



## Greatness of leader in Thirukural

Jayanthi Ramasamy, Elango Palanisamy

### ► To cite this version:

Jayanthi Ramasamy, Elango Palanisamy. Greatness of leader in Thirukural. Colloque international "Thirukkural, éthique et représentations : La Vertu, la Fortune et l'Amour", Université de La Réunion; INALCO, Apr 2016, Saint Denis, Réunion. pp.117–129. hal-02087348

**HAL Id: hal-02087348**

**<https://hal.univ-reunion.fr/hal-02087348>**

Submitted on 2 Apr 2019

**HAL** is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

**Jayanthi Ramasamy** hails from Tirupur District (Textile hub of India) of Tamil Nadu, India. She got her Bachelor of Science (Geography) from Bharathiar University, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu. She topped in her College. She completed her Post Graduation from Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla and she was University second rank holder. She also secured National Eligibility Test, an eligibility criterion for teaching profession at the colleges/universities in India. She completed her Master of Philosophy from Centre for African Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University. Her M.Phil thesis entitled Indian Tamil Diaspora in South Africa and Mauritius - A Comparative Analysis. She is currently Doctoral Fellow at the Centre for African Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, doing her research on Political and Economic Role of Tamil Diaspora in South Africa under the guidance of Prof. Ajay Dubey. Her area of specialization includes Diaspora (Indian/Tamil), Migration, Africa and International Relations. She has attended various National and International seminars/conferences in India. She presented her paper at the International Conference on India and Southern Africa Partnership, organised by Indian Council for World Affairs and Centre for Rural and Industrial Development Research, Chandigarh, sponsored by Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. The article entitled Building bridges: Role of Indian Diaspora in South Africa published on the book India and Southern Africa – edited by Amb. Paramjit Singh Sahai. Contributed an article in the First International Tamil Diaspora Conference on Tamil Diaspora and the Preservation of « Tamil Culture organised jointly by the Institute of Asian Studies, Chennai and the Mahatma Gandhi Institute, Mauritius. Presented a paper on “Role of Tamil Diaspora in Socio-Cultural Development of Mauritius” at the 6th Doctoral Scholar International Conference held at Wolkite University, Ethiopia. Presented a paper on “Overcoming Apartheid and Building Democracy: Role of Tamil Diaspora in South Africa” at the International Conference organised by Policy Research Institute of African Studies Association of India, JNU in collaboration with Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia. She has been writing International Diaspora part of Organization for Diaspora Initiatives news letter. She has organised various National and International conferences organised by Centre for African Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. »

**Elango Palanisamy** hails from the city of Tiruppur, Tamil Nadu, India. He did his Graduation and Post Graduation in History from Madurai Kamaraj University and Pondicherry University, Pondicherry respectively. He also furthered his Master of Philosophy at the Centre for the Study of Comparative Religions, Jamia University, New Delhi. His area of research involved “Sacred Geography – A Comparative analysis of Alvars and Nayanmars of Tamil Nadu”. He is currently with the Institute of Good Governance, a New Delhi based institute working towards promoting peace, Harmony and Good Governance.

## **ABSTRACT**

The Thirukkural is one of the most important works in the Tamil language. It is an earliest Tamil literature which gives a blistering insight and wisdom to human. Thiruvalluvar, the author of this ancient scripture lived in Tamil Nadu about 2000 years old. Thirukkural means “wealth and success in brief. Thirukkural contains 1330 couplets in 133 chapters, each chapter contains 10 couplets. Every chapter has some specific topic to expound the various aspects of life. This book has three main parts, Life with the power of goodness, Material life and Life with the passion of love. The first category covers virtue, wealth and love. The second part comprises economy, wealth, administration and policy. Second category is most important and it comprises 700 couplets. These three parts have touched the every aspect of our life, this shows the speciality of this ancient scriptures. This ancient scripture presents the ethical content which is beyond the boundaries of country or world. These ethical contents are away from geographical, linguistic and religious frontiers. Kural is not a spiritual text discussing entirely about extra-terrestrial matters, but it is a work on ethics for all and discusses numerous aspects pertaining to day to day life. Intuition plays an important role in the life of a leader.

