought, 'respond' when 'begged'.

2 It is interesting to note that S. Radhakrishnan's interpretation of the Hindu philosophy of artha (Religion and Society, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1959, p. 97) reveals a strand of thought in the Sanskritic tradition, similar to the Kural's view on the question of affluence and poverty. He writes: "we should not ...



Adverting our attention now to Valluvar's views on agriculture: they have to be understood against the same background of considering the foundational elements for structuring the good in human life and in relation to the significance of rains adumbrated in the second chapter of his Introduction. We have maintained<sup>1</sup> that Valluvar's specifically dwelling on the importance of rains is symptomatic of his great concern for the economic aspects of life which makes for the possibility of aiming at the good life. In view of this fact we feel that to simply consider that the importance accorded to agriculture by Valluvar was born out of the fact that he lived and wrote in a country which was predominantly agricultural, is to offer a simplistic account of his 'meaning' and to overlook his deeper thoughts. For, such an analysis would imply that his philosophy was just a by-product of his age. Though we are not contending the fact that the Kural's philosophy is best understood against the backdrop of the Indian setting, we do feel that Valluvar's philosophy, though born out of the soil from which it got its grist, was much more than that, possessing as it did, a phenomenal vitality which could help it withstand the vagaries of climate and weather that a 'transplantation' involves. It seems to us that this is the only<sup>way</sup> in which we can

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2 (of the previous page) (contd) conclude that the poor have a monopoly of virtues, administrative capacity, directive ability and disinterested<sup>ed</sup> devotion, while the rich have a full share of all the conceivable vices, lack of imagination, selfishness and corruption."

1 vide supra, pp. 97, 101 and 102.

account for the philosophy of the Kural surviving the ravaging currents of thought since it was propounded twenty centuries ago and for its according prime importance to agriculture. The primacy given agriculture<sup>1</sup> means that since food is ultimately the basis of life, producing it is a fundamentally important occupation of man. This point is to be reiterated not only to arrest an under-statement referred to above but also to maintain that pointing to Vaḷḷuvar as having set the precedent to the Physiocrats of the 18th Century France by voicing the value of agriculture, is a clear case of making an over-statement. Explaining the Physiocrats' view that agriculturists alone were the true productive class, Adam Smith wrote:

The unproductive class, that of merchants, artificers and manufacturers is maintained and employed altogether at the expense of the two other classes, of that of proprietors and of that of cultivators. They furnish both with the materials of its work and with the fund of its subsistence, with the corn and cattle which it consumes while it is employed about the work. The proprietors and cultivators finally pay both the wages of all the workmen of the unproductive classes and the profit of all their employers<sup>2</sup>

those workmen and their employers are properly the servants of the proprietors and the cultivators.<sup>3</sup>

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1 This is transparently evident from the whole chapter 104 of the Kural and is especially made clear by the description of agriculture as the primary occupation (104.1), by considering agriculturists as the linch-pin of society (104.2) and by referring to them alone as 'truly living' (104.3).

2 Cited in Natarajan, op. cit., p. 83.

3 ibid., p. 84.

From the similarity of views which is striking, it is extremely tempting to refer to Vaḷḷuvar as the forerunner of the Physiocrat doctrine,<sup>1</sup> but as Natarajan observes, we have to be careful to note that non-agricultural pursuits being referred to as 'servants' does not at all possess the same meaning in Vaḷḷuvar and the Physiocrats:

The Physiocrats held that agriculture alone was the 'productive' occupation and so compared the people engaged as artificers, manufacturers and merchants to 'servants' who in their concept did not produce anything 'tangible' in value... The unproductive class, however, is ... greatly useful to the other two classes (proprietors and cultivators of land) ... There is no suggestion (in Vaḷḷuvar) that the servants' production had no value, or that their pursuits are 'unproductive'. All Vaḷḷuvar meant to convey ... was the basic dependence of all on agriculture for their food requirements ... The others are 'subservient' in the sense that they all have to depend on growers of food in the ultimate analysis. The economic freedom of the grower of food is basic; that of the others, only derived.<sup>2</sup>

Thus we are suggesting that the significance of Vaḷḷuvar's views are by a deeper analysis of his own ideas rather than by a superficial comparison with other later ideas.

Passing on to consider the political aspects of porul, it seems necessary to consider, even at the outset, the misunderstanding

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1 Natarajan, op. cit., p. 84.

2 ibid.

regarding Valluvar's 'indebtedness' to Kauṭilya's Artha-Sāstra<sup>1</sup> for philosophizing on poruḷ. For, otherwise, the significance of the political aspects of the analysis of poruḷ in the Kuraḷ, can't be appreciated fully. No doubt, there are striking similarities between the two analyses, but we want to underline the fact there are some fundamental differences as well, a fact which ought not to be overlooked while evaluating the 'political content' of Valluvar's analysis. These will become apparent from the fact that in the

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1 P.T. Srinivasa Ayyangar (History of the Tamils from the Earliest Times to 600 A.D., Madras: Coomarasamy Naidu & Sons, 1928, p. 587.) seems to be right in saying that Tiruvalluvar might have been a good Sanskrit scholar as well and that he must have been familiar with Kauṭilya's Artha-Sāstra, since we do find similarities even of a structural nature between the two works; but his other suggestion that the Poruṭpāl (in which the concept of poruḷ is analysed) Section of the Kuraḷ is based on the Artha-Sāstra does not seem to be justified. It is important to note here that even Parimēlaḷakar is at some pains to explain why vaḷakku and ṭaṇṭam are not there in the Kuraḷ, his account being that the two themes are time-bound and regional and since Valluvar's interest consists in focussing on what is universal, are not analysed. (Vaḷakku and ṭaṇṭam stand respectively for civil law and rules of punishment.)

Organ (op. cit., p. 124) similarly underestimates the value of the Kuraḷ as being indebted to Kauṭilya's Artha-Sāstra, though he appreciates that it is not simply concerned with the 'political content' alone. It is obvious, the latter part of the statement is acceptable to us, since we were ourselves making reference to this earlier. (vide supra, p. 156) See also pp. 159-160.

Dikshitar (op. cit., p. 126) is more cautious in taking the position that till more evidence is forthcoming it is better to leave it an open question. He also observes: "It may be that Tamilian genius developed itself on independent but parallel lines and the process of such slow but sure development culminated in the genius of the Tirukuraḷ's author."

Kural we find some significant 'omissions' of some of the topics found in the Artha-Sāstra.<sup>1</sup> From the fact that the omissions are not just few, it seems to us that it will not do to simply explain them away. If the omissions are many, it seems only logical to view

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1 The following are some of the topics that are dealt with by Kauṭilya, but not by Tiruvaḷḷuvar: (i) in regard to kingship: origin of kingship, right of succession, classification of rulers, the daily routine of the king, the coronation-procedure, and safeguards against being poisoned (ii) in regard to counsellors: classification of ministers, names and duties of the high officers of the state, their salaries, superintends of Departments and their salaries and the purohita (priest) and his duties, (iii) details regarding the administration of the capital city, villages, merchant guilds, (iv) details regarding different kinds of armies, the four elements of the army and their constitution and arrangement in battle, accepted conventions of warfare, classification of Indian weapons and their use, religious rites to be observed before going to the battle field and the interpretation of dreams before battle, (v) on the subject of diplomacy: details regarding the classification of allies, the maṇḍala theory and the camouflaging of spies and (vi) discussion of republican forms of government, dyarchy (dvairājya) the sabhās (assemblies) etc.

Regarding these significant omissions, V. Subramaniam ("Tamil Contribution to Hindu Political Thought" in The Indian Journal of Public Administration, Vol. XV, no. 2, 1969, pp. 110-111, New Delhi) writes: "... may be because (a) they are just details (b) they are irrelevant to the context of Tamil Nad; and the general scheme of his (Tiruvaḷḷuvar's) work or (c) they would be contradictory to or at least incongruous with his main thesis. Details of administration and battles would fall under (a), the maṇḍala theory would fall under (b), while subjects like purohita and dvairājya would come under (c). The omission, on analysis, seem to be quite deliberate and indeed more important than his few statements directly contradicting Sanskrit works. They also give his work a non-polemical and internally harmonious approach."

them as deliberately having been intended by the author. Hence we suggest that taking stock of the omissions themselves helps us to appreciate the different type of emphasis that the author of the Kural intended to give.

Another oft-overlooked point needs to be referred to here, viz., the clear statement by Kauṭilya about the aim of his work and a conspicuous avoidance of such a statement by Vaḷḷuvar. This would probably reveal best the perspectival difference between the Artha-Śāstra and the Kural.

Kauṭilya's concern in the work is to write a treatise with a specific purpose which is clearly stated by him when he explains the meaning of Artha-Śāstra:

The subsistence of mankind is termed artha, wealth, the earth which contains mankind is termed artha, wealth; that science which treats of the means of acquiring and maintaining the earth is the Artha-Śāstra, Science of Polity.<sup>1</sup>

The immediate factor which motivated him to write the treatise is also stated by him:

This Śāstra has been made by him who from intolerance (of misrule) quickly rescued the scriptures and the science of weapons and the earth which had passed on to the Nanda King.<sup>2</sup>

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1 Artha-Śāstra, XV.1

2 ibid. Citing this same reference Organ (op. cit., p. 123.)

The clear implication is that the work has a very practical purpose, viz., enabling the state to quickly regain the political stability<sup>1</sup> it had lost and so it is not surprising that ends are even considered as justifying the means in the work.

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2 (of the previous page) (contd.) shows a clear appreciation of the political rather than the economic content of the Artha-Sāstra. He writes: "Shortly after the formation of the Upaniṣads a number of works were written on the polity aspect of the philosophy of worldly success, of which only the Artha-Sāstra of Kauṭilya remains. The subject matter of this treatise is daṇḍanīti rather than vārta since the author defines his topic as the science which treats of the means of acquiring and ruling the earth. It is primarily a handbook for monarchs." His succinct statement regarding the contents of the work is equally significant here inasmuch as it brings out clearly the 'practical bent' rather than the moralistic tone of the work. He writes: "The program for the education of the king and for techniques of ruling is thoroughly Machiavellian. His education is chiefly training in control of lust, anger, greed, vanity, arrogance, and jealousy, as these will prevent him from absolute rule of his people. Statecraft is largely an efficient system of espionage. Officers must be changed frequently, lest any become entrenched in power and position. In judicial matters the king maintains final authority. General insurrection is avoided by secret measures against sedition. In war total destruction of an enemy is advisable. Internal disturbances should be fomented in the ranks of enemies of superior strength; personal enemies are to be overcome by causing in them blindness, bodily diseases and deformities." (ibid.)

1 R.N. Dandekar, "Artha the Second End of Man" in Sources of Indian Tradition, ed., Wm Theodore de Bary, New York: Columbia University Press, 1958, I, 232-233 observes: "The Treatise on Material Gain (Artha-Sāstra) of Kauṭilya reflects, in a striking manner, the social and political forces which were at work in India during the fourth century B.C. Alexander's incursions into India (326-325 B.C.) had helped to emphasize the need for establishing a central political and military power. The Treatise on Material Gain has, accordingly, laid down policies aimed at welding together, into a more or less unified pattern and under the control - direct or indirect - of a single authority, the multiplicity of smaller states that had crowded the stage of Indian history at that time. Interstate relations thus constitutes one of the main topics in Kauṭilya's Treatise. Kauṭilya ... indeed deals with practical government administration more fully

Tiruvalluvar's writing on Porul, on the other hand, is not at all motivated by any such immediate objective, at least from what we can see from the composition of the writing itself. Our reference to the significance of the introductory chapters in the Kural as also to Tiruvalluvar's considering aram as the prime-principle in human life which finds a natural expression in porul by a process of institutionalization point to the fact that his main concern in writing the Kural is to strive for a philosophy of good life, universalist in scope, and independent as far as practicable of any specific religious formulation of it. Maybe, the comparatively stable political conditions that obtained in South India at the time was one of the contributory factors.<sup>1</sup> The moral tone of his philosophy of politics

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i (of the previous page) (contd.) than with theorizing about the fundamental principles of political science...

To the intense political and military activity of the early Maurya period, which is reflected in the science of material gain, there was a reaction in the reign of Ashoka (c.273-232 B.C.), the grandson of Chandragupta and the third Maurya emperor, who turned away from the Machiavellian ways of Artha Shāstra to the ways of righteousness or dharma, and in particular to the teachings of the Buddha."

1 Subramaniam (op. cit., p. 15) brings out the contrast between Valluvar and Kautilya when he writes: "His (Valluvar's) discussion of a war - of conquest or defence - centres on making small gains or making good small losses. This followed from the more settled conditions of South India compared to the North. The latter was, before the time of Kautilya in a state of disequilibrium, with a number of kingdoms and tribal republics changing their borders frequently. The unification of the flat Indo-Gangetic plain seemed to Kautilya a natural and desirable ideal. He urged the energetic prince to go after it, by deceit and aggression if need be, as North India was Chakravartiksetra, the natural arena for empire. In contrast, Tamilnad was divided into three kingdoms of Chera, Chola and Pandya with stable dynasties, and this arrangement was popularly considered as eternal as



thus stands out distinctly and accounts for the different type of approach he takes while analysing the significance of porul as a human aspiration. It should however be urged that in the process of affirming the moral tone that Vaḷḷuvar brings to the analysis of porul, we should not either deny or underplay the fact that Kauṭilya too exhorts the 'prince' to have certain high ethical ideals before him.<sup>1</sup> It will thus be seen that we have pointed to the differences

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1 (of the previous page) (contd.) the sun and the stars - despite intermittent wars and border re-adjustments. Vaḷḷuvar's work reflects this popular belief in a stable equilibrium and is less interested in conquest and empire. It seems to us that with all the significant suggestions that Subramanyam makes, it still indirectly gives the impression that Vaḷḷuvar's philosophy merely reflected the spirit of his times. We should reiterate that it was much more than that.

1 For instance Kauṭilya (Artha-Sāstra, I.7) writes of the King: "... he shall keep away from hurting the woman and property of others; avoid not only lustfulness, even in dream, but also falsehood, haughtiness and evil proclivities; and keep away from unrighteous and uneconomical transactions."

Not violating righteousness and economy, he shall enjoy his desires. He shall never be devoid of happiness. He may enjoy in an equal degree the three pursuits of life, charity, wealth, and desire which are inter-dependent ... Any one of these three, when enjoyed in excess, hurts not only the other two but also itself."

In I.19 of the Artha-Sāstra he says: "Of a king, the religious vow is his readiness to action; satisfactory discharge of duties is his performance of sacrifice; equal attention to all is the offer of fees and ablution towards consecration.

In the happiness of his subjects lies his happiness; in their welfare, his welfare; whatever pleases himself he shall not consider as good, but whatever pleases his subjects he shall consider as good."

between the 'tones' of the two approaches not with a view to underplaying the ethical elements in the one but with a view to indicating the perspective of the other. This is only a slightly different way of reiterating our thesis, viz., that the key-concept of aram runs throughout the philosophy of good life of Vaḷḷuvar and, more specifically in our present context, the political aspects.

We are now in a position to consider the political aspects of poruḷ. As we have already indicated, the political aspects of poruḷ needs to be considered not merely as analysing sovereignty in all its aspects but citizenship as well.<sup>1</sup> The very way in which

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1 (of the previous page) (contd.) Maintaining that the moral elements in Kauṭilya's theory are important, M.V. Krishna Rao (Studies in Kauṭilya, Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1958, pp. 110- 112) observes: "According to Kauṭilya, Kingship and Dharma are closely related and the King is the fountain of justice... It is the king's responsibility to maintain Dharma and to protect his subjects with justice, for its observance will lead him to heaven..."

Kauṭilya urges the organisation of states on the basis of law, recognising all the while, that moralisation of politics is a slow process, and is likely to be held up again and again by mutual suspicions of sincerity. Though as a practical statesman, he often justifies the tendency of the rulers to subordinate ethical considerations to the need of the state as, when at war with unrighteous rulers, there is an unmistakable acknowledgement of the principle of varṇāśrama-dharma and the manifestation of a desire to apply it in politics. To Kauṭilya, political life is not independent of moral life, because the latter always conditions the former. The state has a moral purpose to fulfill and that is the maintenance of the social order, and if separation of politics from ethics is involved in Kauṭilya's work, it is rather an incident than an essential in his system. It is the primary duty of the prince in Kauṭilya's system to maintain dharma not only in the higher conception, as the disinterested life of active duty, but also in its conventional sense as the duty prescribed to an individual by his station in the social order... The King while maintaining varṇāśrama dharma ... is required to checkmate the pursuit of any dharma which

sovereignty is discussed points to aspects of citizenship and the latter in turn points to how the ideals of sovereignty itself could be achieved. We shall now consider the two aspects constituting the 'politics' of the Kural.

Even at the commencement of the discussion of sovereignty Valluvar indicates the six elements of the State, viz., army, citizens, wealth, minister, allies and fort in addition to the king who is considered to be the pivot on which political administration rests.<sup>2</sup>

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1 (of p. 184) (contd.) is likely to turn out to be inimical to the purposes of state and performance of kingly duties, and to accept as valid every local usage and custom that are not inconsistent with king's interests."

Since we are not denying the ethical elements of Kauṭilya's theory of the state, the long citation given here should not be pointed to as countering our position. Rather, it should be considered as our duly acknowledging the ethical aspects of Kauṭilya's political theory.

1 (of the previous page) According to this analysis chapters 39-95 of the Kural deal with sovereignty and its accessories and chapters 96-108 deal with citizenship which is only an epitome of sovereignty. The correlation of king and the citizens is the substance of sovereignty and that is what Tiruvalluvar delineates. The king will find some hints for himself in the section on citizens and the citizens find hints for being ideal citizens from the delineation of the duties of the king. cf. Tiruvalluvamālai, 25 according to which the author Tiruvalluvar discusses the king first and citizen last (kuṭi towards the close) and the rest in the middle. According to Parimēlalakar, however, mere sovereignty is the subject-matter of Poruṭpāl. (He treats the last thirteen chapters of this section - chapters 96-108 - as dealing with miscellaneous topics.) We are not denying the fact that Poruṭpāl deals with sovereignty, but would like to submit that it does not deal with sovereignty alone. If sovereignty alone is the theme, why should Tiruvalluvar discuss in detail honour, nobility, etc. all of which relate to the essentials of good citizenship?

2 Please see the next page.

The analysis of the seven limbs of the state clearly indicates that neither a mere geographical territory nor a group of people alone constitute the state but that a real state consists in the territory and the people bound together by a sense of allegiance to the king who is kind and firm, within easy access of his people, just and upright and devoted to his duty of protecting the people and who is assisted by a cabinet of ministers, an efficient army, a well-regulated economic system and factors which make for 'international' friendship.

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2 (of the previous page) In effect there is here a clear acceptance of the seven-limb (saptanga) theory that we find in Kautilya's Artha-Sāstra and other Sanskrit writings, e.g., Manu, IX.294; Yājñavalkya, I.353 ; Viṣṇu, III.33 and Kāṁāndaka, Nītiśāra, I.16 & IV. 1-2.

The difference between the Kural's approach and the Sanskrit approaches seems to be that the Kural indicates the pre-eminent place accorded to the king by considering him not as one of the 'seven limbs' whereas the latter indicate the importance of the king by mentioning him as the 'first element', though the slight differences noticeable in the Sanskrit writings themselves should not be overlooked. For instance, Kautilya expresses the importance of the king by stating emphatically that the briefest exposition of the elements is to say that the king is the state (Artha-Sāstra, VIII.2) and Śukra's reference to the importance of the king is by comparing the seven elements of the state to the organs of the body and comparing the king to the head (Nītiśāra, I.61-62). On the other hand, Kāṁāndaka states that each of the seven elements is complementary to the others, the ministers are the eyes, ally the ear, treasury the mouth, the army the mind, the capital and rāṣṭra are hands and feet. (Nītiśāra, IV . 1.2) Manu states that it is not possible to say categorically that any one of the seven excels the others in merit but that at different times a different element assumes importance over others, since that particular element is in the particular circumstances, capable of accomplishing the purpose on hand (IX.296-297).

The description of the qualities required of a king and the enumeration of his duties clearly point to the fact that Valluvar is not merely idealizing on the institution of kingship but indicates, in a realistic way, the significance of the office. The king is expected to have no consideration other than justice while dealing with his subjects.<sup>1</sup> The importance accorded to the principle of justice can be appreciated from the positive statement of what justice is<sup>2</sup> and also from the categorical pronouncements as to what justice is not.<sup>3</sup> It is also clearly suggested that being impartial and strict need not mean also being inhuman.<sup>4</sup> In short, a very high ideal of kingship is espoused by Valluvar in keeping with the general understanding of the institution in other classical Indian writings.<sup>5</sup>

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1 "That King will be considered a God among his subjects, who performs his own duties and protects his subjects." (TK, 39.8)

"He is a king who swerves not from justice and refrains from injustice." (TK, 39.4) cf. TK, 39. 2 & 10.