In my paper, I will look into Thirukkural and its dealing with management ideas very exhaustively by applying the uniqueness of Tamil language throughout the sections by compressing the ideas of greatness to leader. This paper discusses the attributes of a stable kingdom and the ways to deal with enemies and relatives. This paper emphasise to matters pertaining to kings and associates managing the kingdom, which was the system in ancient days and can be applied/are applicable/ have applicability to even the modern world and to the general society. Tiruvalluvar emphasises that the right learning is that which will bestow pleasure not only in this life but for seven future lives. Tiruvalluvar describes the virtues and attributes of a worthy ruler. The ruler should be learned, wise, brave, kind ethical, liberal, fearless and vigilant, wisely manage his wealth and regularly monitor his employees, free from pride, anger greed, lust, carelessness and over indulgence. In concluding remarks, Thirukkural emphasized the following ethics as well for great ruler : deliberation, decision-making, execution of work till fruition, classifying and prioritizing works, conflict resolution, performance review, factors of analysis of solution, evaluation of profitability (the goals of management), work-target, work method, work-employee participation in decision-making, motivation, delegation of work, outsourcing, rewarding, converting conflicts into unity, concern for workers, and review of work-target in order to rule the country well-efficiently.

Tamil language is amongst the oldest living languages of the world with its extra-ordinary volume of literature and grammar. “Thirukkural (Tamil Veda or Holy Book) is said by a man to mankind, which insists how man is to set up his life and divine inner self. It compels us in all dimensions to have a full-fledged life. This Universal Veda shows way to Eternal liberation to all the people of this whole universe beyond nations, communities, religions and regions and translated into many languages” (Iraianban, 1997). The 1330 couplets of Thirukkural are set in three books, Virtue [Arattuppall Dharma (1-38)], Wealth [Porutpal Artha] (39-108)] and Love [Kamattuppall Kama (109-133)]. Each book has its subdivisions; the chapters are 133, each chapter has ten couplets and thus numbers 2660 lines. A couplet or kural consists of seven cir, with four cir on the first line and three on the second. A cir is a single or a combination of more than one Tamil word. For example, Thirukkural is a cir formed by combining the two words “Tiru” and “kural”. Aram contains 380 verses, Porul with 700 and Inbam with 250. It is very enthralling and so very realistic, guiding us how to face with the different feelings and circumstances that we come across in our personal life and our interactions with others.

Thiruvalluvar is regarded with deep respect and is honoured as a saint and truth-donor of the Tamilians. He is certainly one of the greatest geniuses of the world. There is no demarcation as to where the internal quotients stop and where the external ones start. Valluvar is a poet of synthesis, not of dissection, implying that internal unction renders external excellence possible. However, the impact of the man in a leader is crucial. The fall of the man in a leader is the fall in his leadership. Hence, what happens to the leader, as an individual matters. In tune thereof, the focus of this paper is Greatness of Leader: - Set the man right, the world will be all right.

## **GREATNESS OF LEADER IN THIRUKURAL**

The first two books of Thirukkural - Virtue and Wealth are examined here to trace the ingredients of leadership. Out of the 133 chapters in the Kural, twenty-five of them deal with the qualities essential for a King and how he should administer his country. While Valluvar considers some of the qualities as crucial, he treats few other qualities as desirable for a king in order to be recognized as an outstanding king. The incidence of political ideas in the Porutpal (Book II Wealth) and the reference of the eternal duties of man as a householder and as an ascetic in the Arattuppall (Book I Virtue) are complementary and give a complete code of ideal behaviour, personal as well as social and public. It is said that the third book also exerts a significant, though indirect influence on shaping a leader's personality by enhancing sensibilities as a spouse of marital fidelity : the lack of which leads to infamy - that has been the focal point of legends, myths, epics and history.

As we moved from the palm leaves era to Industrial age to Internet age, the meaning of a leader changed constantly. Leadership is the ability to transform vision into reality and the ability to do the right thing. Leadership is the capacity to organize a group of people to achieve a common goal. Although the definitions vary, it is commonly accepted that leadership is the ability to achieve the right goals by organizing and motivating other people to work to accomplish those goals. Is leadership an inborn quality or is it something that anyone can learn and become a leader ?