2 "To examine the crimes (committed), to show no favour, to wish to act impartially towards all and to inflict punishment (decided upon), constitutes justice." (*ibid.*, 55.1)

"Where there is rain, creation survives and so when the king rules justly, his subjects thrive." (*ibid.*, 55.2)

"The king protects the whole world; and justice when administered without defect, defends." (*ibid.*, 55.7)

3 "The king who oppresses and acts unjustly is more cruel than a murderer." (*ibid.*, 56.1)

"The king who ... is unjust will lose at once his wealth and his subjects." (*ibid.*, 56.4) (See also 56.2, 7 & 10; also 57. 1, 2 & 5)

The rigorous standards of personal conduct and the high ideal of devotion to duty set for the king no doubt sound extremely idealistic but nothing short of the highest idealization, the author seems to think, is adequate to portray the duty of men who hold public offices.

The realistic element in Vaḷḷuvar's theory is obvious from his reference to qualities (in the king) which may be referred to as

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4 (of the previous page) "The prosperity of the world is due to kindness (on the part of the king); the existence of those who have no kindness is a burden to the earth." (TK, 58.2)

"Kind looks are the ornaments of the eye; without those, they are two sores." (*ibid.*, 58.5). See also 58. 4 & 6.

"The world is the kings' if they are capable of showing kindness without watering down justice." (*ibid.*, 58.8)

5 (of the previous page) We find such a high ideal being placed before the king by the Artha-Sāstra, Mahabharata and other works. We have already referred to Artha-Sāstra I.19 (*vide supra*, In the Mahābhārata, 12.90.1 & 5 it is stated: "the king is there for the upholding of dharma and not for acting as he likes" and that "all beings have to depend on dharma which in its turn depends on the king." The idealization of the king's duties is also expressed by stating that the king should favour like a father. (Artha-Sāstra, II,1; cf. Mahābhārata, 12.139.104 & 105 and Yājñavalkya, I.334) Similarly in the Rāmāyaṇa, II.2.28-47 and V.35.9-14 the virtues of the prince Rama are set out in great detail. It is stated that Rama behaved like a father, that he sympathized with the people in their sorrows and was pleased like a father when the subjects celebrated festivals.

Referring to this aspect of the concept of kingship in ancient India, Ram Charitra Prasad Singh (Kingship in Northern India, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1968, pp. 11-12) observes: "This paternal concept of kingship appears to have been very strong in Indian minds because from the beginning of our history we find traces of it. One of the Kalinga edicts of Asoka records: "All men are my children, and just as I desire for my children that they obtain every kind of welfare and happiness in this and the next world, so do I desire for all men." We are also reminded of the famous proclamation of Queen Victoria in 1857: " ... in their prosperity will be our strength, in their contentment, our security and in their gratitude our best reward."

being basically and deeply human. The king is exhorted to win the hearts of the people by being always approachable,<sup>1</sup> amenable to the wise counsel of the virtuous (whom he is expected to consult),<sup>2</sup> broad-minded<sup>3</sup> highly energetic<sup>4</sup> and not given to procrastination.<sup>5</sup> It is significant to note that Valluvar, even while exhorting the king to have loving kindness towards his subjects points out that punishing a crime is not a fault in a king but a duty<sup>6</sup> and compares the act of punishing to pulling out the weeds in the garden.<sup>7</sup> Misuse of

1 TK, 39.6

2 ibid., 45.2 See also 45.1 & 8.

3 ibid., 60.7-8

4 ibid., 60.2; 62.1. See also 60.1,3 & 4; 62.2,3,9 & 10.

5 ibid., 61.5; See also 61.6 & 7.

6 ibid., 55.9 See also 56.3.

What is suggested here is that the function of upholding justice is performed in the line of offering protection to the people. Awarding punishment is also thus inspired by a loving heart which comes to the rescue of society, though it may be unpalatable.

7 ibid., 55.10

It is important to note that the king is expected to maintain the scales of justice even and thus offer protection to his subjects. Awarding punishment is not just an act of harassment of the people. It is with a view to protecting all people that the institution of punishment is recommended to be used. The idea is that if there were no law, there would be no protection.

punishment, however, should not be indulged in.<sup>1</sup> Punishment should be proportionate to the offence committed.<sup>2</sup>

Another aspect of Valluvar's exhortations to the king may be briefly touched upon here -- the emphasis on education. Here the applicability of the 'address' to the citizen is clearly seen. Education is responsible for 'making' a good citizen and he becomes 'better' through the life-long process. Hence education is not spoken of only in terms of learning and this is clear from Valluvar's description of education as culminating in real wisdom which is referred to as 'the greatest fortress'.<sup>3</sup>

Coming now to a consideration of the other 'limbs' of the state, viz., minister, friendship, people (or country), fort, army and finance, which together with the king make for sovereignty in the real sense: we do not, from the point of view of this study, consider it necessary to deal with them in detail. As such we shall only briefly touch upon aspects of them from the specific angle of our interest here.

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1 TK, 56.1 & 5

2 ibid., 57.1

3 ibid., 43.1 In regard to the subject of education: the Artha-Sāstra and the Dharma-Sāstras, in addition to their general insistence on the cultivation of moral virtues go into many more specific details. (See Artha-Sāstra, I.2; Gautama, XI.3.) The divergences of opinion in regard to the specific subjects that a king



The importance of the ministers consists in the fact that they form the executive 'wing' of the state. We find many practical hints given to them by Vaḷḷuvar in regard to how policies are to be executed. One of the most significant of them is:

Decide and then act without delay.<sup>1</sup> Delay where you must, but delay not, where you should not.<sup>2</sup>

The dynamic philosophy of action is appropriately introduced<sup>3</sup> by Vaḷḷuvar while analysing the office of the minister. Vaḷḷuvar immediately adds that vigour in action and the unwavering mind which are required for 'firmness in action' should be directed towards morally good ends even if they cause increasing sorrow (at the outset).<sup>4</sup> Vaḷḷuvar's holding the view firmly that the end cannot justify the means is most significant in our context. It is obvious, the fair means suggested here is the observance of the principle of aram in action. "Avoid actions which yield neither good nor fame"<sup>5</sup> says Vaḷḷuvar, and adds: "Never do any act for which you will repent

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3 (of the previous page) (contd.) should study are evident from Artha-Sāstra, I.2; Manu, VII.43; Yājñavalkya, I.311, Kāmāndaka, Nītisāra, II.2 and Sukra, Nītisāra, I. 152.

1 TK, 67.8

2 ibid., 68.2

3 Two chapters entitled "Power in Action" and "Method of Acting" respectively (chs. 67 & 68) are devoted to this important subject. We have already made detailed references to them in a slightly different context. vide supra, p. 112.

4 TK, 67.9

5 ibid., 66.2

later."<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, the actions of those who have not desisted from doing deeds forbidden (by the great), will, even if they succeed, cause them sorrow.<sup>2</sup> The appeal to the purity of means<sup>3</sup> is most evident when Vaḷḷuvar says: "Even for appeasing the hunger of your mother do no act which the wise would treat with contempt."<sup>4</sup>

5 (of the previous page) TK, 66.2

1 ibid., 66.5

2 ibid., 66.8

3 The whole of chapter 66 entitled "Purity in Action" is devoted to this subject. In addition to the couplets cited above in the body of the the discussion we find it worthwhile referring to three significant couplets:

"Far more excellent is the extreme poverty of the wise than the store of riches obtained by guilt-laden souls." (TK, 66.7)

"All that has been gained with tears (to the victim) will be lost with tears (to oneself); but what has been acquired by fair means, though with loss at first, will afterwards yield fruit." (ibid., 66.9)

"(For a minister) to protect (his king) with wealth acquired through unfair means is like preserving a vessel of wet clay by filling it with water." (ibid., 66.10)

4 ibid., 66.6

The distinctive 'moral tone' of the Kuṛaḷ's approach can be appreciated by a studying certain sentiments expressed in Kauṭilya's Artha-Sāstra and the Mahābhārata:

In the Artha-Sāstra Kauṭilya discloses how the artha-sāstra writers did not shrink from tendering advice which was cruel, selfish and immoral. In I.17 the views of several teachers are explained. Bhāradvāja says that princes are of the nature of crabs eating up their parents; so it is better to finish them in secret when they are wanting in filial affection. Viśalākṣa abhorred this advice as cruel, as unsanctioned murder and as destructive of the seed of kṣatriyas and recommended that it was better to keep them confined to a single spot. Vātavyādhi recommended that princes should be made addicted to sexual excesses.

The insistence on purity of means is further evident in the treatment of the role of ambassadors<sup>1</sup> which obviously fosters 'international relations'. The deeper significance of friendship is made evident

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4 (of the previous page) (contd.) Kauṭilya disapproves of this as living death (for the princes), recommends proper care before conception and after birth and instruction in dharma. But, in I.18 Kauṭilya does not shrink from advising that secret emissaries (of the reigning king) may kill an abandoned prince with weapon and poison and in V.1 Kauṭilya remarks that when a king cannot openly put down the principal courtiers or chiefs who are dangerous to the kingdom, he may inflict punishment on them in secret or may induce the brother of the officer to be punished to attack the latter by promising to give the position and wealth of the officer and then destroy that attacker with weapon or poison saying that he was guilty of fratricide. In V.2 for replenishing a depleted treasury Kauṭilya coolly asks the king to deprive the temples in the kingdom of their wealth through the Superintendent<sup>ent</sup> of religious endowments.

In the Mahābhārata (Sāntiparva, chapter 140) Bhīṣma sets out the policy which should be followed by the king 'when he is in trouble'. The whole chapter is full of Machiavellian advice. A few verses from the chapter may be quoted here. "One desirous of prosperity may fold one's hands, may take an oath, may use sweet words, place his head on another's feet and even shed tears, one may carry on one's shoulders one's enemy till one accomplishes one's object and when a fit opportunity arises should break him like an earthen pot on a stone." (17-18) "When one is reduced to a wretched state one may extricate oneself from it by any act whatever whether gentle or horrible and practise dharma after one becomes able to do so." (38) "One should inspire confidence in one's enemy by some means which appear to be true (to the enemy), but one should strike him down at the right moment when he takes a wrong step." (44) "Whosoever causes obstacles to the purpose of the king, whether son or brother or father or friend, should be killed by the king who desires to prosper." (47) "Without cutting the vitals of others, without committing horrible deeds and without killing indiscriminately as the fishermen in the case of fish one does not secure high prosperity." (50) "When about to strike one should utter sweet words and even after striking one should use honeyed words; even after severing another's head with a sword one should lament and shed tears." (54) "If some remainder is left in the case of a debt or fire or enemies, there is a tendency to grow and so no remainder should be left of these." (58)

in the treatment of this aspect of the state, by dealing with its positive as well as negative aspects. The positive aspects alone are of interest here inasmuch as they point to the fact that development of altruistic love as a possibility signifies that fellowship-feeling in the realm of international relations is not an impossibility.

"Looked at thus, what has to be aimed at (in international relations) is nothing more than what every human being knows as friendship in his worldly relationship with others."<sup>1</sup> Hence the discussion of this aspect is significant both in regard to the individuals in whose hearts friendship has to be fostered and in regard to the positive effect such a feeling produces in the larger context.<sup>2</sup> The 'negative aspects' of friendship point to certain defects in the individual's

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1 (of the previous page) It is interesting to note here that Kauṭilya in his Artha-Sāstra devotes one chapter (I.16) to the subject of ambassadors in which he dwells at length on the qualifications of the envoy, what he is to observe when he is in the enemy territory, how he is to behave (such as avoiding women and wine), how he is to make use of spies to get the necessary information, etc. The details are passed over in the Kural.

It is also significant to note that the ambassador is distinguished from the spy in both the classics and separate chapters are allocated for discussion. Whereas Kauṭilya devotes four chapters (Artha-Sāstra, I. 11-14) for dealing in detail with the subject of spies, Valluvar deals with the subject in a single chapter (TK, ch. 59). The similarity between the contents of this chapter and those of the Artha-Sāstra is striking but for the fact that we have a lot more of details in the latter.

1 Meenakshisundaram, op. cit., p. 308.

2 We may cite just a few couplets from the Kural to illustrate how the wording of them lend meaning both in the context of the individual and in that of international relations:

attitude which affect friendship with the others in one's own society and also international relations. The significant point about the treatment of these aspects is that they reveal the deep psychological insight of Valluvar, and from the point of view of our specific interest they need no detailed reference here.

The fact that natu has the meaning of a geographical territory and also the significance of 'people' provides us the logic of considering it alongside 'fort'. The significance of these two aspects of the state seems to be that Valluvar is not merely concerned with philosophizing about the ethics of politics but is also concerned to

2 (of the previous page) (contd.)

"(True) friendship hastens to rescue the distressed (as readily) as the hand of a man whose garment is loosened (before an assembly)." (TK, 79.8)

"Friendship may be said to be at its peak when it lends support at all times and under all circumstances." (ibid., 79.9)

"The love that dwells (only) in the smiles of the face is not friendship; (but) that which (is seen) in the heart is real friendship." (ibid., 79.6)

"Living together and meeting frequently are not necessary (for friendship); but mutual understanding alone creates the right to friendship." (ibid., 79.5)

"Reflect before you decide on friendship." (ibid., 80.2)

"The old allies have a value of their own, especially when there is a longstanding intimacy, welcoming even the offences towards them." (ibid., 81.1)

"Of what use is it to cultivate the friendship of those who love when there is gain and leave when there is loss?" (ibid., 82.2)

indicate that the physical protection of a country and its people is extremely necessary. It is significant that he considers the character of the people who inhabit the country and those who man the fort as important as the other 'requirements' like plentiful supply of water and food grains and the invincibility of the fort.

The aspect of finance which points to the importance of the economic 'base' in human life has already been dealt with in the earlier part of this chapter. Suffice it to add here that this aspect needs also to be read along with 'people' and 'fort' in so far as finance is important not merely from the point of view of the country as people but also from the point of view of its fortification and for maintaining a well-equipped army.

The very treatment of army as one of the aspects of the state would evidence the fact that Tiruvaḷḷuvar is not building an utopian state but is realistic enough to appreciate the fact that human nature being what it is, constant vigilance is required to 'protect' the state from being subjected to interference from without. Once again, in treating the subject we find Vaḷḷuvar dwelling merely on the spirit of valour and self-sacrifice that should characterize the army rather than going into all the details of organization.<sup>1</sup> The

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<sup>1</sup> This is in contrast to the elaborate discussion we find in the Artha-Sāstra (IX.1-7 & X.1-6) about the organization of the king's army, the proper time and place for starting on an invasion,

army which has the undaunted courage and stands by the state is considered the 'chief wealth' of the king. Supreme sacrifice, offering united resistance to the foe, valour and trustworthiness are marks of an army of which a country can be proud. Valluvar also speaks of the justifiable pride of a heroic army and points to the way an ideal soldier sacrifices his life for the sake of his country. The valiant soldier fighting a fierce battle and laying down his life are exemplifications of his love (of the country) expressing itself spontaneously in his making a supreme sacrifice for the sake of his country.

In the light of the brief survey of aspects of the state made just now and in the light of the analysis of the economic aspects of poruḷ made in the first half of the present chapter, Valluvar's concluding the analysis of poruḷ by distilling certain basic human qualities becomes highly significant. By delineating these points as a sort of appendage<sup>1</sup> Valluvar indicates that these basic qualities

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1 (of the previous page) (contd.) internal and external troubles and calamities and measures against them, means of dealing with traitors and enemies, religious remedies against misfortunes like fire and flood, epidemics, famine, etc., encampment of armies, treacherous and strategic fighting, proper battle grounds, encouragement to one's own army, free labours and their work, different arrangements or formations of armies, etc.

1 Meenakshisundaram (op. cit., pp. 315-316) significantly points to Parimēlalakar's reference to the last thirteen chapters of Poruṭpāl (chapters 96-108) as "Miscellaneous" (oḷipiyal) as not doing justice to the spirit of Valluvar's thought. He points out that the

ultimately point to the other-regarding tendencies that are grounded in the human personality. No doubt, they are no less significant even from the more specific point of view of the economic and political institutions referred to by him,<sup>1</sup> but when it is remembered that these (the economic and political institutions) are nothing but extensions of aram, the deeper significance of the qualities referred to will be appreciated 'in their true setting'.

The 'first level of depth' here is certainly indicated by the political aspects of the analysis of poruḷ, which, as pointed out earlier<sup>2</sup>, are not to be construed as being addressed exclusively to the prince or as being applicable only to those who are in charge of the political management of a society but as having relevance for the concept of sovereignty itself. It is important to reiterate here that such an understanding of 'poruḷ', far from diluting the political content of it, enhances the magnitude of its conception. We would

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1 (of the previous page) (contd.) idealizations of man found in these concluding chapters are taken to mean by Parimēlaḷakar as being concerned with treating miscellaneous topics (regarding human perfection) and suggests that since all the individuals participating in the state are human beings, there is no necessity for calling this part a 'miscellaneous' section. Meenakshisundaram's contention is that the chapters have a deeper significance in that they do not simply deal with 'miscellaneous' topics but point to the basic human qualities which make possible the ideal state which, ultimately, is the prerequisite for the practice of good life.

1 In this 'narrower sense' the qualities referred to are those which make for the 'usefulness', 'efficacy' or 'true value' of the economics and politics of society. Even from this 'limited perspective', the details discussed under the economic and political



further urge that by dwelling on the excellences (of character) to be aimed at and achieved by all individuals in a society, Tiruvalluvar in effect analyses the qualities which contribute to ideal political institutions which in turn make the good life possible.

The 'second level of depth' becomes apparent from the fact that these qualities, in view of the enormous social significance they possess, rather than being considered as 'statements made anew' regarding the necessity for cultivating the refinements required for transforming the raw individual (who is first made to 'develop' concern for the limited circle of his own kith and kin) to become really the man of the world, - radiating the light of kindness and transmitting the warmth of his affection and love for the whole of humanity - need to be referred to as qualities which alone make for 'true humanity'. And, in this respect, the concluding part of the analysis of 'porul' reminds us of the reiteration of the value of aram found earlier in the analysis of the philosophy of good life. The meaning we read into the reiteration of the significance of 'porul' is that it is not to be treated as unrelated to or as being discontinuous with aram but as confirming the explication of the principle of aram enunciated earlier. We shall illustrate our

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1 (of the previous page) (contd.) aspects of society become more meaningful in that the basic human qualities which contribute to the realization of the ideals envisaged in the economic and political institutions emerge in a natural way here.

2 (of the previous page) vide supra, pp. 154-156 & 159-160.

argument by referring to certain of the qualities<sup>1</sup> delineated. The first quality reiterated is nobility. Consistency of thought, word and deed as well as fear of doing evil conjointly constitute this quality.<sup>2</sup> It is important to note that Valluvar attaches the greatest importance to refinement of character (panpu)<sup>3</sup> and the qualities that go with it, viz., a cheerful disposition, liberality and courtesy.<sup>4</sup> These qualities when read with the exhortation that the individual should do all his best to contribute his might for the furtherance of the great ideals of society seem to reiterate the ultimate responsibility of the individual to become a man of the world - with altruism characterizing his outlook on life and the identity-feeling marking his attitude towards humanity as a whole.<sup>5</sup>

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1 These qualities are referred to by Valluvar towards the close of his analysis of porul in chapters 96-108 of the Kural. Some of the ideas treated in these chapters have already been referred to by us at the appropriate places in our analysis of the theme of good life.

2 TK, 96.1 The Tamil word of which nobility is a translation literally means noble birth. As Parimēlalakar elucidates the meaning of the term: nobility of birth cuts across the four-fold stratification of society and is equally to be found or not found in the members belonging to the four castes.

3. ibid., 96.5

4. ibid., 96.3

5. ibid., 96.8

This significant couplet reads: "If in a man of good birth there arises want of affection, then ipso facto his noble birth will be questioned."

The next important quality mentioned by Valluvar is honour (mānam). This quality points to the individual living up to the human ideals and his being prepared to even sacrifice his life for the sake of ideals.<sup>1</sup> Rather than giving up high ideals the people possessed of this quality prefer to give up their lives. Obviously such a sense of honour accounts for the feeling of dignity (that we see in great men) which prevents disreputable action even under adverse circumstances.<sup>2</sup>

Greatness (perumai) is the next quality referred to. Possession of this quality makes a person stand exalted from the rest of mankind. The author says that one's greatness consists in accomplishing of deeds which others can't do<sup>3</sup> and that this is a trait of the mind.<sup>4</sup> Conversely, one's decadence is nothing other than the desire to live destitute of such a state of mind. The other qualities

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1 The following couplets are significant in bringing out the importance of this quality:

"It is better for one to be said of him that he died in his own estate than that he made his living by following those who brought disgrace to him." (TK, 97.7)

honour  
is gone is not a remedy against dying." (ibid., 97.8)

"Those who give up (their) life when (their) honour is at stake are like the wild ox which kills itself at the loss of (even one of) its hairs." (ibid., 97.9)

"The world will adore the fame of the honourable who would rather die than suffer indignity." (ibid., 97.10)

2 ibid., 97.3

like perfection and culture are similarly not abstract qualities of great men but are transparently evident in every one of their actions. They also account for the quality of modesty which they possess in abundant measure.

It is significant that towards the very end of the discussion Valluvar also refers to the very opposite of all the qualities listed earlier, viz., baseness. What is striking about the description of the base people is the irony with which Valluvar portrays their qualities with lot of sarcasm, to spotlight the contrast between the good men and those who are not.

The significance of the good qualities referred to as basic and the undesirability of their opposites is obvious. Here we need only to reiterate the point that according to Valluvar the difference between the good and the bad consists in the fact that whereas the other-regarding tendencies characterize the former, the assertion of their ego is the trait of the latter. It is obvious that the qualities of greatness referred to, whether they are thought of in terms of the economic and political institutions or in general terms signify that their presence would add to the quality of life - and indicate that they are aspects of the good life in a very deep sense indeed.

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3 (of the previous page) TK, 98.5

4 (of the previous page) A significant couplet points out that all men are born equal and become great by actions only. (98.3)

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DIVERSIFICATION OF ARAM : II

One of the leading ideas suggested thusfar in our study has been that Valluvar's scheme of the good life does not overlook the necessity for attaining personality-integration. In an earlier reference to the concept of personality-integration we stated<sup>1</sup> that it has more than a psychological meaning in the Indian tradition and also that the Kural reflects the Indian tradition in this regard. Our clear meaning (which of course was not spelt out then) was that the psychological significance of personality-integration does not deserve either to be disregarded or under-estimated. In more positive terms it may be stated that attaining personality-integration at the psychological level is an important prerequisite for attaining personality-integration in the spiritual sense as well. Tiruvalluvar's treatment of the theme of love and sex<sup>2</sup> as aspects of good life seems to have proceeded from this 'angle of vision'. It seems to us that Tiruvalluvar's view-point is that the good life is not to be construed (i) as something which can be 'realized' in a distinctive sphere

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1 vide supra, pp. 87-88.

2 This is found in the Kāmatuppāl of the Kural.

and 'achieved' apart from the biological and psychological desires and (ii) as involving a violent suppression of the basic biological urges and the innate psychological needs of man.

Nevertheless the treatment of the love-sex theme by Vaḷḷuvar has been subjected to some grave criticisms on the count that a 'book of morals' according importance to a full-length discussion of kāṁam or the experience of mutual attraction felt by the sexes implies a complete watering down of all the grand morals explained and illustrated in the Kural. The basic reservation about the significance of the treatment of the theme has obviously been that sex and the description of human love on the one hand and the description of the good life, on the other, represent two entirely different realms of discourse so much so a detailed analysis of the former does not 'go well' with an intensive discussion of the latter.

A brief reference to the initial biases entertained even by the scholars who were otherwise appreciative of the Kural and their 'second thoughts' on the subject may help us to indicate more precisely the significance of Vaḷḷuvar's treatment of the theme and even to anticipate the discussion regarding the deeper analysis involved in the treatment of the topic. Pope, who has been a great admirer of the Tamil classic, records, in his introduction to the translation of the work, the reservations Mr. Drew and he had, to start with, on the Kāṁattuppāl:

Of this (Third Book on 'Love') Mr. Drew said that it could not be translated into any European language without exposing the translator to infamy. But this is only true in regard to certain of the commentaries upon it, which are simply detestable. I am persuaded that it is perfectly pure in its tendency, and in the intention of its wise and high-souled composer ... Kāman is the Hindu Cupid. Hindu ideas differ from our own. The prejudice kept me from reading the third part of the Kural for some years; but the idea occurred to me very forcefully that he who wrote:

'Spotless be thou in mind!  
This only merits virtue's name;  
All else mere pomp and idle sound,  
no real worth can claim' (Tirukkural, 4.4)

could not have covered himself with the spotted infamy of singing a song of lust. Thus I ventured at length to read and study it, rejecting commentators, when I was able fairly to appreciate its spirit; and, as the result, I translate it, believing that I shall be regarded as having done good service in doing so. Dr. Graul has published it in German...<sup>1</sup>

The initial prejudice scholars had against the Kāmatuppāl is analogous indeed to the critical comments that Vātsyāyana's Kāma-Sūtra<sup>2</sup> evoked . It is interesting not merely to note that the

1 op. cit., pp. xxviii-xxix

2 This is the acclaimed Hindu classic on sex and is generally believed to have been composed around 400 A.D. by the author (whose personal name was Mallanāga). It is considered variously as a book on erotics, as a text-book for lovers, etc. One of the most important characteristic features of the work is that it treats in detail the various aspects of sex - the 'mechanics of sex' finding a prominent place in it. This last aspect becomes evident from Vātsyāyana's 'defending' the importance of his work. The objection to his work on Kāma (Sex-desire) is that sex is practised even by the brute creation and as such there is no need of any book on the subject. Vātsyāyana's

treatment of the subject of sex in the Sanskrit classic was as much misunderstood as the Tamil classic's treatment, but has also earned high praise from Western writers as the Tamil treatise did. Zimmer points out that the Kāma-Sūtra has earned India an ambiguous reputation for sensuality and recants its ambiguity. He observes that the subject is presented on an entirely secularized and technical level, more or less like a text-book for lovers and courtesans. He further explains that though the kāma literature has come down to us giving excessively technical details of the subject, some basic insights concerning the attitude of the sexes towards each other can still be had from it - some notions of the psychology of love, analysis of the feelings and manners of emotional expression as well as a view of the recognized task and spheres of love.<sup>1</sup>

The comments of Havelock Ellis, the greatest authority on sex of our era, on the treatment given to sexual life in Indian writings are also significant in our context. He writes:

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2 (of the previous page) (contd.) answer to the objection is: "... Sexual intercourse being a thing dependent on man and woman requires the application of proper means by them, and those means are to be learnt from the Kāma-Sāstra. The non-application of proper means, which we see in the brute creation, is caused by their being unrestrained, and by the females among them only being fit for sexual intercourse at certain seasons and no more, and by their intercourse not being preceded by thought of any kind." (Kāma-Sūtra, ch.2)

1 op. cit., pp. 38-39.



In India ... sexual love has been sanctified and divinized to a greater extent than in any other part of the world. 'It seems never to have entered into the heads of the Hindu legislators' said Sir William Jones long since (Works, II, 311) 'that anything natural could be offensively obscene, a singularity which pervades all their writings, but is no proof of the depravity of their morals' ... 'love in India, both as regards theory and practice', remarks Richard Schmidt (Beitrag zur Indischen Erotik, p. 2) 'possesses an importance which it is impossible for us even to conceive.'<sup>1</sup>

We anticipate that our citing the parallel of the Kāma-Sūtra and the suggested closer scrutiny of it may be misunderstood as our reading into the Kural the ideas of the Kāma-Sūtra, and as having the very 'bias' associated with the commentary of Parimēlalakar that Tamil scholars have quite often pointed out while writing on the Kāmattuppāl. We would certainly not agree with the view that the ideas contained in the Kāmattuppāl are nothing but reproductions of those in the Kāma-Sūtra.<sup>2</sup> If we may make references in terms of

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1 Studies in the Psychology of Sex, Philadelphia: F.A. Davis Co., 1922, VI, 129. Whether the author had Tiruvalluvar's Kural or Vātsyāyana's Kāma-Sūtra in mind, we do not know. Even if it is argued that he had Vātsyāyana's work in his mind we would argue that the comments are much more significant in regard to Tiruvalluvar's work.

2 Though in the text above we are going to be concerned a little more to indicate the contrast between the approaches of the Kural and the Kāma-Sūtra, we find it useful here to reflect on some other points concerning the various approaches to the subject of sex (including Vātsyāyana's) within the Sanskrit Hindu tradition. We may also mention the refreshing contrast provided by Tiruvalluvar's approach. The motive of sexual love, strictly speaking, according to the Hindu tradition, is begetting of children. The latter again is not for the joy of the progeny in itself but as Parimēlalakar would say, typifying the standard Hindu spirit (preamble to chapter 6)

'deviations from the Sanskritic ideas', we would concede that the 'deviation' is much more evident in the Kāmattuppāl than in the other two Sections, Arattuppāl and Poruṭpāl.

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2 (of the previous page) (contd.) for the performance of obsequies of the parents so that the parents might have happiness ensured for them in the life hereafter. The national Epics of India, Rāmāyaṇa and Mahābhārata indeed reflect this spirit in vivid colours. True, this has not inhibited the higher aesthetic and emotional attitudes going with sexual love and making for the rise of love poetry and of treatises on love. But as one may see especially when compared with the profoundest of the motives with which the theme is approached by Tiruvaḷḷuvar, there is a certain banality that attaches to the approach to man in terms of mere sex-worthiness or defining complete happiness in terms of sex-activity (which reflects the Kāma-Sūtra approach).

The standard Hindu scene from which Kural's Section on sexual love stands out contrasted, may be described as falling between a prosaic intellectualism which deprives romantic love of its very essence and an apotheosis of eros as sexual activity, impersonal and autonomous, claiming on grounds of 'instant happiness' priority over dharma, mokṣa and even artha (vide the opening remarks of sūtra 1 of the Kāma-Sūtra). The former tendency is reflected in the sections relating to the institution of marriage and progeny in the Dharma-Śāstras, the Epics and the Purāṇas. The theme of sexual love (śṛṅgāra) is treated as contextual to marriage either of the kind of a ṛṣi (seer) marrying in order to qualify for performing certain religious rites or where a king marries for reasons of state (e.g., Udayaṇa and Padmāvati) or of the kind where marriage is entered into purely for sexual enjoyment (eg., Udayaṇa and Vāsavadatta). The last mentioned variety exemplifies the gāndharva style of marriage which formally approximates to the Tamil concept of kaḷavu. (vide Nakkīrar's commentary, Iraṇanār Kaḷaviyal, sūtra 1) The other tendency which hypostasizes sex-love goes to the opposite extreme of viewing kāma per se as the highest of life's ideals. If in the former case sex is made contextual to marriage which itself is contextual to the exigence of progeny, 'diplomacy', pleasure, etc., in the latter case sex is blown out of proportion and thematized. (The author of the Kāma-Sūtra makes no distinction between a ghaṇikā or professional hustler and a wedded wife as far as sex activity is concerned) See K.R. Pisharoti, "Sex-life in Ancient India", in R.N. Dandekar and K.V. Abhayankar, ed., The Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute Silver Jubilee Volume (1917-1942), Poona, 1943.

In fact, our citing the passages from Zimmer and Havelock Ellis is with a view to pointing to the way in which the subject of sex has been approached in India and also to a contrast which needs to be drawn between the two Classics, - a contrast which is not at all evident in the passages. Furthermore, the two passages may also be understood as representing the dominant characteristics respectively of the Sanskritic and the Tamilian approaches to the theme.

The Kāma-Sūtra clearly is a great treatise on erotics. Vātsyāyana discusses in detail, the kinds of sexual union 'according to dimension, force of desire or passion and time':

Men are divided into three classes: the Hare men, the Bull men and the Horse men, according to the size of their liṅgam (organ)

Women also are divided into three classes: a female deer, a female hare and the female elephant, according to the depth of their yonī (organ)

Thus there are three equal unions between persons of corresponding dimensions, and there are six unequal unions when the dimensions do not correspond. Thus as the following table shows, there are nine unions in all:

|                |       |          |
|----------------|-------|----------|
| Equal unions   | Man   | Woman    |
|                | Hare  | Deer     |
|                | Bull  | Mare     |
|                | Horse | Elephant |
| Unequal unions | Man   | Woman    |
|                | Hare  | Mare     |
|                | Hare  | Elephant |
|                | Bull  | Deer     |
|                | Bull  | Elephant |
|                | Horse | Deer     |
|                | Horse | Mare     |

There are also nine kinds of union according to force of passion or carnal desire, as follows:

| Man      | Woman    |
|----------|----------|
| Small    | Small    |
| Middling | Middling |
| Intense  | Intense  |
| Small    | Middling |
| Small    | Intense  |
| Middling | Small    |
| Middling | Intense  |
| Intense  | Small    |
| Intense  | Middling |

A man is called a man of small passion whose desire at the time of sexual union is not great, whose semen is scanty, and who cannot bear the warm embraces of a female.

Those who differ from this temperament are called men of middling passion, while those of tense passion are full of desire. In the same way women are supposed to have three degrees of feeling as specified above.

Lastly, according to time there are three kinds of men and women:

- (i) the short-timed
- (ii) the moderate-timed
- (iii) the long-timed

Of these, as in the previous cases there are nine kinds of union.<sup>1</sup>

The meticulous care with which Vātsyāyana mentions 'details' are evident from the description of the bed-chamber he gives:

The outer room, balmy with rich perfumes, should contain a bed, soft, agreeable to the sight, covered with a clean white cloth, low in the middle part,

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1 Kāma-Sūtra, II.1

having garlands and bunches of flowers upon it and a canopy above it. It should have two pillows, one at the top, another at the bottom. There should also be a sort of couch, and at the head of this a sort of stool. On this should be placed the fragrant ointments for the night, such as flowers, pots containing collyrium and other fragrant substances...<sup>1</sup>

Even a perusal of the broad division of the Work (with a chapter-heading given within brackets) would indicate the type of approach to the topic of sex and love that Vātsyāyana took:

- Part I Socio-Sexual Topics (ch. 4: Of the Kinds of Women resorted to by the Citizens and on Friends and Messengers)
- Part II On Sexual Union - Embraces (ch. 2: On Creating Confidence in the Girl)
- Part III Union of Males and Females (ch. 3: On Kissing)
- Part IV On One's Own Wife (ch. 1: On the Manner of Living)
- Part V On the Wives of Other People (ch. 3: Examination of the State of a Woman's Mind)
- Part VI On Courtesans (ch. 2: On a Courtesan Living like a Wife)
- Part VII On the Arts of Seduction (ch. 2: On the Ways of Exciting Desire)

The mechanics of sex is thus the focus of concern in the Kāma-Sūtra. The psychology of love is not entirely disregarded and the 'ethics of moderation' which is suggested is again based on the inquiry into the conditions under which man can derive the most enjoyment out of sex.

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1 Kāma-Sūtra, .I.3.

In the Kāmattuppāl we do not find any mention about the technical details about sex. From the complete shift in analysis (while treating the subject of kāmam) that we find in it - the shift towards the suggestive analysis<sup>1</sup> of the finer aspects of love in the human heart, the premises on which Vaḷḷuvar proceeds to analyse the subject is obvious, viz., that love is more than sex though it is based on sex. Vaḷḷuvar does not at all deny the fact that sexual cravings form the basis of lasting affections and intimate sharing of joys and sorrows by two individuals who are bound by the institutions of courtship and marriage. But, Vaḷḷuvar's main concern seems to be to show that the whole-hearted partaking of the sweet and bitter things of life is impossible unless the individuals look upon love and marriage as more than physical intimacy.<sup>2</sup> Sheer satisfaction of the sex-desire cannot explain the remarkable attitude of sacrifice (for each other) that persons who come together in love (and institutionalize it through marriage) develop.

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1 In adopting the procedure of 'suggestive analysis' Vaḷḷuvar follows the Tamilian tradition according to which matters concerning love cannot be fully explicated. (See also p. 240) Hence we have had to 'dig out' Vaḷḷuvar's analysis as found in the third Section, Kāmattuppāl. Naturally our interpretation of Vaḷḷuvar's analysis is based on the wordings we find in the text, the contexts in which they occur and also on the connecting links that can be discerned between this section and the section on Aram.

2 It is of interest here to note that Havelock Ellis, writing on the objects of marriage draws a significant distinction between the "animal ends" and "spiritual objects" of marriage. In broad terms: the latter is an evolution from the former, and he explains the 'evolution' as follows:

Vaḷḷuvar's treatment of the theme reflects clearly his view that of all the human longings, the love of man for a woman is extremely significant. Vaḷḷuvar has shown a remarkably strong psychological insight into the basic fact of human love, viz., that it ennobles, uplifts and makes man capable of great sacrifice.<sup>1</sup> He has also appreciated the fact that on the purely psychological side, the lack

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2 (of the previous page) (contd.) "...from an early period in human history, a secondary function of sexual intercourse had been slowly growing up to become one of the great objects of marriage... This means that sex gradually becomes intertwined with all the highest and subtlest human emotions and activities, with the refinements of social intercourse, with high adventure in every sphere, with art, with religion. The primitive animal instinct, having the sole end of procreation, becomes on its way to that end the inspiring stimulus to all those psychic energies which in civilisation we count most precious. This function is thus, we see, a by-product. But, as we know, even in our human factories, the by-product is sometimes more valuable than the product. That is so as regards the functional productions of human evolution. The hand was produced out of the animal forelimb with the primary end of grasping the things we materially need, but as a by-product the hand has developed the function of making and playing the piano and the violin, and that secondary functional by-product of the hand we account, even as measured by the rough test of money, more precious, however less materially necessary, than its primary function. It is, however, only in rare and gifted natures that transformed sexual energy becomes of supreme value for its own sake without ever attaining the normal physical outlet. For the most part the by-product accompanies the product, throughout, thus adding a secondary, yet peculiarly sacred and specially human, object of marriage to its primary animal object. This may be termed the spiritual object of marriage.

By the term 'spiritual' we are not to understand any mysterious and supernatural qualities. It is simply a convenient name, in distinction from animal, to cover all those higher mental and emotional processes which in human evolution are ever gaining greater power. It is needless to enumerate the constituents of this spiritual end of sexual intercourse, ... They include not only all that makes love a gracious and beautiful erotic art, but the whole element of pleasure in so far as pleasure is more than a mere animal gratification." (Little Essays of Love and Virtue, New York, 1922, pp. 65-67.)

of the experience called love makes man fugitive, distracted, nervous, confused and restless and leads to a lop-sided development of personality. Perhaps the most important feature of Valluvar's analysis is that it shows full recognition of the intimate relationship between attaining satisfaction in love and developing the virtue of selflessness.

The mutual attraction of the sexes which is accepted by Valluvar as natural is also considered by him as being instrumental to the attainment of satisfaction through sex which in its turn is responsible for the attainment of a sense of completeness in life.

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1 (of the previous page) The 'extra-individualistic' significance of the 'intimate relationship' - marriage - is portrayed beautifully by Havelock Ellis (*ibid.*, pp. 68-69) when he writes: "While it is perfectly true that sexual energy may be in large degree arrested and transformed into intellectual and moral forms, yet it is also true that pleasure itself, and above all, sexual pleasure, wisely used and not abused, may prove the stimulus and liberator of our finest and most exalted activities. It is largely this remarkable function of sexual pleasure which is decisive in settling the argument of those who claim that continence is the only alternative to the animal end of marriage. That argument ignores the liberating and harmonising influences, giving wholesome balance and sanity to the whole organism, imparted by a sexual union which is the outcome of the psychic as well as physical needs. There is, further, in the attainment of the spiritual end of marriage, much more than the benefit of each individual separately... For through harmonious sex relationships a deeper spiritual unity is reached than can possibly be derived from continence in or out of marriage, and the marriage association becomes an apter instrument in the service of the world. Apart from any sexual craving, the complete spiritual contact of two persons who love each other can only be attained through some act of rare intimacy. No act can be quite so intimate as the sexual embrace. In its accomplishment, for all who have reached a reasonably human degree of development, the communion of bodies becomes the communion of souls."



When a man and a woman come together in love and marry, the unity of interests they achieve is not a mechanically contrived uniformity of outlook but the result of complementing the feelings and emotions of one another. In the process of complementing there results an unique mingling of the emotions and from this is born a sense of sacrifice for the other. This is the starting point of the development of the various ethical qualities. Valluvar's clear view thus is that a man who is not accustomed to sacrificing his own interest for the sake of his family cannot be expected to sacrifice his interests for the larger ends of society.<sup>1</sup>

The deeper significance of Valluvar's suggestive analysis approach to the theme of love becomes evident now. The love-theme, strictly speaking, belongs to the 'inner side' of man and all other themes (including ethical virtues) fall on the 'outer side',<sup>2</sup> though the two are intimately related. As correlates for the 'outer'

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1 Valluvar does not, however, discuss the ethical aspects of the man-woman relationship in the section on love, the Kāmattuppāl, they have been touched upon in the section on aram, the Arattuppāl. The feeling-emotional aspects of that relationship which makes possible the practice of aram are detailed in this section. The finer aspects of the human personality which come to the fore when the mutually stabilizing effect of love is experienced are clearly portrayed in the Kāmattuppāl.

2 This, in a very broad sense, is the type of distinction that the Tamil literary tradition makes, in the 'treatment of themes', between akam and puram. The literal meaning of 'akam' is 'inside' and 'puram' literally means 'outside'. We may say that "akam" represents that which is experienced by the mind alone and, in a

can be visualized to be found in the 'inner' (even though the latter is only incompletely accessible) it may be argued that the former has deeper implications for the latter. Thus it is that on the

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2 (of the previous page) (contd.)

sense, something which cannot be adequately expressed in words. Puram refers to all things experienced by all or many in common and are more easily describable." (See E.S. Varadaraja Iyer, Tolkāppiyam : Poruḷatikāram, Annamalainagar: Annamalai University, 1948, Vol. I, pt. 1, p. 1).

In our present context, what is significant is that the theme of love falls on the side of akam. That is, kāmam is considered to belong to the akam side of the 'akam-puram dichotomy'. We may also note here that the other two values of aram and poruḷ, according to this understanding of akam and puram, fall on the side of puram. It will be evident then that in effect, the four-fold value-scheme (the dharmā-artha-kāma-mokṣa scheme) which was referred to by us as having been reconceived by Valluvar in terms of the three-fold value scheme (the aram-poruḷ-inpam scheme, - the value of viṭu being considered as in-built in the three-fold-scheme-structure) becomes explicable also in terms of akam and puram. We have not, however, referred to this akam-puram 'base' of the scheme of aram, poruḷ and inpam in this study so far. Not that we consider it unimportant or insignificant but because we find a reference to it in our present context more significant.

In our interpreting Valluvar's approach to the concept of love we are maintaining that the personality-integration idea is clearly seen in the treatment of kāmam. We might reiterate the point here in terms of the 'inner significance' of kāmam considered as falling on the akam side rather than on the puram side, and also suggest that the akam-puram 'base' itself seems to have a deeper significance from the point of view of the development of an integrated personality. As Meenakshisundaram (op. cit., p. 227) observes: "Akam and puram ... are but the internal and external aspects of one and the same human life... All the aspects of the external life have their corresponding internal aspect. From this point of view human life is worth that name, only when all the aspects of human personality are harmoniously developed ... during the course of one's own life." In our specific context the significance of the importance accorded to kāmam becomes more than apparent - in terms of its contribution to an integrated -personality-development. In this sense kāmam may be considered to hold within it the potentiality for opening up newer vistas for the 'seeker'.

one hand, the experience of love cannot be explicated fully and, on the other, in its deepest sense it paves the way for the development of the other-regarding virtues in human life. This seems to be the obvious reason for Valluvar's ideas appearing to be elusive of our grasp.

A few leading ideas in Valluvar's concept of aram, however, give us a clue to an understanding of his views on love. First and foremost, his idea of aram as ultimately pointing to the necessity of 'expansiveness' of human love. Second, that the other-regarding attitude (arul) is ultimately born out of affection (anpu). Third, that the genesis and development of affection and love are to be found in the most intimate man-woman relationship. In the light of these, it seems to us that Valluvar's treatment of 'love' needs to be approached purely from the human angle to get at its significance for the theme of good life. If aram in Valluvar's system ultimately stands for the principle which makes for the development of the other-regarding virtues (or attitude towards humanity), we suggest that the beginning phases of it are indicated by him through the analysis of the concept of kāmam. As we indicated earlier: in Valluvar's treatment of the theme of good life we see the recognition of the importance of the idealistic aspects of the family (the foundation for which is laid by the uniquely intimate man-woman relationship) as well as the deep psychological bases of the idealized conception of the 'nucleus of altruism'. An idealist that he was, Tiruvalluvar

could not help insisting on the duty-bound attitude of man and wife towards each other, towards the children, towards other relatives and towards strangers while referring to the 'virtues of family life', the stage of 'illaram'. At the same time, the realistic approach that he always brought to bear on his task of delineating the essentials of good life was responsible for his never overlooking the empirical-psychological aspects of the question. Furthermore, he well appreciated the fact that initially the instinctive attraction felt between the sexes determined a type of relationship which mellows down in good time, refines itself and truly becomes the nucleus of an idealistically other-regarding attitude towards life.

The obvious implication of this approach of Valluvar is that the instinctive basis of the man-woman relationship needs to be nurtured properly so that the inner potential of this innate human urge can be actualized fully.<sup>1</sup> In such an attitude towards sex we neither

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1 It is interesting to note that L.T. Hobhouse (in Morals in Evolution, London: Chapman & Hall Ltd., 1908, pp. 13 ff) maintains that instincts in man (in contradistinction to the instincts in animals) undergo radical and remarkable transformation. The instincts, far from retaining their rudimentary nature are transformed by the pressure of experience as well as social tradition. He maintains further that in the course of evolution man's nature undergoes such a modification that his behaviour is seldom, if ever, determined, by instincts fixed and specific as they may be supposed to have existed prior to experience and independently of social tradition. "Love and the whole family life have an instinctive basis, ... they rest upon tendencies inherited with the brain and nerve structure; but everything that has to do with the satisfaction of these impulses is determined by the experience of the individual, the laws and customs of the society in which he lives, the woman he meets, the accidents of their intercourse and so forth."

see an apologetic treatment of the subject nor hear the tone of mere legitimation of the inner urges of man and woman which bring them together through the irresistible, mutual attraction felt. It is not surprising, therefore that Vaḷḷuvar positively and deliberately sets aside an anemic presentation of the most universally felt experience of sexual attraction and adopts, with a sense of gay abandon, the flesh-and-blood approach while analysing it. Yet, true to the Tamil literary tradition of akam, he takes us on to an imaginative plane without articulating fully the intimate experience which, in the ultimate analysis, is too deep and personal (hence also unfathomable and inaccessible) that it is difficult, nay impossible, for the 'others' (i.e., those who are not actually 'involved') to comprehend fully or vividly. The reason why Vaḷḷuvar utilizes fully his poetic resources in the analysis of love now becomes clear and can be appreciated better. Lest we should mistake him as giving us only a patched up presentation, - the serious aspects of family life while treating of aram and the sensuous aspects of it in his analysis of kānam - Vaḷḷuvar indicates the connecting link between the two even while concerning himself with the theme of love. The concepts of kālavu (pre-marital love) and karpu (love in the married state) clearly evidence this fact and we shall turn our attention to this presently.

Before that, however, it is necessary to refer here to a completely different type of interpretation that is given to Vaḷḷuvar's treatment of 'love', viz., that the love portrayed by him

is 'divine love', the 'longing' that is described is the one felt by the individual soul for 'union' with the Divine Being. Whatever might be the basis for such an interpretation it seems to us that it has at least one inherent difficulty. It at once raises the question why such an allegorical interpretation be not given to the concepts of aram and porul as well. If it is conceded that such an interpretation should be given to aram and porul, the uniqueness of the Kural's whole approach to the philosophy of good life will seem to be a 'claim' which can't be sustained at all. On the other hand, if it is maintained that an allegorical interpretation need not necessarily be given to the first two values, the charge of 'arbitrariness' in the interpretative procedure adopted, may be hard to meet. In effect, the allegorical interpretation is beset with difficulties both in terms of vindicating the unique, this-worldly approach of Vaḷḷuvar and in terms of interpretative consistency.

It seems to us therefore that the interpretation of the love theme we are suggesting is quite appropriate to the spirit of Vaḷḷuvar's approach to the good life. The basis of our suggestion becomes especially evident when we recount that Vaḷḷuvar is concerned all the time with human endowments and capacities which need to be 'exploited' to make man actualize his own potentialities.<sup>1</sup> No doubt, he

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1 Indicating the type of approach to the Kāmatuppāl that he would favour, Pope (op. cit., p. xxix) observes: "... many give to the whole a mystical interpretation, an idea with which commentators

idealistically approaches the human situation and draws our attention to the laudable aspects of the human personality which 'show promise'; yet, the realistic appreciation of the 'stirrings of the human heart' that we see in the Kural is equally significant. We have already had glimpses of this approach and our submission here is that Valluvar's treatment of the theme of love illustratively evidences his deep psychological insight in this regard. Human love in its early beginnings is presented with a penetrating effect, the pangs of separation felt by the lovers are pictresquely portrayed and the attitude of sacrifice that love entails is taken due note of by him. It is the last aspect which assures us that Valluvar's dwelling on the 'psychology of sex and home' is intimately related to the idealistic presentation<sup>1</sup> of man he made earlier. While quite appreciating the fact

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1 (of the previous page) (contd.) on the book of Canticles have made us familiar. Its interpretations as an allegory exhibiting the play (Skt. līlā) of the Divine Spirit with the embodied soul, would be in harmony with much that is found in Muhammadan literature as well as in Sanskrit, especially in Buddhist writers. Yet I can hardly think that Tiruvalluvar's tone of mind would lead him to this method of teaching spiritual truths."

1 Devasenapathi (op. cit., p. 323) seems to suggest that the two types of interpretation need not necessarily be considered incompatible with each other. Addressing himself to the question what the main theme of the Kural is, he suggests that it is concerned with non-attachment and love and the evolution of personality from the state of self-centredness and narrow attachments to a state of God-centredness and boundless love (benevolence) and maintains that the third section (of the Kural) is the best description of such a state. He also maintains that the very first chapter of the Kural, 'Praise of God', other chapters in the first two sections emphasizing ethical virtues which help to bring about freedom from egoism and the whole of the third section is also concerned with Heaven or Release,

that the allegorical interpretations are probably intended to stress this idealistic presentation of man, we would suggest that such an interpretation need not necessarily be brought in to account for the idealizations of the man-woman relationship we find in the Kural.<sup>1</sup>

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1 (of the previous page) (contd.) probably implying that the 'mystical meaning' itself need not be unrelated to the basic human approach, provided we give a deeper interpretation of the term 'human' as does Tiruvalluvar.

It seems to us that the 'meaning' of the third section need not necessarily be understood in terms of or in relation to the chapters in the earlier two sections where the concept of God is accepted. We are not of course taking the view that the concept of God stands in isolation from the rest of the concepts in the Kural. In regard to the relationship between the ethical virtues exhorted in some of the chapters constituting the earlier two sections: we would concede that they need to be related to Kāmatuppāl. We are however suggesting that the Kāmatuppāl can well be interpreted as pointing to the way the intimate man-woman relationship helps the development of ethical virtues rather than giving a purely mystical meaning to it.

1 We are well aware of the fact that the symbol employed in Indian mysticism and described in God-union is drawn on the model of the perfect relationship between man and woman. The relationship between man and woman is conceived as holy and perfect and as most intimate. Spiritual mysticism employs the language of the lover and the beloved to express devotion. The Lord is the eternal lover and the longing of the human being for the Lord's eternal love is analogous to the longing of the lovers for his love. We are thus not denying the significance of the model employed in bridal mysticism but are only reiterating the fact that even without employing that model the deeper significance of the Kāmatuppāl can be understood.

Moreover even when Valluvar speaks of the pre-marital and the marital stages of 'love' (referred to by the Tamil terms kalavu and karpu respectively), the idealizations of the relationship of two persons being bound together in love become obvious. And, when we remember that Valluvar's concepts of kalavu and karpu were themselves grounded on the institutions of kalavu and karpu of the Tamil society the view that a purely human interpretation of the Kāmatuppāl does not do damage to the spirit of Valluvar's philosophy (we are deliberately expressing ourselves 'negatively'), may be considered quite plausible.



Furthermore, the fact that the idealization of sex-life was not born purely out of Tiruvalluvar's imagination would add strength to our own argument here. As one of the recent interpreters of the Kural observes:

We are not sure whether the sex life, as depicted in this part, was only that actually existed at the time of Tiruvalluvar. It is, however, obvious that it is not a mere figment of his imagination, as all the sex habits and behaviour set forth here are well corroborated by Sangam literature and the traditions recorded in the Tolkāppiam. It is apparent that ... the author presents an ideal sex life, interpreting its significance and aim to his country men for their edification and emulation.<sup>1</sup>

The Caṅkam literature and Tolkāppiam traditions referred to here clearly indicate that Tiruvalluvar's concepts of kaḷavu and karpu

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1 (of the previous page) (contd.) Referring to the early Tamil society's acceptance of the pre-marital courtship idea, K.K. Pillay (A Social History of the Tamils, Madras: University of Madras, 1975, Vol. 1) writes: "... there is little doubt that among the Tamils, kaḷaviyal was ennobled almost into a fine art in which certain traditional conventions were harmonised with rustic simplicity" (p. 344). He continues: "Fidelity to the lover was rarely, if ever, broken. (Kuruntokai, 3 and 42; Narrinai, 166.) Several poets of the classical age speak of the steadfastness and intensity of love on the part of the girl. (Kuruntokai, 18, 42 and 366; Narrinai, 166; and Aiṅkurunūru, 2) Little wonder that separation of the lovers caused acute agony to them." (pp. 347-348)

We might thus say that the 'purity of intention' of Valluvar can be asserted purely on the basis of his idealizing the relationship between the lovers both before and after marriage. (See also

p. 108. 1 K. Kothandapani Pillai, "Tirukkural-Kāmattuppāl" in TSEL,

Analysing the question whether or not the love-situations depicted in the Caṅkam classics were of a contemporary character,

were in fact based on the social practices of the Tamils prevalent at the time, though as Meenakshisundaram argues, Tiruvaḷḷuvar's great contribution, here again, is that he has made improvements in the original caṅkama conception.<sup>1</sup> Hence it is all the more necessary to take note of the social practices of kaḷavu and karpu.

The literal meaning of kaḷavu is theft and in terms of social practice it may be mistaken as the ancient Tamils' giving recognition to the securing of women by 'theft'. Probably it was such a mistaken notion about kaḷavu which was at the basis of the interpretation of it in terms of gāndharva-vivāha, one of the eight 'forms of marriage'<sup>2</sup> recognized by the Sanskritic tradition.<sup>3</sup> Suffice it to state here

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1 (of the previous page) (contd.) K.K. Pillay (op. cit., pp. 340-341) writes: "The handling of kaḷaviyal or pre-marital love by the poets of the caṅkama age seems to indicate that they portray for the most part events and features of a previous epoch. By the period of the caṅkama age they had become part of the literary convention."

1 op. cit., p. 286.

2 The expression 'form of marriage' is generally applied to the numeric variation in the partners in marriage, as Malinowski puts it (See the article "Marriage" in Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. 14). Accordingly, the forms of marriage usually listed are monogamy, polygamy, polyandry and group marriage. But here in referring to the Hindu idea of marriage we shall use the expression 'form of marriage' to denote the method of consecrating a marriage-union.

3 The Sanskritic 'Law Books' refer to eight forms of marriage: brāhma, daiva, ārṣa, prājāpatya, āsura, gāndharva, rākṣasa and paiśāca. The brāhma form consists of the gift of a daughter by the father, after decking her with ornaments, to a man, learned in the Vedas, and of a good character whom the bride's father himself invites. The daiva form involves the gift of the daughter as above, to a priest who duly officiates at a sacrifice, during the course of its performance. The

that from the fact that gāndharva is mentioned as one among eight forms of marriage and kaḷavu is not considered a form of marriage but only as a stage preceding marriage, 'reading' gāndharva into kaḷavu does not do justice to the Tamil tradition. Furthermore, gāndharva, as a 'recognized form' of marriage seems to point to the Hindu Law-givers' great concern for according social recognition to a type of union which, in any case, is not considered to be the 'best'<sup>1</sup> whereas kaḷavu is to be understood entirely differently.

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3 (of the previous page) (contd.) ārṣa form is the one in which the father gives his daughter in marriage to the bridegroom, after receiving a cow and a bull or two pairs of these from the bridegroom. The prājāpatya form is the one in which the father makes a gift of the daughter, by addressing the couple : "May both of you perform together your dharma (duty)" and by doing due honour to the bridegroom. In the āsura form the bridegroom has to give money to the father or kinsmen of the bride, and thus, in a sense purchases the bride. In the gāndharva form, mutual love and consent of the 'boy' and the 'girl' are the only conditions required to bring about the union. Neither the father nor the kinsmen have a hand in bringing about the marriage. The rākṣasa form is described as the forcible abduction of a maiden from her home, while she cries and weeps, after her kinsmen have been slain or wounded and their houses broken. It amounts to the capture of the bride by force. The paśāca form is the 'form of marriage' in which the man seduces, a girl while she is sleeping, intoxicated or disordered in intellect. In our context we need reiterate that in the gāndharva form, the bride may be said to allow herself to be 'stolen' by her lover. (Manu, III,21; Baudhāyana, I,11,20,1-9; Gautama, IV, 6-13; Yājñavalkya, I.58-61; Kauṭilya, Artha-Sāstra, III.2.)

1 The painstaking researches of Kane into the Sanskritic sources have clearly indicated that there has always been (in the Sanskritic tradition) an 'evaluative approach' to the various kinds of marriage contracted. There has been a continuous debate on the question of 'suitability' of these different kinds of marriage for the different varṇas. There is general agreement that the first four, viz., brāhma, daiva, ārṣa and prājāpatya, are the approved forms. (Gautama, IV.12; Apastaṃba, II.5.12.3; Manu, III.24) Most say that

A deeper reflection about the Tamil term kaḷavu points to the real significance of its usage in the 'realm of love'. It will be conceded that 'theft' connotes basically a 'loss' of something without the 'owner' being conscious of it (he may become conscious of it, later.). In the realm of the hearts which are in love, it means precisely that the 'lovers' find their hearts being 'stolen'.<sup>1</sup> Hence

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1 (of the previous page) (contd.) each preceding one out of the first four is superior to each succeeding one and that brāhma is the best. (Āpastamba, II.5.12.4; Baudhāyana, I.11.11.) Almost all are agreed that paśāca is the worst. Manu (III.23-26) refers to several views. One view is that the first four are the proper forms for brāhmanas (Baudhāyana, I.11.10; Manu, III.24); another view was that the first six (i.e., all except the rākṣasa and paśāca forms) are allowed to brāhmanas and the last four to kṣatriyas, and the gāndharva, āsura and paśāca to vaiśyas and sūdras. (Manu, III.23). A third view was that prājāpatya, gāndharva and āsura may be resorted to by all varṇas. Manu mentions the view that the gāndharva and rākṣasa are proper for a kṣatriya, or a mixture of these two, viz., where the girl loves the bridegroom, but her parents or guardians disapprove or cause obstacles and the lover takes away the girl after a fight with her relations. (Manu, III.26; Baudhāyana, I,11.13) See Kane, op. cit., Vol. II, pt. 2, p. 521.) In the Kāma-Sūtra we find the view of the brāhma form being mentioned as being the best referred to (i.e., Vātsyāyana refers to the Dharma-Sāstra views on the question first) and its own opinion that gāndharva is the best. (III.5)

1 The great Tamil poet Kampan has indicated clearly the significance of kaḷavu by 'taking the heroine (Sita) of his immortal Epic Rāmāyana, through different stages of love': Commenting on an important quatrain in the Epic (Mithilaikkāṭchi, 55) K.Kothandapani Pillai (op. cit., p. 50) explains: "Here is the introspection of a virgin heart tossed out of its moorings by the storm which the sight of her would-be-partner had raised. Her good womanly heart with its attributes of equanimity, self-possession (nirai) and resoluteness (tiṇmai) which she has inherited as one coming in the long line of cultured womanhood (penvaḷi nalanōtum) her inborn modesty (piranta nānōtum) and her powers of reasoning and intellect from her. She makes a thorough search but could find them nowhere within herself (nān yeṅgum kānkilēn). The stately person who went along the street with a

kaḷavu connotes the experience, the lovers have, of 'the stolen heart'. It gives us also the underlying implication of the relationship between the sexes before marriage. The courtship of young people seems to be an old and established custom with the Tamils of that age<sup>1</sup> and Valluvar's analysis of the theme of love may be interpreted as reflecting it.

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1 (of the previous page) (contd.) languor in his gait (maṇ vali naṭantati varunttappōnavan) is undoubtedly the thief who could enter through the eyes (kaṇ vali nulaivumōr kaḷvanekolam)."

1 Kanakasabhai (op. cit., p. 120), writing on the social life of the Tamils 1800 years ago, observes: "Women mixed freely though modestly in the business and amusements of social life. In towns and cities, women of the poor classes were employed as hawkers, vendors and shop-keepers or as servants in rich households; and in the villages they worked in the fields and gardens along with men, and shared their hardships. The ladies of the higher classes were more confined to their homes, but they were not secluded from society. From the queen downwards every woman visited the temples. During the evenings they came out on the terraces of their houses, and saw the scenes in the street: and on festive occasions, they joined the processions and went out to invite their friends and relations. (Cilappathikāram, VI. 76-108) Owing to the freedom enjoyed by women it was possible for young people to court each other before marriage. It was not considered improper for a young lady even to elope with her lover, provided they returned to their relations afterwards, and entered into a married state. Love and not the greed for gold, ruled the court, the camp, and the grove in those days; ... It is no matter of wonder, therefore, that much of the poetry of this ancient period, treats of love, and that rules for writing amatory poems were already in use."

It is also important to reiterate here that the 'pre-marital' love-relations were also governed by strict moral codes. K.K. Pillay (op. cit., pp. 355-356.) writes: "The prevalent idea of those times was that once the kaḷavu or courtship had commenced, it must end in the consummation of marriage. Occasionally it did not have this happy outcome, on account of the man wishing to get out of the moral obligation. Sometimes the opposition of the parents to the proposed marriage was responsible for the dissolution of the tie. In this connection a common belief prevalent among the early Tamils may be noticed. It was

We have already stated that Vaḷḷuvar's concepts of kaḷavu and karpu are to be understood against the caṅkam background of the pre-marital courtship period and the married state. In terms of the caṅkam conception: five aspects of love need to be delineated, viz., kuriñci (the stage where the lovers meet and lose their hearts for each other), pālai or a period of separation which is characterized by the 'pangs' being felt by the lovers, neytal or the feeling of despair that is naturally felt by the hearts in love, the feeling which expresses itself in the man 'posing' as if he is going to die but really wants to continue to live only for the sake of his beloved, mullai or the actual living together in a state of wedlock after accomplishing their intense and long-felt desire in this regard and marutam or the sulky mood which arises sometimes even in the married state.

We find all these aspects of love being dealt with by Vaḷḷuvar though we find him introducing a more refined conception of marutam. Whereas the caṅkam conception of marutam is exemplified in terms of extra-marital relations of the hero, Vaḷḷuvar's conception is in terms

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1 (of the previous page) (contd.) considered a serious moral breach on the part of the girl to marry any one except her lover whose love she had reciprocated; any violation of this was bound to bring ruin to the village in which they lived and to the group to which they belonged. A poem in the Kalittokai collection (39: 11-21) states that where the girl was not married to her lover, the crops would not flourish, the hunters would not succeed in the pursuit of their game and the honeycomb would not yield honey. It was held that the violation of the moral obligation of 'kaḷavu' was unjust and that the marrying of a different person other than the one loved earlier would be tantamount to second marriage (ibid. 114: 15-21)."

of visualizing "the natural difficulty involved in two different personalities, nurtured under two different family environments, coming to commingle and to form a new creative family type."<sup>1</sup> In this sense Valluvar takes the treatment of love to the psychological plane completely, with the clear ethical suggestion that true love between man and wife permits no place for extra-marital relationship.<sup>2</sup>

We may thus maintain that Valluvar's treatment of love is neither purely imaginary (since it is based on the social practices of the Tamils at the time) nor is it completely in the nature of a narrative - recording the actual course of development of love between a man and a woman and thus enhances its value for a philosophy of good life. The technique of Valluvar seems to be aimed at emphasizing the important role that love plays in the formation of home and family. By portraying the stages through which love flowers in the lives of individuals and the natural attitude of sacrifice it entails, he insightfully points to the family as the nucleus of altruistic love.

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1 Meenakshisundaram, *op. cit.*, p. 282.

2 One other consideration which is helpful in giving us an understanding of the Kāmattuppāl is the dramatic monologue style of presentation that we find in it. Maintaining that this aspect of the Kural conclusively proves that it is following the caṅkam tradition, Meenakshisundaram (*ibid.*, p. 291.) writes: "Caṅkam poetry has no narrative verse. It consists of dramatic monologues capturing the poetic moment in beautiful phrases of lightning flashes revealing the varied aspects of human love, either from the intrinsic or from extrinsic point of view. Kāmattuppāl similarly consists only of dramatic monologues; there is no dramatic narration of any story."

A brief review of the contents of the third Section of the Kural may help us to appreciate Valluvar's view better. In his analysis of kalavu we find the course of 'pre-marital' love (which is ultimately to pave the way for a lasting union) picturesquely portrayed. The way in which the lover feels that his beloved is the tenderest of all Creation and is more beautiful than even the most beautiful things Nature has produced and the inexpressible inner joy that the very thought of her inspires in him are also imaginatively portrayed. The intensity of the feeling of love is such that they cannot 'wait' till they are married, they must meet in secret to share the joys of love. For, the social norms are such that they cannot enjoy the fruits of love openly and unreservedly and must satisfy themselves only by stealing 'time and place'. Though they like to get married as early as possible, the procedures to be adopted are such that there has to be a 'period of waiting' during which they have to meet at appointed times and places, there being no alternative open to them. Soon, however, the love has to be 'announced' to the world and the announcement is in terms of matal, the traditional way in which the lover, by undergoing a sort of martyrdom, induces the girl's parents to offer his beloved to him in marriage.<sup>1</sup> Valluvar's

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1 V.V.S. Aiyar (op. cit., pp. xxxiv-xxxv) describes the tradition vividly: "A few branches of the palmyra-palm are joined together so as to enable a man to sit astride on the bundle, the lover sits on it, and a number of his friends carry him in that posture into the village, singing passionate songs of love. The edges of the palmyra branches being rough and hard and indented, the riding of the



analysis of kalavu<sup>1</sup> thus ends with the happy note of the union of the lovers in wedlock.

In the analysis of karpu<sup>2</sup> Valluvar describes in detail the mental experiences of the man and wife<sup>3</sup> 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

1 (of the previous page) (contd.) palmyra stock or palmyra horse as it is called, is veritable martyrdom. The young folks of the village mock at the love-lorn pilgrim and perhaps even refer to the object of his passion by name. The outcry reaches the ears of the parents and other relations of the maiden in the village. They reproach her for entering into matrimony without their consent, but there is no remedy now but to give their consent, and everything ends happily for the lovers."

It is extremely significant that Tiruvalluvar refers specifically to the 'mounting of the palmyra horse' in a chapter entitled "The Abandonment of Reserve". See TK, 114.1-3 & 5-7.

1 We find this in the first seven chapters (chapters 109-115) of the Kāmatuppāl of Tirukkural.

2 We find the analysis in the rest of the chapters - chapters 116-133 of the Kural.

3 We are using the terms 'man' and 'wife' here mainly to indicate that Tiruvalluvar is in this section, concerned with love as experienced by the married couple. The 'purity' of the discussion of the topic of love and the 'sanctity' of the 'fire of love' enkindled in the 'hearts in love' are thus more than obvious.

It should be noted, however, that in the Tamil tradition the terms used 'in the context of love' to refer to the man and wife are talaimakan or talaivan and talaimakal or talaivi (which terms roughly correspond to the terms 'hero' and 'heroine'). It appears that the two terms connote the sense of the 'man' and 'wife' playing the roles of lover and the beloved respectively. The obvious implication is the parts played by 'man' and 'wife' in the 'game of love' are equally important and complementary in nature and scope. This background of the Tamil literary convention is helpful in appreciating

separation on the lovers, but this they must bear with a sense of sacrifice, enduring all personal hardships. Valluvar points to how the lovers prove equal to the task by 're-living' the experiences they shared and by expectantly longing for the time when they will be re-united. Though the strength of their love makes possible the endurance, it inevitably leaves the mark of physical and emotional changes and these are described in the Kural particularly from the point of view of the 'beloved'.

The prolonged absence of the lover creates in the beloved the yearning for his company and she feels emotionally pained to an indescribable extent.<sup>1</sup> She is tormented by the pain of separation and experiences sleeplessness.<sup>2</sup> She reflects about the irony about her eyes - the very eyes which caused the 'malady' of love are now 'suffering' from the malady and she also finds that they can weep

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3 (of the previous page) (contd.) the significance of the Kāmatuppāl section of the Kural better.

We shall henceforth use the terms 'he' and 'she' or 'the lover' and 'the beloved' to refer to the married partners who pine for each other when they have to inevitably endure periods of separation.

1 "If he is so cruel as to mention his departure (to me), the hope that he would bestow (his love) must be given up."  
(TK, 116.6)

"Painful is it to live in a friendless town; but far more is it to part from one's lover." (ibid., 116.8)

"Fire burns when touched; but, like the sickness of love, can it also burn when removed?" (ibid., 116.9)

no more, the tears having dried up completely. It is indeed strange that they (the eyes) can sleep neither when 'he' is away nor when 'he' is present.<sup>1</sup> Thus, 'he' is wholly responsible for 'her' state which is also apparent from her sickly hue; yet she feels it would be good if people deride her for her sickly hue and not call 'him' unkind.<sup>2</sup>

1 (of the previous page) (contd.)

"(As if there were) many indeed that can consent to the impossible, kill their pain, endure separation and yet continue to live afterwards." (TK, 116.10)

2 (of the previous page) "The joy of love is (as great as) the sea; but the pain of love is far greater." (ibid., 117.6)

"I have swum across the terrible flood of love, but have not seen its shore; even at midnight I am alone; still I live." (ibid., 117.7)

"The night which graciously lulls to sleep all living creatures, has me alone for her companion." (ibid., 117.8)

"Could my eyes travel like my thoughts to the abode (of my absent lover), they would not swim in this flood of tears." (ibid., 117.10)

1 "The eyes that have given me this 'malady' have themselves been seized with this (suffering). Oh! I am much delighted." (ibid., 118.6)

"These painted eyes have caused me a lasting mortal disease; and now they can weep no more, the tears having dried up." (ibid., 118.4)

"When he is away they do not sleep; when he is present they do not sleep; in either case, my eyes endure unbearable agony." (ibid., 118.9)

2 "Sallowness, as if proud of having been caused by him, would now ride on my person." (ibid., 119.2)

"It would be good to be said of me that I have turned sallow, if friends do not reproach with unkindness 'him' who pleased me (then)." (ibid., 119.10)

The effect of the chain of thought is that it pushes her into deep despair and a grave state of anguish.<sup>1</sup> Her mind keeps returning to the subject of love. She says to herself that 'he' is always abiding in her soul, but suddenly she begins questioning herself whether, after all, she is right in thinking that she, likewise, abides in his soul. She feels she is wasting away her life without him, and particularly by thinking again and again about his 'cruelty' in not returning home early. But yet, the depth of her love for 'him' is such that she cannot help thinking about him.<sup>2</sup>

Constantly thinking of him she falls into a state of dream. She sees 'him' there and considers the dream-state to be a great source of solace for her love-tormented heart. But alas! she soon

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1 "Would not Cupid (the god of love) who abides and contends in one party (only) witness the pain and sorrow (in that party)?" (TK, 120.7)

"There is none in the world who is as hard-hearted as those who can live without receiving (even) a kind word from their lovers." (*ibid.*, 120.8)

2 "He continues to abide in my soul, do I likewise abide in his?" (*ibid.*, 121.4)

"I have never forgotten (the pleasure); even to think of it burns my soul; could I live, if I should ever forget it?" (*ibid.*, 121.7)

"My precious life is wasting away by thinking too much on the cruelty of him who said we were not different." (*ibid.*, 121.9)

reverts to the state of wakefulness and even starts feeling that if there were no such thing as wakefulness her lover would not have 'departed' from her.<sup>1</sup>

And, when evening comes she dislikes it, for it reminds her all the more about her lover. She cannot but 'feel the contrast' - how, when 'he' was with her the evenings were extremely pleasant and how now, without him, they are extremely painful.<sup>2</sup> The consciousness of the contrast reveals once again how she feels she has lost all her feminine charm because of his absence. She turns 'critical' - holding 'him' responsible for her beauty fading away from her; immediately, however, she feels the pain born out of this 'condemnation' of her lover and realizes, once again, how deeply she loves him.<sup>3</sup> No doubt,

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1 "My life lasts because in my dream I behold him who does not favour me in my waking hours." (TK, 122.3)

"Were there no such thing as wakefulness, my lover (who visited me) in my dream would not depart from me." (*ibid.*, 122.6)

2 "Live, oh evening! Are you (the former) evening? No, you are the season that slays (married) women." (*ibid.*, 123.1)

"In the absence of my lover, evening comes in like slayers on the field of slaughter." (*ibid.*, 123.4)

"This malady (love) buds forth in the morning, expands all day long and blossoms in the evening." (*ibid.*, 123.7)

"The shepherd's flute now sounds as a fiery forerunner of night, and is become a weapon that slays (me)." (*ibid.*, 123.8)

3 "The discoloured eyes that shed tears profusely seem to betray the unkindness of the lover." (*ibid.*, 124.2)

"The (loosened) bracelets, and the shoulders from which the old beauty has faded, relate the cruelty of the pitiless one." (*ibid.*, 124.5)

she condemns herself also that she is a 'fool' to allow her thoughts to go after her lover who has left her to mourn the separation but still realizes the irresistible charm 'he' still holds for her.<sup>1</sup>

She now comes out openly, as she has never done before and says to herself that when he comes her modesty can no longer restrain her from openly exhibiting her love. She says to herself that she must admit that if in the past she couldn't but pour her love to him at the very sight of him, it is certainly not going to be possible for her to 'conceal' her love.<sup>2</sup> Even this very thought that she will 'succumb' to his love seems to be thrilling to her. And then she admits to herself that when her lover rejoins her, she will look at him till she is satisfied (and, in the process, regain her bloom) and enjoy all his overtures (and thereby destroy all the agonizing sorrow she is now experiencing).<sup>3</sup>

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3 (of the previous page) (contd.) "I am greatly pained to hear you call him a cruel man, just because your shoulders are reduced and your bracelets loosened." (TK, 124.6)

1 "You are a fool, O my soul, to go after my departed one, while you mourn that he is not kind enough to favour you." (ibid., 125.8)

"O my soul, to whom would you repair while the dear one is within yourself?" (ibid., 125.9)

2 "The axe of love can break the door of reserve which is bolted by the bolt of shyness." (ibid., 126.1)

"The dignity that would not go after an absent lover is not known to those who are stricken by love." (ibid., 126.5)

The reason for this feeling of re-assurance is that she is able to visualize how, on his seeing her expressive eyes, he is going to fill his eyes with her beauty. Such is the unbounded love he has for her even though he is not with her (now).<sup>1</sup> So she is still debating whether she can after all feign anger towards him (when they meet) when she knows she cannot hold out for long.<sup>2</sup> Also, there lurks in her the fear of possibly 'losing' him again and so she may not 'pose' to be angry when, after all she knows she is not really angry with him.<sup>3</sup>

2 (of the previous page) (contd.)

"I know nothing like shyness when my lover does from love (just) what is desired (by me)." (TK, 126.7)

"Are not the enticing words of my trick-abounding roguish lover the weapon that breaks away my feminine firmness?" (ibid., 126.8)

3 (of the previous page)

"May I look on my lover till I am satisfied and thereafter will vanish the sallowness of my slender shoulders." (ibid., 127.5)

"May my husband return some day; and then will I enjoy (him) so as to destroy all this agonizing sorrow." (ibid., 127.6)

1 "Though you would conceal (your feelings), your painted eyes would not, for, transgressing (their bounds), they tell (me) something." (ibid., 128.1)

"Unusually great is the female simplicity of your maid whose beauty fills my eyes and whose shoulders resemble the bamboo." (ibid., 128.2)

2 "O my friend, I was prepared to feign displeasure but my mind forgetting it was ready to embrace him." (ibid., 129.4)

"Like the eyes which see not the pencil that paints it, I cannot see my husband's fault (just) when I meet him." (ibid., 129.5)

But then suddenly she realizes that after all, her feigning anger (without carrying it to disproportionate levels) may add more charm to their happy reunion. Moreover it will help her to see for herself his deep love for her (when she sees him 'suffering' because of her feigned anger),<sup>1</sup> So, with great difficulty she feigns anger, all the time saying to herself that the innocent lover will enjoy it as much as her pouring her love.<sup>2</sup> She is after all right, and he actually welcomes the feigned anger and wishes that it should prolong throughout the night so that he could try to passify her the whole night and at the end of it derive most enjoyment out of the embrace when there is 'complete reconciliation'.<sup>3</sup>

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2 (of the previous page) (contd.)

"Like those who leap into a stream which they know will carry them off, why should a wife feign dislike which she knows cannot hold out long?" (TK, 129.7)

3 (of the previous page)

"O my soul, you would not first seem sulky and then enjoy (him); who then would in future consult you about such things?" (ibid., 130.4)

"My soul fears when it is without him; it also fears when it is with him: it is subject to incessant sorrow." (ibid., 130.5)

1 "Let us witness awhile his keen suffering; just feign dislike and embrace him not." (ibid., 131.1)

"A little dislike is like salt in proportion; to prolong it a little is like salt a little too much." (ibid., 131.2)

2 See TK, 133.2,5 & 6.

3 "May the bright-jewelled one feign dislike, and may the night be prolonged for me to implore her!" (ibid., 133.9)



What might be most obvious from our review of the contents of Kāmatuppāl is the poetic artistry with which Vaḷḷuvar deals with the theme of love, but what must be reiterated is that his adopting the Tamil convention of akam poetry does not point merely to his poetic genius but also to the deeper ethical significance he attaches to the man-woman relationship. Our remembering that Vaḷḷuvar's dealing with the love-theme is organic to his philosophy of good life (itself adumb-rated in and through the concept of aram) is helpful here. Furthermore, the deeper significance of the akam convention of Tamil poetry would also go to show that the adoption of it by Vaḷḷuvar while treating the theme of love was perhaps intended to give us the realistic-idealistic presentation of the man-woman relationship: realistic, inasmuch as love is a feeling in the hearts of the two people (concerned) which can't be adequately expressed and idealistic, in that the 'hero' and the 'heroine' are the idealized types of persons - with the clear implication that the most intimate man-woman relationship has its own norms to follow.<sup>1</sup>

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1 A.K. Ramanujan's remarks on akam poetry and his making references to Tolkāppiyam (The Interior Landscape, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1967, pp. 103-104) are extremely significant in our context. He writes: "Akam poetry is directly about experience, not action; it is a poetry of the 'inner world'"....

"The love of man and woman is taken as the ideal expression of the 'inner world', and akam poetry is synonymous with love poetry in the Tamil tradition. Love in all its variety - love in separation and in union, before and after marriage, in chastity and in betrayal - is the theme of akam. 'There are seven types of love, of which the first is kaikkilai, unrequited love, and the last is peruntinai,

We are, however, not overlooking the fact that Tiruvalluvar was well aware of the genesis of (the feeling-for-the-other aspect) human love in the sexual love of man for woman. That he did not disregard at all the physical aspects of kāma is obvious from the significant couplet:

The (simultaneous) enjoyment of the five senses of sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch can only be found with bright braceleted (woman).<sup>1</sup>

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1 (of the previous page) (contd.) mismatched love (Tolkāppiyam, Akattinai Iyal, 1).<sup>1</sup> Peruntinai or the Major Type (as the Tolkāppiyam somewhat cynically calls it) of man-woman relationship is the forced, loveless relationship: a man and a woman, mismatched in age, coming together for duty, convenience, or lust. At the other extreme is kaikkilai (literally the base relationship), the one-sided affair, unrequited love, or desire inflicted on an immature girl who does not understand it. Neither of these extremes is the proper subject of akam poetry. They are common, abnormal, undignified, fit only for servants. 'Servants and workmen are outside the five akam types (of true love), for they do not have the necessary strength of character (ibid., 25-26).'<sup>1</sup>...

Of the seven types, only the 'middle five' (already referred to by us on p. 229) are the subject of true love poetry. The hero and the heroine should be 'well-matched in ten points' such as beauty, wealth, age, virtue, rank, etc. Only such a pair is capable of the full range of love: union and separation, anxiety and patience, betrayal and forgiveness. The couple must be cultured; for the uncultured will be rash, ignorant, self-centred, and therefore unfit for akam poetry."

In the light of the implications of akam poetry referred to above and in the light of the way it is handled in the Kural, it seems to us that notwithstanding the poetic excellence of the Kāmattuppāl Section, its idealization of the relationship of mutual love between two persons (who have come together in love) is extremely significant from the perspective of the philosophy of good life that Valluvar offers us.

1 TK, 111.1.

The definition is certainly analogous to that offered by

Vātsyāyana:

Kāma is the enjoyment of appropriate objects by the five senses of hearing, feeling, seeing, tasting and smelling assisted by the mind together with the soul. The ingredient in this is a peculiar contact between the organ of sense and its object, and the consciousness of pleasure which arises from this contact is called kāma.<sup>1</sup>

In spite of the similarity noted above we would like to reiterate a point of distinction we made already. Though Vātsyāyana's treatment of the subject does not wholly exclude the 'psychology of sex', it needs to be understood still in terms of the importance accorded to sex itself<sup>2</sup> whereas Valluvar's treatment, without overlooking the physical aspects of sex is concerned more with the analysis of the finer feelings that a proper satisfaction of the sex-desire engenders. No doubt, the deeper meaning of the analysis of love is not at all evident at first sight, but it is quite in keeping with the Tamil tradition of which kāmam is a clear exemplification

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1 Kāma-Sūtra, I.1.

2 Our view here is based on the following facts: (i) even while dealing with the 'mechanics of sex' Vātsyāyana does not regard sexual love as a random activity or as the expression of wild emotions, for he observes: "Pleasures, being as necessary for the existence and well-being of the body as food, are consequently equally required. ... They are ... to be followed with moderation and caution." (ibid.) (ii) the moderation approach suggested is still with a view to enabling the individual to derive the maximum amount of sexual enjoyment. The clear implication here is that indulgence in sex without a sense of proportion is self-destructive inasmuch as the individual is bound to lose his capacity for enjoyment.

Above all, we have seen that Valluvar has with great insight, confined his attention merely to the intimacy of the man-woman relationship while analysing the theme of love, for reasons already referred to.

## CHAPTER SIX

### CONCLUSION

In concluding this inquiry we would like to draw the strings of our argument together and indicate the new dimensions of analysis we have suggested for an understanding of the theme of good life from the perspective of the Kural. Though in a sense the Kural itself does not go into the 'definitions' of the good life, we have attempted to discern its strands of thought which, when considered together, offer us a picture of the good life as visualized by its author, Tiruvaḷḷuvar. The absence of a precise 'formulation' of a 'philosophy of good life' at once offered us a challenge and an opportunity for our investigation: challenge, in so far as it set the task (for us) even at the outset, viz., analysing carefully the implications of Tiruvaḷḷuvar's own reactions and responses to the ideas and ideals prevalent in the Indian scene at the time, for it seemed to us that that would be one of the ways in which we could get an insight into the mind of Vaḷḷuvar; opportunity, inasmuch as the study itself proved fruitful in the direction of unravelling certain problems in the area (chosen for inquiry), as for instance the conspicuous absence of an express reference to the spiritual value (though accepting it as an important ingredient of good life) which is normally considered to be

realizable only in a world to come and/or by positively setting aside the activistic 'roles' of man-in-society.

In effect then, the ideas highly suggestive of a philosophy of good life needed to be interpreted in terms of the views of life that the author was wanting to reject, on the one hand and, on the other, the ways of life he was keen on exhorting. The 'rejection aspects' were paradoxically symptomatic of the author's acceptance of the essentials of religion as contributing to an enrichment of man's life on earth and the exhortation aspects indicated, unambiguously, the substance of the good life by making evident a prime-principle which would not merely enlarge the scope and purpose of human living but also simultaneously effect a transformation of it.

In regard to the essence of religion: we have maintained that the Kural arrived at it not by rejecting in toto the ideas characterizing and the ideals cherished in the prevalent religions of Brahmanical Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism, but by accepting aspects of them which did not smack of a sectarian approach. It was in this sense that we saw the Kural incorporating within its philosophy of religion, the 'ethics of responsibility' concept from the three religious traditions as also the transcendent aspect of the good life envisaged in them - though by considerably re-structuring the latter aspect in such a way that the normative orientation (to good life) does not obliterate the positive-affirmative approach to life in the world. It is obvious, the social orientation of the Classic is accountable by its insistence

on man's adopting the life-affirming attitude while the metaphysical roots for its social ethics are traceable to the transcendent goal of the Good envisioned in it. The subtle but significant modification in the notion of asceticism that emerged naturally from such a careful blending of the normative and the positive approaches to the good life was, we suggested, in terms of exhorting the necessity of cultivating attitudinal changes - by developing altruistic love by stages (i.e., by progressively realizing it) - and by transcending altruism even, on the ground that even traces of ego-motives come in the way of 'complete self-giving'.

We suggested, therefore, that by visualizing two levels in man's attempting to realize the Good in his life - the level of actuality and the level of the Ideal (and introducing refinements in them) - we could understand better the Kural's philosophy of religion, viz., that the essence of religion consists neither in dwelling merely on the actual nor in flying off into the Ideal but in attempting to transform the actual in the light of the Ideal. Since the transformation-potential that religion offers has significance both for the personal and the social aspects of human life, the Kural's postulating an ideal code of conduct for individuals and an ideal pattern for institutions, we maintained, followed as natural corollaries.

The effect of such an approach to religion discernible in

the Kural has been that neither by denying outright the metaphysical dimensions of the human personality nor by dwelling on its empirical aspects entirely, it offers an in-built philosophy of good life which is seriously normative in orientation and adequately social in its motivation. Hence we have maintained that the Kural's reconceiving the four-fold value-scheme in terms of three can, only by a purely 'numerical approach', be characterized as its deleting the metaphysical dimensions of Indian philosophy and religion just as the suggestion (in the Classic) that the ultimate Good in human life is realizable by adopting one prime-value (designated as aram) can, only by overlooking completely the social dimensions of the good life, be characterized as lending support to a non-social, purely metaphysical conception of the good life.

What, it may be asked, is the significance of the Kural's taking such an approach to religion and implicitly to the good life? Though answering the question is not as easy as posing it (for, this is probably one of the most unresolved problems in the study of the philosophy of good life in the Kural), we would, rather than interpreting the author of the Kural as taking a "neither-this-nor-that-stand" or as adopting a "both-this-and-that-approach" to the issue of conceptualizing the essence of religion and good life, suggest that he was perhaps convinced not merely that paying lip-service to the 'social base' of the good life will not do but also that in the name of giving a social orientation to the good life, its metaphysical



implications can be ignored only at its peril. It needs to be reiterated here that the Kural is not as much averse to considering the metaphysical dimensions of the good life as it is intent on emphasizing the need for developing social concern. The result is that only by a deeper consideration of the social aspects of the Kural's view-point can the metaphysical implications inherent in its philosophy be appreciated fully.

It seems to us that the social and the metaphysical dimensions of the human personality can thus be adequately 'accommodated' in an analysis of good life since they are but the obverse and reverse of the same coin. Perhaps, the coin-analogy is not wholly capable of indicating the fact that even when only 'one side' is presented, the 'other side' can, by a deeper analysis, be grasped. Yet, in so far as a coin cannot be visualized as having only one side, the analogy itself is not unhelpful in our present context. In more concrete terms: since it is difficult to delete either the social or the metaphysical aspects of man's personality without doing damage to the analysis of man, neither the one nor the other can be overlooked or 'disclaimed'. Hence it can also be maintained that in so far as a social analysis as well as a metaphysical discussion have, as their reference-point, man, from either of them the other can be derived. That is the peculiarity of human nature and it is indeed reflected in the deeper meaning of the various disciplines which deal with man and his significance.

It is in this sense that the approach of the Kural can be interpreted also in terms of certain categories employed in recent studies on religion. One such is Mol's recent book to which we made references earlier. In view of the deeper implications of the argument of the book, viz., that a sociological approach does not necessarily connote ignoring the other aspects of man<sup>1</sup>, we found Mol's sacralization-model valuable in our context. We made note of Mol's

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1 This is evident from Mol's reference to 'order' and the deeper implications of morality while explaining the significance of religion as a transforming influence on human life. In keeping with his sociological approach to religion Mol suggests that in order to be relevant to the needs of meaning and order in mundane existence, religion cannot remain content with articulating a totally other-worldly mode of sacredness. Explaining the significance of moral rules he writes: "Moral rules ... are the almost visible outlines and concretizations of ... order. They are the living tissues covering the bones. They are the working bees busily engaged in resolving the practical inconsistencies, ambiguities, injustices, and above all, infringements. The master authority of order would be jeopardized if these yeoman services were not promptly performed. It is precisely because of their importance that traditional religious organizations sacralized the major ones such as the Golden rule or the Ten Commandments and their equivalents in the non-Christian religions." (op. cit., p. 10) "The importance of the Golden Rule lies, (a) in its general contribution to an orderly society, leaving aside the problem of specific prescriptions differing from place to place and time to time; and (b) in its provision of a discernible and practical axiom that nevertheless integrates a whole body of rules, and which, in the process, furnishes a mutually consistent criterion." (ibid., p. 97) Mol's appreciation of the deeper implications of morality is evident from his maintaining that morality becomes less significant if it consists merely in a mechanical implementation of visible 'forms' of moral behaviour or in obeying moral rules for the sake of avoiding punishment. Morality in this narrower sense may still have the effect of promoting order in society, but maximization of order will be possible only when the implementation of rules depends on its being believed in for other reasons. As Mol explains: "Reciprocity in human relations and the confidence that flows from the assurance that one's expectations

view that the process of sacralization is, from the point of view of social living, perhaps more relevant than concern with the sacred. Mol's concern, it should be emphasized, is not that the sacred is of less value but that the process of sacralization is more important from the point of view of the day-to-day life of man.

Though Mol's theory of religion as sacralization of identity is much more comprehensive than our reference to one of the mechanisms, viz., 'objectification' as a sacralization-mechanism, might have indicated, we confined our attention to it alone since it seemed to offer us a cue to the way in which the Kural might possibly have conceived the relationship between the Good as a transcendental category (described in terms of the essence of religion) and the good life as a process in which the ideal is attempted to be realized. Thus our specific interest in the objectification-concept of Mol's theory has been in its offering us an indication as to how ideals are conceived and, by implication, the significance of idealizing inter-personal relationships.

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1 (of the previous page) (contd.) will be met, are endangered when only discernible rules are rewarded or backed by punishment. It is less comfortable to live in a society in which people are honest only so long as one cannot get away with dishonesty, than it is to live in a society where there is a basic intention and motivation to be honest." (ibid.) Our interest in this aspect of Mol's theory is in its clear implication that if even a mechanical implementation of or adherence to moral rules and regulations have the effect of transforming personality at the individual level and bringing about order at the social level, morality in its deeper sense of 'doing the right for its own sake' is going to be far more effective both in individual and collective life.

It seems to us that Mol's concept of objectification, in so far as it is considered by him as symptomatic of projecting an order which is obviously and significantly absent at the mundane level, may also be referred to as a process of ideal-construction or as a direct consequence of the idealizations of the existential (i.e., the actual) conditions of man at the mundane level. Here again, Mol's considering the capacity of the human mind for 'abstraction' (in visualizing an ideal order or a perfected state) is significant inasmuch as it would also indicate that the 'abstraction' - being 'born' out of the actualities of the mundane world - points to the relatedness (interconnectedness) of the two 'realms', the level of the actual and that of the Ideal. Hence the perfection conceived, the ideal constructed, can well be visualized as possessing the ability to inspire approximation and realization of it by individuals and societies at the mundane level. The distinctness of the ideal from that of the actual thus seems to be both a necessity and a predicament.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Referring to this aspect of the relationship between the 'actual' and the 'ideal' Mol observes: "The awe of the sacred guaranteed common loyalty to socially crucial values and beliefs... The separateness of the sacred was a prerequisite for order and security, all the more so because in the transcendental point of reference, the major, relevant archetypes and features on the mundane world were emotionally anchored... Yet in spite of their remoteness, these characteristics had a significant effect on the mundane order because men were committed to them... In this transcendental point of reference order could appear less arbitrary, less vulnerable to contradictions, exceptions and contingencies. Thus, the arbitrary, the unexpected, the frustrations and contingencies could be absorbed and 'digested' as not altogether meaningless, but as part and parcel of an orderly world." (op. cit., pp. 206-207)

Thus it is that the concept of an ideal perfection that religion offers is also highly suggestive of the essentials of good life in so far as the latter are, in the ultimate analysis, symptomatic of man's efforts at realizing the ideal perfection. Hence in terms of Valluvar's view: we have suggested that the realization of the ultimate state of perfection which is synonymous with realizing the Good, is possible only by adopting a principle which consistently pervades every aspect of human living; we have also maintained that Valluvar's philosophy of good life can be derived from such a conception of the essence of religion and the 'means' of attaining the ultimate Good.

To briefly review the 'substance of good life', according to the Kural: we found it being explicable in terms of an all-pervasive principle referred to as aram and visualized as holding within it the potentiality to transform human life in all its aspects, - the feeling-emotional, the ethical-social and the metaphysical-transcendental. These various aspects, representing as they do, the purely personal, the inter-personal and the trans-personal facets of personality-development in man point, on the one hand to the all-pervasive nature of the principle of aram and, on the other, to the inter-connectedness and the reciprocal involvement of these aspects in enabling man to realize the Good. Though the Good is a transcendent category, aiming at and realizing it does not, in such a scheme, involve the impoverishment of the empirical aspects of the Good which we have referred to as the 'means' without minimising their significance.

It is to indicate such a reciprocal involvement of the social and the metaphysical aspects of the philosophy of good life discernible in Valluvar's theory that we have employed the model of the 'extension-principle of aram' in this study. By considering 'extension' not merely in the usually understood linear sense but also in its deeper dimensional sense we suggested that the protean characteristic of aram (and the underlying implications for good life) can be wholly comprehended. We preferred to designate these two aspects of extension respectively as the horizontal and the vertical dimensions to point to Valluvar's view that man's capacity to realize the Good ultimately signifies more than realizing 'altruistic possibilities'. In so far as such a transcendence of the altruistic outlook truly characterizes the actualization of the inner potential in man, the 'transcendence' itself may be referred to somewhat paradoxically as 'becoming truly human'. The transformed outlook that the 'transcendence' engenders can obviously be 'detected' in every aspect of one's 'dealings' - as a member of a family in the multifarious 'roles' he has to 'play', as a citizen with his economic and political responsibilities and most basically and essentially, as a human person capable of realizing and also thereby revealing virtue.

It should be reiterated here that it was perhaps because of the recognition of such a relationship between the ethical-social and the metaphysical 'levels' that the Kural does not obliterate the metaphysical. ~~May~~ be to so state the position accorded to the

metaphysical aspects of human life does not bring out adequately the significance of the transcendental plane of reference that the ultimate Good (vītu in the terminology of the Kural) is, but our expressing it in a 'low tone' is not intended to 'under-expose' its role but rather to indicate that the Kural, concerned as it was, with the 'more immediate', 'tangible' 'realities' in human life, was more keenly bent on a detailed consideration of the ethico-social aspects of human life. It should be conceded here that this is our surmise and, like other interpretations of this situation (of the Kural, though attaching significant importance to the metaphysical aspects of life, does not allot a separate section for discussing it), is still open to discussion.

From the point of view of highlighting the importance thus accorded to the ethico-social aspects of human life in the Kural's scheme of good life we need simply to recall at this point that the thrust of our interpretation of porul and inṇam in the Kural has been to point out (i) that the economic and political aspects of the good life are accorded considerable importance by Vaḷḷuvar for the reason that unless the basic securities in life (that the economic and political pursuits offer) are achieved, it is unreasonable and unrealistic to expect man to (even) attempt to realize the Good, and (ii) that the biological-psychological aspects of human life (apparent from the analysis of aspects of the love-sex theme) need to be given their due importance, for 'impoverishment' in these spheres of life would certainly result in a lop-sided development of personality whereas

achievement of satisfaction in them would pave the way for personality-integration and greater concern for all.

In regard to both (i) and (ii) we have maintained that their significance in the Kural is best understood by considering them as extensions of aram and also that such a concept of 'extensions of aram' resulted in an idealistic orientation being given to 'life on earth', - on idealizing human life in every conceivable respect. Starting from a consideration of the type of relationship that ought to prevail in the most elementary 'face -to-face social group'- the family and passing through the economic and political institutions and culminating in society at large, the individual is exhorted to observe the principle of morality which is concretely envisaged as extending the area of concern to envelop the whole of humanity, nay, the animate creation in its entirety, ultimately. No doubt, the idealization of life in regard to the spheres mentioned above may also be referred to as laying the foundation for the means by which a perfected state of the individual may be attained, the state of vīṭu in the terminology of the Kural. But since the state of vīṭu cannot be attained in a distinct sphere outside society, it should be reiterated, the idealization of inter-personal relations - in respect of every institutional structure that man 'creates' and in which he participates, is significant from the point of view of life in society. The idealizations of inter-personal relationships in the Kural thus need to be understood as derivable from the ideas on the Good and the good life and not as



having been born out of Valluvar's analysing, for instance, social, economic and political problems.

We were suggesting this word of caution in regard to the assessment of Valluvar's theory in our analysis of aram as presenting the philosophy of good life and we may further clarify the point before we close this study. It seems to us that Valluvar's theory can well be interpreted as containing within it root-ideas which may be helpful to us, at the present time, to effectively reconstruct our economic, social and political institutions. We may further point to the fact that it is specially relevant to our age which witnesses a growing secularization of life and institutions in which the secular is accorded the meaning of a studious indifference to religion and religious values. Hence the message of the classical work of Valluvar presents itself as challengingly relevant to an age such as ours. It is therefore not surprising that this work has received phenomenal attention in recent decades in India as will be evident from the various translations of it that have appeared in other Indian languages<sup>1</sup>

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1 We may mention the following in this context:

(i) BENGALI: Nalini Mohan Sanyal. Calcutta: Bangiya Sahitya Parisha Mandir, 1939.

(ii) GUJARATHI: Najnkhal Choksi. Ahmedabad: Sastu Sahitya, 1931 and Kantilal L Kalani. Bombay: 1971.

(iii) HINDI: G. Jain. Delhi: 1942; B.D. Jain. Tirupananthal: Kasi Mutt, 1951; Khemanand Rakat. Ajmere: Sasta Sahitya Mandali, 1924 (first two parts) and New Delhi: Sasta Sahitya Mandali, 1959; S. Shankar Raju Naidu. Madras: University of Madras, 1958; and M.G. Venkata Krishnan. Tiruchi: Tirukkural Prachar Sangh, 1964. (Part I only.)

and the spate of literature that has appeared on it. Furthermore, the three Centres for advanced research in Tirukkural, that have been established recently in the Indian Universities of Madras, Annamalai and Madurai and functioning vigourously, are certainly symptomatic of the sudden awareness of the relevance of the work of Tiruvalluvar for the task of rebuilding the Nation in India. Perhaps, no single classical book has provoked the kind of attention, study and stimulated research as this work, in recent times, in India.

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1 (of the previous page) (contd.)

(iv) KANNADA: L. Gundappa: Bangalore: 1955 (Part I); and B.M. Srikantaiya. Kural Extracts. Bangalore: 1940.

(v) MALAYALAM: Azhakathu Kurup. Trivandrum: 1875; G. Bhaskaran Nair. Tiruvallam: 1963; P. Damodaram Pillai. Tirukkural Manikal. Trivandrum: Balan Publications, 1951; V. Gopala Kurup. Kottayam: National Book Stall, 1960 (Two parts); A. Govinda Pillai. Trivandrum: n.d.; P. Krishna Vaidyan. Kural (Part I) : Selections. Trivandrum: n.d.; S. Ramakrishna Pillai. Trivandrum: Kamalalaya Printing Works, 1957; and L.V. Ramaswamy Iyer, ed. Kural in prose containing the Tamil couplets in Malayalam, first written in 1595 by an unknown writer and published in the Bulletin of the Rama Varma Research Institute, Vol. VI, pt. II; Vol. VIII, pt. I; and Vol. IX, pt. I in 1938, 1940 and 1941.

(vi) MARATHI: P.S. Sane Guruji. Kural - Teen Purushārtha. Poona: Continental Prakashan, 1948.

(vii) SANSKRIT: Appa Vajapeyin. Suniti Kusumamāla. Kumbakonam: Gururajachariar, 1922; Sankara Subramanya Sastri. Sugati Ratnākara in the Journal 'Sahridaya': 1937-1940; Srirama Desikan. Madras: Sarasa Kala Nilayam, 1961 (Part I); and Unknown: Sanskrit verse with Hindi prose. Delhi: 1956.

(viii) TELUGU: M. Jaganna Sastri. W. Godavari: Palleturu Granthamandal, 1952; Jalayya. Madras: Vijnamajvala Pracuranalu, 1955; C. Lakshminarayana Sastri. 1906; S. Narasimhalu Naidu. Madras: Chennagalvaraya Naicker's Orphanage Press, 1892; C. Radhakrishna Sarma. Madras: 1954; S. Sripathy Sastry. Madras: 1966; P. Sriramulu Reddy. Puthalapatty: 1948; and K.V. Vidyanathanatha: 1887 & 1894.

(ix) URDU: Hasarat Suhrawary. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1965.

But, the topicality of no classical work should be exaggerated. Whether we like it or not, the era in which we live has departed from the Classicists' approach to life and culture. There is a growing awareness of the significance of the particular and the piecemeal and the rejection of the 'approach' in the light of an unifying vision. It will therefore be anachronistic to invoke the philosophical solutions of a classical thinker for answering questions which not merely happened to originate in modern times but are intrinsic to modernity. Hence to maintain that Valluvar, long time ago, with great foresight, visualized our modern predicament and offered enduring solutions much before the 'problems' themselves arose would be a clear case of over-stating the significance of his philosophy of good life. Our taking this position is not in the spirit of under-estimating the significance of his approach but rather with a view to pointing to the fact that he was concerned primarily with a principle in human life which had an in-built potentiality to transform life in all its aspects and not with specific problems that man encounters in the course of his social living. Thus we would suggest that the enduring principles of good life that Valluvar was concerned about are 'relevant' for our own times rather than interpret Valluvar to have addressed himself to the problems of our own times long ago.

But certainly this is not to deny the perennial value of Valluvar's work. Just as Plato has an unique relevance for all times,

in the context of the East, we might venture to suggest that Vaḷḷuvar's Tirukkural has a timeless significance about it and is therefore, not without its appeal even to the modern man.

## APPENDIX I

### ON THE DATE OF TIRUKKURAL

Though the focus of concern in the thesis has been on adopting an analytical-interpretative approach to the philosophy of Tirukkural, in view of the fact that a recent publication has revived an extreme view held during the 40s regarding the date of the Tamil Classic, we deem it necessary to write this Appendix. The Appendix is intended both to acknowledge clearly that the recent view on the date-question goes counter to our own view and also to offer our reactions.

We would like to submit that a detailed analysis of the historical and social contexts in relation to the Kural is not within the purview of the present thesis. For one thing, the uncertainty in regard to chronology has made it virtually impossible for us to go into the question. For another, our interest in this study has been philosophical rather than historical; we have been concerned to analyse the deeper implications and significance of the thought-contents which are accepted, on all counts, to contain a perennial philosophy reflecting the best elements in Indian religious thought. Furthermore,

in the text itself there is no reference to the social and political conditions, the focus of interest being on the philosophy of society and the state. This has also been influential in our choosing to avoid the purely historical approach. Hence, we have considered the text of the Kural in relation to the history of ideas which preceded the work and influenced it both positively and negatively and indicated how the author responded to the dominant religio-philosophical climate. Our view is that a philosophical analysis such as ours may itself open out possibilities of further research in which the historical aspects may find a more prominent place.

All the same, in view of the importance of the question of the date of the Tamil Classic, some discussion seems to be called for even in our context. We may emphasize here that whichever date is accepted (after a more intensive and thorough historical research) our thesis will not in the least be affected since ours has been primarily an axiological analysis of the argument of the Kural. Since a Czech Tamil scholar, Kamil Zvelebil has revived<sup>1</sup> an earlier point of view maintained by a great

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<sup>1</sup> Vide The Smile of Murugan, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1973; pp: 155-171.

Tamil scholar, S. Vaiyapuri Pillai,<sup>1</sup> we shall first review the latter argument.

Though we consider Vaiyapuri Pillai's argument not worth referring to in detail, to the extent that it occasions an analysis of the date of the caṅkam literature and enables us to offer some clarification of our own view regarding the date of the Kural, we may take note of the reason<sup>1</sup> for his extreme views on the date of the Classic. He observes:

From references to his Kural in Cilappatikāram and Maṇimēkalai which are acclamed to have been written in the 2nd cen. A.D. he has been assigned to the 1st cen. A.D. or B.C. But this date of the above kāvyas is no longer accepted. There are very strong grounds for concluding that these works were composed circa 800 A.D. .<sup>2</sup>

... Kural, as is well-known, is one of the Kilkanakku works (didactic manuals) and these are always distinguished from the earlier caṅkam anthologies. In point of date they are later works and their authors are called by Perācīriyar and other commentators 'pir-caṅṅor' (lit., great men of later times) ... Even the most conservative of scholars hold that the caṅkam age began only in about the 2nd cen. A.D. and so Valluvar's date could not be earlier than this.<sup>3</sup>

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1 Vide his History of Tamil Language and Literature, Madras: New Century Book House, 1956.

2 ibid., p. 81.

3 ibid.

His general argument that the caṅkam works are not didactic at all and hence the Kural, Nālaṭiyār and other works which are in some sense didactic do not belong to the caṅkam age is unacceptable, for Puranānūru and other anthologies are found to incorporate unambiguously clearly ideas and ideals usually associated with didactic literature. Thus it seems to us that making a generalization like the one which Vaiyapuri Pillai makes would be doing scant justice to the ancient caṅkam literature. We may mention here that idealizing about life was not alien to the Tamils of that age.

Our view that the Kural belonged to the 1st cen. B.C. - 1st cen. A.D. may, in terms of the date of the caṅkam literature, be expressed also as our taking the position that it belonged to the middle-caṅkam or early-caṅkam period and goes counter to Vaiyapuri Pillai's view that the caṅkam literature itself belonged to the 5th or 6th cen. A.D. Though a precise date for the caṅkam period is difficult to fix, it is possible to indicate a wide period within which the literature was produced. Historians of South India are in general agreement that the caṅkam literature may be placed between the periods: 5th cen. B.C. - 5th cen. A.D. V.R. Ramachandra Dikshitar considered the caṅkam literature to have originated in



5th cen. B.C.<sup>1</sup> and ended in the 5th cen. A.D.<sup>2</sup> K.R. Srinivasa Aiyangar in a similar vein observes: "It seems to be reasonable to assume that the three academies comprised a period of about one thousand years ... and we shall not be wrong if we fix 500 B.C. and 500 A.D. as the extreme limits of the caṅkam age."<sup>3</sup> V.A. Smith is more precise in his reference to the date of the caṅkam classics. He writes: "The scholars who maintain the early date of the best Tamil poems are right, and the 'Augustan Age' of Tamil literature may be placed in the first three centuries of the Christian era."<sup>4</sup> K.A. Nilakanta Sastri's observation: "We are bound to assume that the caṅkam age lies in the early centuries of the Christian era"<sup>5</sup> goes well with the views of Smith cited above and, needless to add, both the views indirectly 'corroborate' our own surmise in regard to the date of the caṅkam classics.

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1 Studies in Tamil Literature and History, London: Luzac & Co., 1936, p. 21.

2 ibid., p. 4. See also his Pandyan Kingdom, London: Luzac & Co., 1939, p. 24 and History of South India, Oxford, 1955, p. 110.

3 The Age of Imperial Unity, p. 293. (Cited in N. Subrahmanian, Sangam Polity, Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1966, p.25.)

4 Early History of India, p. 445. (Cited in N. Subrahmanian, op. cit., p. 24.)

5 The Cōlas, p. 3. (Cited in N. Subrahmanian, op. cit., p. 24.)

Since traditionally the two Tamil epics, Cilappatikāram and Manimēkalai as also the Patinenkil Kanakku (the eighteen 'minor' works of which the Kural is extremely important) are considered to form part of the caṅkam literature, and since the dates of the two Tamil epics have been historically well-established, we maintain that we have sound reasons, even historically speaking, for our views on the date of the Kural.

The Cilappatikāram mentions that Gajabāhu, King of Ceylon, attended the worship of Kaṇṇaki instituted by Cenkuttuvan, the chera king. The Ceylon chronicles refer to two Gajabāhus, one belonging to the 2nd cen. A.D. and the other to the 12th cen. A.D. As it is very clear that a work of the nature and style of Cilappatikāram could not have been written in the 12th cen. A.D. and that no great chera King like Cenkuttuvan lived in the 12th cen. A.D., the Gajabāhu mentioned in the Tamil epic must be one who belonged to the 2nd cen. A.D. just as the same date (2nd cen. A.D.) seems to be unmistakably that of Cenkuttuvan.<sup>1</sup> The date of the Cilappatikāram can, on this evidence, be fixed as the 2nd cen. A.D. since the epic was written by Iḷaṅkō Aṭikal, the brother of king Cenkuttuvan. Similarly,

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1 See N. Subrahmanian, op. cit., pp. 26-27.

the other Tamil epic, Manimēkalai, written by Cāttanār, a contemporary of Iḷaṅko Aṭikal, may well be considered to have belonged to the same period. Thus the Gajabāhu-Cenkuttuvan synchronism becomes the sheet-anchor for our view on the date of the Kural. Unable, probably, to go against the historical dates of the two epics, scholars like Vaiyapuri Pillai do not have any alternative other than to 'shift' the whole of the caṅkam literature to a later date. From the well-established dates of the two Tamil epics and also from the fact that the Kural (6.5) is reproduced in toto in the Cilappatikāram (xxiii) and in the Manimēkalai (xxii. 59-61) we maintain that the Kural must have been written at least a century or two earlier than the two Tamil epics.

Vaiyapuri Pillai argues for the 'late date' also on the count that the Kural is largely indebted to well-known treatises in Sanskrit. He writes:

A study of his work reveals that he is largely indebted to well-known treatises in Sanskrit such as Manu, Kautiliya, Kāmandakiya, Ayurvedic treatises and Kāma-Sūtra. Kural 41 and 47 emphasizing the importance of the grahastās (householders) are based upon Manu III.78. Kural 58 describing the merits of a married woman who bestows loving care on her husband owes its idea to Manu V.155. ...<sup>1</sup>

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1 op. cit., p. 81.

Our comment here is that the originality of Tiruvalluvar is completely overlooked by the learned Tamil scholar. One of the unfortunate misunderstandings about the Kural, according to us, consists in equating the concept of aram with dharma, porul with artha and kāma with the meaning given to the term kāma in the Kāma-Sūtra and drawing the conclusion that Valluvar's philosophy is derived entirely from the Sanskritic sources dealing with dharma, artha and kāma. Vaiyapuri Pillai suffers under this misunderstanding and misreading of the Kural. The subtle but significant differences between the connotations of the Kural terms and their 'equivalents' in the Sanskritic traditions are not appreciated at all by the learned scholar. Since one of our major concerns in the thesis has been to highlight these differences, our arguments in this regard may themselves be pointed out as fitting answers to Vaiyapuri Pillai here.

Furthermore, while discussing the dates of the Sanskritic works to 'fix' the date of the Kural, Vaiyapuri Pillai, even while acknowledging the wide variations of opinion among scholars - Indian and foreign - always prefers the 'later dates' without offering any reason. For instance, he writes:

Of these works, the date of Manusmṛti can be fixed only within large limits and the date of Kautilya's Artha-Sāstra is open to grave doubts, most of our Indian scholars placing it in the 3rd cen. B.C. and the Western scholars in the 3rd cen. A.D. (A.B. Keith, History of Indian Literature, p. 461; Winternitz, History of Indian Literature, German edn., Vol. III, p. 523.). Kāma-Sūtra is assigned to A.D. 490 by both Keith (p. 461) and Winternitz (Vol. III, p. 540), though the former is inclined to give it a later date, 500 A.D. (p. 469)... Taking into consideration the dates of these Sanskrit works, we are compelled to conclude that the earliest date to which Valluvar can be assigned is 600 A.D.

Thus Vaiyapuri Pillai's argument is not convincing at all. Reliance on the dates of the Sanskrit texts (which are themselves uncertain) on the unacceptable assumption that the Kural is nothing but a re-production in Tamil, of the Sanskritic ideas makes for a strained argument. From the very fact that even when there is a wide variation of opinion in regard to the dates of the Sanskritic works, he always prefers a later date, without explaining the grounds on which he prefers them, it is obvious, his theory of the later date of the Kural, rests on weak foundations.

One other reason offered by Vaiyapuri Pillai in support of his thesis is that there are a great number of

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1 op. cit., pp. 83-84.

Sanskrit words in the Tamil Classic. The argument seems to be that, linguistically, the Kural is contemporaneous with some of the Sanskritic works like Artha-Sāstra rather than with caṅkam classics. The implication is that the 'non-pure' (i.e., the non-Dravidian) Tamil used in the Kural would straight away negative the thesis of its 'earlier origin', viz., 1st cen. B.C. - 1st cen. A.D.). It seems to us important to emphasize here that even if, for argument's sake, we accept that the Kural belonged to the same age as that of Kauṭilya's Artha-Sāstra which is accepted, on historical evidence, to belong to the 5th-6th cen. B.C., the reading of the date of the Tamil Classic as the 6th cen. A.D. does not have any justification, on this count. (We must, however, concede, Vaiyapuri Pillai does not commit a logical inconsistency here, he 'shifts' the date of the Artha-Sāstra itself 'further down'<sup>1</sup>, just as he 'shifts down' the dates of the Tamil epics, to suit his theory.) For, the Kural will then have to be considered to belong to an earlier date (around the 5th cen. B.C. or to a date a little later than that) rather than to a date like the 6th-8th cen. A.D. as Vaiyapuri Pillai maintains.

It is important here to observe that the loan-words

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1 op. cit., p. 83

argument of Vaiyapuri Pillai is effectively countered by Zvelebil, who otherwise supports him. Zvelebil first refers to the complete list of loan-words<sup>1</sup> as prepared by Vaiyapuri Pillai and then observes:

Now from this list we have excluded a number of items which were considered to be Aryan loan-words by S. Vaiyapuri Pillai, but which have since been proved, mainly by the labours of Burrow and Emeneau, to be of Dravidian origin. The lexis of Tirukkural is thus no so heavily Sanskritized after all. The following items have to be regarded as Dravidian in origin: amar (137), uru (608), emam (760), er (2313), kavari (1115), kayul (1124), kalakam (1132), kalam, kalan (116), kuti (171), kur (1578), kottam (1709), takar (2430), tinmai (2634), tukil (2687), totti (2925), tai (2940), nayam (2977), nir (3057), pakuti (3154), pantam (3220), palli (3309), peti (3631), ney (3635), matamai (3798), mayir (3854), mayil (3793), ma (3923), min (3999), mukam (4003), valai (4348), valli (4351), velai (4555). Some items are of uncertain etymology; thus e.g., uru, uruvu (566) may or may not be a lw from Skt. rupa-.

The Sanskrit vocabulary of Tirukkural shrinks considerably; from 137 items to about 102 items. And if a more intensive etymological work were done, it may still shrink. (cf. the uncertain etymology of such items as kutankar, kalul, etc., which may ultimately prove to be Dravidian.).<sup>2</sup>

Apart from the presence of loan-words we would also concede that there is definitely a higher percentage of Sanskrit words in the Kural than in the Tolkappiyam and in

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1 op. cit., p. 170.

2 ibid., pp. 170-171.

the caṅkam works. The Tamil expression piravipperuṅ katal (lit. 'the great ocean of rebirths') does remind us of the Sanskrit expression saṃsārasāgara. We do find parallels in the Kural which seem to reflect ideas and views we find in Sanskritic works. For instance TK 4.3 is comparable to Manu III.72 and TK 5.3 and 5.8 respectively resemble Manu IX.212 and V.155. The parallelism between Manu II.212 and TK 39.6 as also between Manu VII.99, 100 and TK 38.5 are indeed striking. But, as Zvelebil points out: "... it would be foolish to deny that Tiruvalluvar, a mind so universal, cultured and learned and eclectic, knew these basic Sanskrit sources of dharma."<sup>1</sup> From our point of view Zvelebil's observation: "He was without doubt a part of one great ethical, didactic tradition"<sup>2</sup> is significant. Furthermore, as N. Subrahmanian observes, this may be "due more to the style and taste of individual authors and dependent on the subject-matter rather than to any particular trend in particular periods of the literature."<sup>3</sup>

Certain other linguistic considerations are also suggested by Vaiyapuri Pillai to support his theory. He

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1 op. cit., p. 171.

2 ibid.

3 op. cit., p. 30.



observes:

New forms of functional words appear in the Kural for the first time in the history of Tamil language... Nouns, including those of uyar-tinai category, have begun taking the suffix 'gal' to denote plural (e.g., Pūriyargal, 919). Verbs have begun to take the infix of 'anirrun' to denote the present tense (e.g., irāvānira, 1157) and the termination 'an' has begun to take the place of 'al' indicating future tense of 1st person, singular (e.g., irappan, 1067).

The subjunctive endings 'ēl' (enin enilēl, 386) and ānāl (ā-y-in āyin-āl-ānāl, 53) are late arrivals very far from the 'in' ending of the Sangam post-fixing themselves to the roots 'en' and 'a' respectively. The adverbial ending 'mal' added to the negative particle 'a' with verbal themes as in sey-y-ā-mal (101, 313) is unknown to early Sangam works, the earlier ending being 'tu' as in Narrinai 306. So also is the negative 'al-l-āl' meaning 'except', the earlier form being 'anri' as in Narrinai 27. Moreover 'vān', 'pān' and 'pāku' are late endings of verbal participles. Of these two occur in the Kural - arivān (701) karappāku (1127, 1129) and vēpāku (1128). Finally in the case of words which have changing forms in course of time, later forms are found in Kural - pōltu (412, 539, 569, 930, 1229) and besides these many new words which are definitely known to have been in use about the beginning of the 7th cen. A.D. and not earlier are found in Valluvar's Kural. Examples are oppāri (1071), Appar (V, 3, 1), patti (1074, Appar V, 5, 1), mādū (wealth, 400, Appar V, 77, 4), tuchchu (340, Appar IV, 69, 8), pākkivam (Kural, 1141, Appar V, 48, 6), pūsanai (18, Appar IV, 76, 4), nāman (360, Appar V, 90, 5), kodu (1264, Appar V, 5, 8).

...So we shall be fairly justified in concluding that Valluvar lived about the time of Appar, that is, about AD 600.

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1 op. cit., pp. 83-84.

Our comment here is that we greatly value the painstaking research of the great scholar into the linguistic aspect but since the Kural can, by no means, be considered merely as a master-piece of Tamil literature, linguistic considerations alone are not sufficient while examining the question of the date of its composition. Especially in view of the complexity of the whole question, whatever data available must also be taken into consideration. The certainty in regard to some historical 'details' relevant to our question (as we have indicated above) cannot simply be brushed aside as totally irrelevant, as the scholar does. 'Philosophical data' we have referred to seems to us as no less significant than historical evidence since the philosophical content of the Kural is an undisputed fact.<sup>1</sup>

Coming now to consider Zvelebil's views on the date of the Kural: following the tradition of Vaiyapuri Pillai, he maintains that the best date for the Kural that can be suggested is the 5th-6th cen. A.D., probably sometime between 450 A.D. and 550 A.D. Zvelebil concedes that

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<sup>1</sup> Similar are our comments in regard to some recent attempts at analysing the contents of the Kural through purely structural-linguistic methods, as for instance, Yu Ya Glazov's long paper, "Morphemic Analysis of the Language of Tirukkural" in K. Zvelebil, Yu. Ya. Glazov and M. Andronov, Introduction to the Historical Grammar of the Tamil Language, Moscow: Nauka Publishing House, Central Dept. of Oriental Literature, 1967, pp. 113-175.

the historical problem of the date of Tirukkural is complicated, though it has been thrashed out in a number of papers and books, published in Tamil as well as in Western languages. Our criticism of Zvelebil is that apart from 'choosing' the date of the Kural as the 5th cen. A.D. he does not argue out his case. Though the complexity of the problem of the date calls for a more detailed analysis and references to historical evidences on which there is general agreement among scholars who have done good work on South Indian history, Zvelebil chooses not to discuss the issue. He merely observes: "The internal evidence (the language of the work, allusions to earlier works, indebtedness of the Kural to some Sanskrit treatises, etc.,) all point to a date which is considerably later than the early classical poetry (and in this respect the Kural does certainly not belong to the caṅkam age), but earlier than the beginnings of bhakti in Tamilnad."<sup>1</sup>

The historical-linguistic approach he prefers to take to the whole issue of the date of the Kural may have its own merit but, in regard to a work like the Kural, it seems to us that such an approach alone cannot be wholly relied upon. His reference to 'allusions to earlier works' is far from clear since the Kural does not contain 'allusions to earlier works' as Zvelebil wants us to believe.

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1 op. cit., p. 156.

He does not at all substantiate his statement.

Zvelebil adopts Vaiyapuri Pillai's line of argument in regard to Sanskritic literature vis-a-vis Tirukkural. Zvelebil too refers to Tiruvalluvar's 'indebtedness' to the Sanskritic sources. Though the whole issue is admittedly complex, Zvelebil dismisses it by just one oblique reference to it by observing that Valluvar was influenced by the Sanskritic sources. We have taken pains to argue in our thesis that though the Dharma-Sāstra ideas and ideals are found reflected in the Kural, it is wrong to consider the concept of aram as having wholly derived its significance from the Sanskritic concept of dharma. Likewise we have maintained that the philosophy of porul is not derived from the Sanskritic work, Kauṭilya's Artha-Sāstra. We have also pointed out that the resemblances between Vātsyāyana's Kāma-Sūtra and the third 'book' of the Kural are nothing when compared to the divergences of approach that they take to the subject of sex and love.

Zvelebil refers to the 'Sanskritic sources' a little later in his work<sup>1</sup>, though the references are in connection with his discussion of loan-words in the Kural. But it is gratifying to note that his 'tone of reference' is entirely different, his categorical reference to

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1 op. cit., p. 171.

'indebtedness' being replaced by a more guarded statement. This will be evident from his observation:

Just as there is a not negligible influence of Sanskrit vocabulary on Tiruvalluvar's lexis, the author of the Kural is undoubtedly to some extent indebted to Sanskritic sources like Mānavadharmasāstra, Kautilya's work, etc.<sup>1</sup>

It is not surprising, therefore, that he makes the statement:

It is important that he (Tiruvalluvar) was also a very integral part of the non-Sanskritic Tamil tradition, this fact is seen not only from his conception of 'pleasure' which is so typically a reflexion of the akam genre, but also from the all-pervading pragmatic, this-worldly, empirical and, to a great extent, humanistic and universalistic character of his particular conception of dharma and niti.<sup>2</sup>

We also appreciatively take note of Zvelebil's content-analysis of the Kural which, as he implies, ought to be understood alongside the structural analysis of the Tamil classic. In view of the importance of the statements he makes, from our own point of view, we deem it worthwhile to quote them in full. Zvelebil writes:

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1 op. cit., p. 171.

2 ibid.

The content of the Tirukkural is undoubtedly patterned. In fact it is structured very carefully, so that no 'structural gaps' occur in the text. Every single couplet is indispensable for the structured whole. Every distich has, so to say, two kinds of meaning: if isolated and thus removed from the content-structure the couplets lose a very important meaning-component - their 'structured meaning'. An isolated couplet may be charming and interesting in itself, but it is just a 'wise saying', a moral maxim, a 'literary proverb' in perfect form, possessing, in varying degree, the prosodic and rhetoric qualities of gnomic poetry. It acquires a 'structural meaning' only in relation to other couplets, forming higher patterns, and finally, in relation to the entire text, which forms a perfect total structure. This fact is in sharp contrast with the early classical poetry, where each stanza was a perfectly self-contained unit; various stanzas were gathered in anthologies; while, as already stressed, the Tirukkural is not an anthology.

Man in the totality of his relationships is the subject of the Kural. After a cosmic introduction, which praises God, rain, supermen and virtue, the author of the book turns towards man, whose personality is gradually unfolded in 'ever expanding concentric cycles': within the family with his wife and children, within the community with his friends, and within his country, in his relationship towards the ruler and the state. Man is shown not in a static state but in development, and the force that is behind this dynamism is sympathy, even love manifesting itself through kind thought, sweet words and right actions.<sup>1</sup>

While we welcome the above statement as significant for understanding the philosophy of the Kural we also want to emphasize that the linguistic-structuralistic approach is considered inadequate by him while commenting

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1 op. cit., pp. 163-164.

on the content of the Classic. We heartily approve of the argument of Zvelebil here but we can't help reiterating the fact that to the extent that he emphasizes the content-analysis of the Kural his argument regarding the date of the work on purely linguistic-structural grounds gets weakened.

Furthermore, even if the Sanskrit works referred to are, for the sake of argument, considered to have influenced the thought-content of the Classic, it is extremely difficult to draw the conclusion that Zvelebil does, viz., that the Classic must have been produced during the 5th-6th cen. A.D. since the accepted dates of the works mentioned range from the 5th-4th cen. B.C. (Kaṭilya's Arthaśāstra, for instance) to the 1st cen. B.C. (Manusmṛti).

Finally, - and this seems to be a decisive point in favour of our view - the 'tone of tolerance' towards all religions which is the characteristic feature of the Kural cannot be accounted for if it was the product of the 6th cen. A.D. For, by then the Pallavas had come to power and the Pallava age, 6th-9th cen. A.D. witnessed the attitude of fanatical devotion to particular religions. From the 6th cen. A.D. onwards we have clear historical and archaeological evidence and these point precisely to the Pallavas

enjoying supreme power in South India. From the spirit of accepting all that is best from various religious philosophies that we see in the Kural, it is obvious, the suggestion of the 'later date' for the Tamil Classic becomes extremely hard to accept. In sum, the earlier date we have suggested seems to be much more plausible, to express our 'claim' in modest tones.



## APPENDIX II

### ON THE ILLARAM-TURAVARAM QUESTION

In view of the firm stand that we have taken on the illaram-turavaram question a few more observations seem to be necessary to clear some misapprehensions in the minds of our readers regarding the use to which we have employed the categories of illaram and turavaram. A few problems that may arise here are: "How are we to be sure of the distinction that we have drawn between illaram and turavaram - even though we are referring to them not as 'stages' in the Dharma-Sāstra sense?" "Was the distinction intended by the author himself or was it 'imposed' by the commentators?" "If the latter was the case, would it or would it not weaken the nerve of our argument in the thesis?" Similarly it may be asked whether the chapter and other divisions are the work of the author or the commentators and whether the acceptance of the latter alternative might make a difference to our thesis itself.

It seems to us that the division of the work into three major parts, the Arattuppāl, Porutpāl and the Kāmattuppāl was the author's own. References to the work as

Muppāl (a work of 'three parts') that we find in Tamil classical works as also the general agreement we find among the classical commentators regarding the three-fold division of the work lend support to our view here. Any further division might have been the work of commentators, though the possibility of some major divisions at least having been thought of by the author cannot be ruled out completely. That is, the labelling itself (into illaram and turavaram) might have been done later on, - after the time of the author - but this itself does not signify that the idea of the distinction between illaram and turavaram was absent in the author's mind; for, such a type of distinction and prescriptions of virtues for the house-holders and the ascetics was 'in the air' - was part and parcel of the Brahmanical Hindu, the Jaina and the Buddhist traditions. Tiruvalluvar must have 'known' the distinction but his emphasis has been on considering them as 'stages' which are continuous with each other.

Even if it is accepted for argument's sake that the illaram-turavaram labelling was done by the commentators, it does not affect our thesis at all. For it seems more reasonable to hold that the labelling

itself reflects the thoughts contained in the original than maintaining that the process of labelling does not bear any relation whatever to the actual contents of the work. The work of the commentators of any classical work, it seems to us, consists in their trying to understand the underlying theme and giving a proper interpretative exposition of it. In some sense the commentators' work is comparable to the work of an 'editor' in so far as the latter is not expected to import ideas which are extraneous to the work. The labelling of the broad divisions of the Arattuppāl certainly cannot be visualized to have been done in a haphazard way, without having any consideration for the actual content of the Division (pāl) dealing with Aram.

It is obvious, even if the illaram-turavarm<sup>a</sup> labelling was not by Valluvar himself, it does not make any difference to our argument since it cannot be denied that the idea of the two 'states' was very much in the mind of the author, his distinct contribution being the insistence on there being no 'status change' between them. In this connection Zvelebil's emphatic pronouncement: "the poet himself was responsible for the basic structure of the book and for the sequence of individual couplets; ... there do not seem to be any later additions to the text"<sup>1</sup> is quite

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1 op. cit., pp. 158 and 160.

significant, for, in spite of the strong disagreement he has with the majority of the scholars in regard to the date of the work, he shows complete agreement on this important question of the text not being subjected to later alterations or additions. If there were no interpolations at all to the original text of the Classic, the illaram-turavaram idea, it is obvious, was 'native' to the text. The commentators, both classical and modern, can at best be considered to have brought out this basic idea clearly to the surface and not 'found' something which was not already there in the text.

### APPENDIX III

#### ON OUR TREATMENT OF THE KĀMATTUPPĀL

Our relating the concept of kāman as understood by Tiruvalluvar to the caṅkam traditions may, in some quarters give rise to the question why, when we were discussing aram and poruḷ in our present work, we did not adopt a similar procedure (of relating them to the classical Tamil traditions). It may be pointed out that for the sake of 'keeping the symmetry' (at least) such a procedure could have been adopted in our treatment of aram and poruḷ too.

Our general line of meeting this possible criticism is that we do not consider the Kural as a post-caṅkam work. We do not accept the view that caṅkam polity, for instance, influenced the Kural's idea of the state. Rather we maintain that the Kural's ideas have had their sway over the caṅkam social and political philosophy. Hence it seems to us that an analysis of the Kural's philosophy of society indirectly, though significantly, helps us to get an insight into the caṅkam institutions themselves. But since we have been concerned with delineating the philosophy of the Kural we have not investigated the question of how the institution-  
alization

of ideas and ideals of the middle-caṅkam and/or later-caṅkam periods (depending on whether the Kural is considered the product of the early-caṅkam or middle-caṅkam period) is understandable in the light of Kural's philosophy of institutionalization. Further, since we are not sure whether the Kural belonged to the early or middle caṅkam period (due to absence of precise historical evidence), it seems to us that the question of pointedly relating the Kural and caṅkam ideas is beset with difficulties of a historical nature. On the other hand, understanding the Kural idea of kāma in relation to the caṅkam tradition of love was comparatively easy since both could be shown to have been derived from Tolkāppiyam. The same could not be said about aram and porul. The Sanskrit traditions of dharma and artha were found to be helpful in understanding aram and porul respectively.

Furthermore, our concern in the thesis has been to understand the distinct significance of the Kural concepts and not just to indicate the relationship between the Kural concepts on the one hand and the caṅkam and Sanskritic sources on the other. To indicate the distinctness of the concept of aram we contrasted it with dharma as understood in the Sanskritic sources, just as the real significance of porul was indicated by pointing to the different type of approach to the concept of artha in the

Sanskritic tradition. The contrast between the Kāma-Sūtra and the Kural in the treatment of the love-sex theme was also drawn. The distinct approach of the Kural could be highlighted best by relating it to the Tamil tradition of love which was not merely conceptualized but which was also current in the Tamil society at the time.

Incidentally we may also emphasize here that the stylistic variation we see in the Kāmatuppāl need not be feared to weaken our thesis that there is one theme running throughout the work, viz., a philosophy of good life. Does the poetic style adopted in the Kāmatuppāl which is definitely not found in the Arattuppāl and Porutpāl suggest even obliquely that either the Kural was an anthology or that its author left off the serious tone he adopted earlier on in the 'books' on Aram and Porul and dealt with an entirely different theme with a 'sensuous intention'? Regarding the former question there is unanimous agreement among scholars that the Classic was not an anthology, that it had a single author, also that there were no interpolations to the original text. Even though in regard to the second question there is only near-unanimity, on the whole scholars seem to agree that the 'sensuous intention' interpretation

is not wholly acceptable. Even a scholar like Zvelebil who misunderstands the significance of the Kāmatuppāl exhibits an insight into the integral scheme of the good life envisaged in the Kural. This will be evident from his observations. He writes:

The man who has unfolded his personality in the moral and spiritual order and who is taking part in the social and political life, is also entitled to pleasure, and to strictly private life. In fact, only a meaningful relationship with woman, physical and emotional, makes him 'whole'. After spiritual treasures and moral wealth, there is emotional richesse; after exercising his intelligence and knowledge, there is the heart which must not be neglected. The hypertrophy of virtue, as well as the hypertrophy of skills and prowess would be catastrophic; beauty, leisure, feelings and emotions are indispensable parts of human life. And in the Kāmatuppāl, we have the lover and his sweetheart in physical and emotional rapture, described in about 250 charming couplets.

...  
If there is true poetry anywhere in the Tirukkural, it is here, in the erotic couplets of the third book. Because here, the teacher, the preacher in Valluvar has stepped aside, and Valluvar speaks here almost the language of the superb love-poetry of the classical age.

The misunderstanding of Zvelebil consists in his interpretation that Valluvar 'steps aside' aram while dealing with the love-sex theme. Our suggestion here is that such an interpretation of the treatment of kāmam

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1 op. cit., pp. 165-166.



does not do justice to the integral philosophy of good life that Valluvar has suggestively indicated. Kāma as 'diversification of aram' is no doubt not evident at first, but as we have already indicated in our chapter on kāma, considering the deeper meaning of individual couplets in the Kāmatuppāl points beyond doubt to the intimate relationship between the themes of 'love' and 'virtue'. It seems to us that Zvelebil's observations on the couplets constituting the section on Poru are themselves significant also for an understanding of the Kāmatuppāl couplets. He observes:

However, one should never contemplate the couplets in isolation. We must again and again stress that they have true validity and meaning only in their patterned relations to other couplets, and to the whole. And when read and contemplated in this way, Tiruvalluvar's ethics is never that of a Cāṅakya or a Macchiavelli.<sup>1</sup>

However, it should be pointed out here that very few serious studies on the Kural have even attempted to touch on the question of the one underlying theme. Perhaps ours is the first attempt in this direction. Our interpretation of the stylistic variation is the following: True to the Tamil tradition of the akam-puram distinction, the author must have adopted the 'poetic mode' to express the

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1 op. cit., p. 165.

delicate love-sex theme.<sup>1</sup> Explaining the significance of the akam 'mode' in the Tamil poetic tradition K. Kailasapathy observes:

Tolkāppiyar divided the subject-matter of all poetry or human emotions into two broad categories, viz., akam, 'inner' and puram, 'outer'. Following the classification scholars down the ages have accepted it as the standard division of poetics. Ilampūranār (A.D. 9) whose commentary on the Tolkāppiyam is the earliest extant, has defined these two terms: 'The author called it akam (the inner) since its content is the enjoyment of sexual union and its results realized only by the two persons concerned. He called it puram (the outer) since its content is indulgence in acts of war and acts of virtue and its results, comprehensible to the others' (Tol. Poruḷ -Intr.)<sup>1</sup>

Hence the adoption of the poetic style does not point either to a dilution in the philosophic tone of the Classic or to a loosely knit scheme of presentation of the various aspects of human personality or the corresponding ways in which the diverse aspects of it are projected in real life-situations.

We have no doubt already argued our case in the chapter on Kāman, but we wanted to reiterate here that though on the face of it the two different styles adopted by Valluvar while dealing with the themes of aram and poruḷ on the one hand and kāman on the other, do present

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<sup>1</sup> Tamil Heroic Poetry, Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1968, p. 4.

some difficulty on the surface, an in-depth study of the Kural in general and the Kāmatuppāl in particular reveals that the stylistic variations themselves are not symptomatic of a 'treatment of diverse themes' (unrelated to each other) in a single work but indicate a concern for giving a psychologically sound treatment of each of the human aspirations.

#### APPENDIX IV

##### ON OUR USAGE OF THE TERMS PHILOSOPHICAL AND EXTENSION

Though it may sound a truism, we consider it necessary to emphasize that the term philosophy of Good life as used in our thesis ought not to be understood in the same sense as it is understood in contemporary discussions. No doubt, recent analyses of the term Good have enriched the concept so much that they have added valuable dimensions to our understanding of a significantly important philosophical concept like the Good. Yet, while looking at an ancient classic like the Kural which we have tried to situate in the more immediate context of the Indian religious and philosophical traditions, two factors need to be borne in mind:

1. Philosophy is a purely Western term and is only the nearest equivalent of the term darsana in the Indian tradition.

2. Philosophy in the West is ultimately traced to the Greek term *philosophia* which literally means the love or the pursuit of wisdom.

In regard to 1. we concede that darśana, like philosophy connotes both a deliberate analysis of concepts and an 'application' to life-situations, bringing to the fore the 'ultimate seriousness' of life itself in the process. Yet, the activity of philosophizing that can be discerned in an ancient Indian classic like the Kural (for, unless the 'philosophic activity' is presupposed we can't refer meaningfully to a philosophy of Good life in the Classic) deserves to be described as 'pre-systematic philosophy'. The usage of the term is intended to emphasize that before the serious activity that we call 'philosophic' 'emerges', lots of preliminary and preparatory 'analyses' are involved. Needless to say, these stages are as important as the 'later stages' of philosophizing, in so far as they provide the strong foundations upon which the mansion of philosophy is built later on.

In regard to 2. we note that four at least of the ways in which philosophy was conceived in the 'classical West' are important.<sup>1</sup> These are: (i) philosophy as a study in which the various special sciences are to be related together and understood as parts of one system; (ii) philosophy as embodying a contrast between Appearance and Reality; (iii) philosophy as considering the 'Form'

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<sup>1</sup> See Article on Philosophy in The Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. XVII.

of the 'Good' as the source both of being and of intelligibility; and (iv) philosophy as providing an intellectual insight gained through the practice of the method of dialectic. We consider these significant in indicating further the meaning of our expression 'pre-systematic philosophy' here. It will probably be noticed here that (i) and (iv) are just helpful in pointing to the pre-systematic philosophic activity in the Kural and (ii) and (iii) vindicate the usage of the term philosophy itself (whether understood in the pre-systematic sense or otherwise) in the context of the Kural.

It is in keeping with such a conception of the activity of philosophizing that we are maintaining that our own approach to the study of the Kural is philosophical. The study of the Kural signifies, then, not merely understanding the meaning of the couplets (however important this might be) but also interpreting the significance of the totality of meaning that the Kural incorporates. The process involves basically the study of the text and the commentaries to start with, but more importantly it involves also an in-depth study of the argument that can be discerned in the Classic. This approach also calls for an evaluation which is philosophical too.

In brief, Kural's thought, we have contended, is

philosophical in so far as there is discernible in the Classic a serious analysis of the Good and an underlying conception of the Appearance-Reality question. While offering an interpretative analysis of the thought-system found in the Classic we have also evaluated it as embodying a wholesome approach to problems of human life, though our 'commendation' is deliberately not explicit. We have indicated this evaluation in terms of our argument that by steering clear of sectarian views and approaches, the Kural presents a view and way of life which is comprehensive and 'integrated'. Not a single aspect of human life is overlooked by the Kural, we have maintained. In addition we have also shown that each aspect is integral to the personality of man even while indicating how a pattern evolves by this integrative-comprehensive approach. If our attempt here is successful, our submission is that it does not itself 'prove' that there can be no other type of interpretation, just as a non-acceptance of our approach does not necessarily involve a 'disproof' of the correctness of our evaluation, unless it is shown that an interpretative-evaluative approach to the text itself is irrelevant.

Coming now to our usage of the term extension: Though we have, in the body of the thesis, deliberated on it, a word here may be added to highlight an important point we

have made.

In one sense our meaning of 'extension' could have been conveyed better had we referred to poruḷ and kāmaṁ as 'Araṁ in extension' rather than as 'diversifications of Araṁ'. Yet we preferred 'diversification' even at the cost of creating some misunderstanding of our position. We feared that in spite of our carefully delineating the meaning of 'extension' we may still be mistaken as over-emphasizing the role of araṁ in the spheres of polity, economics and love. Hence we deliberately avoided the use of the expression 'Araṁ in extension'.

We wanted to indicate, however, that poruḷ and kāmaṁ have their own spheres of autonomy just as the language of love is different from the language of commerce or politics. The 'plane of reference' for poruḷ and kāmaṁ, we wanted to show, was clearly visualized by Valluvar to be different from each other and also different from that of araṁ. All the same, we wanted to also reiterate that the originality of the author of the Kuraḷ consisted in his maintaining precisely that no aspect of human life can be totally autonomous in the sense of their not incorporating the principles of araṁ in themselves. This, according to us meant that poruḷ and kāmaṁ can be referred to as diversifications in so far as they represent expressions of



aram in different spheres of life.

We may also re-emphasize the aspect of 'vertical dimension' here to point to another aspect of the usage of the term 'extension'. To the extent that human personality itself can be understood both in terms of its ethical-social dimensions and in terms of its metaphysical dimensions, we feel that our giving the deeper meaning of dimensionality to the term extension is, from the point of view of the philosophy of the Kural, not unwarranted, to express it mildly, and logically required, to give a more positive 'description' of our stand-point.

APPENDIX V

ON THE CONCEPT OF THE GOOD IN THE KURAL

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The emphasis we were laying through out our thesis on the ethical-social perspective taken by Valluvar is likely to give rise to the question whether or not Valluvar had also a concept of the Good. Can Valluvar's appeal be attributed to the fact that he philosophized on good life without at all going into the metaphysical question of the Good? If so, what lends support to the whole structure of the moral life exhorted? Would not a reference to good life without a pointed reference also to the Good go against the 'claim' that Tiruvalluvar's 'system' is reflective of the Indian philosophical ethos?

These are indeed significant questions and need some analysis here. One reason why we did not even touch on this question in the chapter on Aram was that we wanted to indicate Tiruvalluvar's 'model' of philosophizing. He was averse to dwelling at length on metaphysical questions, his point of emphasis being on the need to achieve transformation of individual and institutional life. The question at issue here is whether we can visualize a way of life being exhorted without an underlying view of reality. Can

any sound system of philosophy suggest (simply) an ideal of conduct which claims 'allegiance' to the entire personality of man without raising, by implication at least, questions about ultimate value, the nature and destiny of the individual who accepts the scheme of life and his relation to the ultimate ideal?

Our reaction to these possible questions is that though Valluvar's emphasis was on the good life, he did not disregard the question of the nature of the Good itself. That we are not taking up such a position in an apologetic spirit will become evident in the sequel.

It needs to be recalled here that while referring to the methodology adopted by Valluvar while philosophizing on the good life, we delineated the two aspects of the philosophic activity in ancient India, viz., having the focus of concern on metaphysical categories and also dwelling on a system of values which cohered well with the former. Our point was that traditionally the philosophic activity in India tended to be looked upon as identical with analysing and dwelling on metaphysical categories. Axiological aspects were certainly not ignored, but considering them as all-important was perhaps not popular. One reason for this situation might have been the fact that in the ultimate analysis a concept of value rested on a theory of Reality.

In terms of Indian terminology we may consider philosophic activity to be explicable both in terms of tattva and puru-  
sārtha. Mokṣa was considered as the supreme purusārtha but 'realizing it' involved also realizing the nature of Being. Obviously, the concept of mokṣa was intimately related to the concepts of Being, Reality and Truth. Philosophizing on good life, in terms of realizing the Supreme human Value could also have been done by emphasizing the way in which even secular values could or ought to be realized. This procedure would necessarily have meant an idealization of all inter-personal relationships. Certainly here a concept of the Good as the Real, as the Truth, as the nature of one's Existence, is involved and lends support to the whole system of ethical and social philosophy.

Our submission is that Tiruvalluvar brought to the fore this aspect of philosophizing on the good life that was inherent in the Indian religio-philosophical tradition. That we are not just 'reading' principles of Indian philosophy into the philosophy of good life in the Kural would be evident from the fact that the text refers to both types of categories, the ethical and the metaphysical, but with a great emphasis on the former. We were dwelling at length on the ethical categories mainly in the course of our discussion of the Kural's philosophy of good life and merely hinted at the clear acceptance of the metaphysical

categories as well by Valluvar when we were explaining the vertical dimension of aram. The usage of the 'meta-physical language' that we find in the Kural may be illustrated by specific references to the text but before doing so we should suggest certain general considerations in regard to the Good- good life question:

(i) Tiruvalluvar's concept of the Good can be explicated not through references to doctrinal definitions but through his exposition of the good life for the simple reason that he does not enter into a discussion of the concept of the Good as it is usually done in the mokṣa-sāstras of Indian philosophy.

(ii) The Good, therefore is presupposed as the basis of good life. This is evident from the contexts in which Valluvar refers to the Good as such in contradistinction to the good life, i.e., he has made use of specific terms which in Tamil mean the Good.

(iii) The nature of the Good is clearly indicated by Valluvar by reconceiving dharma in such a way (and this is all too evident from his conception of aram) that its nth dimension itself is identified with realizing the ultimate human value or perceiving Reality. It is because of this that the dividing line between vītu and aram is extremely thin. Conversely, this thin dividing line

points to 'where' we have to look for for getting at Valluvar's concept of the Good.

(iv) Any aspect of life 'becomes good' because of and only because of its relationship with an intrinsic Good. This is apparent from Valluvar's insistence that there **is** not a sphere of life in which aram cannot be observed, that in fact realizing vītu is impossible unless aram pervades every aspect of one's life. The ultimate realization of vītu in this sense is synonymous with realizing the Good. Here it should be reiterated that though this line of interpretation may sound as if the Good is considered identical with aram, it is not so. Vītu is conceived as the Good, but since vītu itself cannot be realized unless aram (moral perfectibility) is realized in every sphere of life, aram realized fully may be referred to as the perfect state of Being, as the state in which the Good is realized in one's life.

It is in the light of the above considerations that specific references to the concept of Good found in some significant couplets of the Kural become extremely important. We may just mention some of the specific terms used for the concept of the Good in the Tamil Classic, to make our point. The terms porul (TK 36.1), meypporul (TK 36.5-6), pērā ivar-kkai (TK 37.10), cirappu (TK 4.1), cemporul <sup>and</sup> cārpū (TK 36.9)

refer to the Good.

That the metaphysical-idealistic conception of the Good was given a supreme place of importance by Valluvar becomes evident also from chapters 34-37 of the Kural, the chapters which are considered extremely significant by all commentators. It is significant to notice that on the basis of these four chapters alone the Kural is sometimes referred to as an Advaitic work in Tamil. Since our main object in this 'post script' is to emphasize that there is a distinct concept of the Good in Valluvar's system of philosophy as well, we do not want to go into this 'claim' from the side of Advaita.

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