Here is a look at leadership as defined by 2100-year-old Tamil didactic work Thirukkural. In the section on Leadership, Valluvar lists several qualities as essential for a king/Leader to be an effective ruler. In short, there are 80 Leadership proportions in Thirukkural such as Ability, Assessing enemies' strength, Attending to the basic need - food, Avoiding base people, Avoiding meat, Avoiding slander, Being aware of enemies within, Charitable to enemies, Charitable hands, Charitable mind, Choosing the right place and time to act, Constantly learning, Courtesy, Differentiating good people from bad, Easy accessibility, Educating and training others, Eloquence, Empathetically listening, Employing right type of envoys, Erudition, Evaluating friends, Face-reading, Forbearance, Fore-thought, Free from anger, Free from base desires, Free from hatred, Gaining wealth by the right means, Gathering intelligence through spies, Gratitude, Guided by elders, Health consciousness, Honour, Hospitality, Impartiality, Industriousness, Judging listeners, Just in administration, Keeping the right type of ministers for wise counsel, Knowing one's own strength, Legitimate pride, Love, Maintaining army with its majesty, Mind-reading, Modesty, Never offending the great, No conceit, No extramarital affairs, No frauds, No ostentation, Nobility, Non-violence - not causing injury, mental or physical, Not being envious, Not being hasty, Not coveting, Not dreading the audience, Not giving room for faults, Not interfering, Not resorting to meanness, Not taking liquor, Perfection, Perseverance, Pure in activities, Pure mind, Resoluteness, Respect for the rule of law, Retentive memory, Righteousness, Setting example, Speaking pointedly and with purpose, Straight-forwardness, Sweet tongue, Taking good, timely food, Testing and trusting deputies, To dare destiny, To go at the root of hostility, Truthfulness, Unblemished family life, Using wealth in right channels and Virtuous conduct.

## ESSENTIAL QUALITIES OF LEADERSHIP

Thirukural contains many couplets dealing with Leadership. But here I am mentioning few in my article. We will start with Kural #381 from the chapter “Greatness of a King” (a leader) under the section "Grandeur of Kings", says

padaikuti koozh-amaichchu natparaN aaRum  
utaiyaan arasaruL ERu (Kural 381)

An army, people, wealth, a minister, friends, fort : six things-  
Who owns them all, a lion lives amid the kings.

Armies, Citizenry, Economic resources, Ministers, Allies and Fortresses  
All six make for a Lion among kings.

According to Thirukkural the ‘big’ four virtues of a leader are namely: never failing daring courage, magnanimity, intelligence and enthusiasm as given below :

anjaamai eekai aRivookkam inhnhaankum  
enjaamai vaendhark kiyalbu (Kural 382)

Courage, a liberal hand, wisdom, and energy : these four  
Are qualities a king adorn for evermore.

Never to fail in these four things, fearlessness, liberality, wisdom, and energy, is the kingly character.

Courage: Uncompromising commitment to do the correct thing for the workers and the clients. Courage is the ability to face fear, pain, danger and uncertainty and to take action in spite of them. Nelson Mandela, the South African revolutionary who fought against apartheid and who later became the president of his nation said, “I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it.” It was not unusual in the past for a king to be involved in combats and confrontations with enemies foreign and domestic. Therefore, a king should always be alert and courageous to confront his

enemies. Valluvar believes courage as an essential quality for a ruler (kural 382). As we observe from the subsequent kural, Valluvar is in favour of courage that is tempered by discretion. For him valor without discretion is foolishness.

anjuva thanjaamai paedhaimai anjuvadh

anjala Rivaar thozhil (Kural 428)

Folly meets fearful ills with fearless heart ;

To fear where cause of fear exists is wisdom's part.

Not to fear what ought to be feared, is folly ; it is the work of the wise to fear what should be feared.

**Giving (liberal hand):** The character of doing charity to the less fortunate is always considered as a noble quality. So it is wise for a leader today, to help the society. These days, corporate, business tycoons are getting defined by their Corporate Social Responsibility activities and leaders should focus on this key aspect of their business. Another way to look at this is to help others in general. This should resonate for people in any level of a state or an organization. Liberality is the quality of being generous.

According to Valluvar, kindness is a virtue that everybody should practice. In particular, serving the less fortunate without expecting anything in return is the true hallmark of liberality. A king has virtually unlimited resources and his liberality would be greatly beneficial to the impoverished and the people in need. Nothing speaks to others loudly or serves them better than generosity from a leader. True generosity isn't an occasional event. It comes from the heart and permeates every aspect of a leader's life, touching his time, money, talents, and possessions.

**Wisdom / Knowledge :** Unquenched thirst for knowledge is important for a leader. The more a leader learns, the better it is for the company and its employees. Learning is the act of acquiring new information about various things. When we use our intelligence to understand the relationships among the various pieces of information, we gain knowledge. The more we understand about the information we have learnt, the more our knowledge increases. Valluvar considers that learning and improving our knowledge is necessary for everyone.

thottanaith thooRum maNaRkaeNi maandharkkuk

katranaith thooRum aRivu (Kural 396)

In sandy soil, when deep you delve, you reach the springs below ;

The more you learn, the freer streams of wisdom flow.

Water will flow from a well in the sand in proportion to the depth to which it is dug, and knowledge will flow from a man in proportion to his learning.

kaetil vizhuchchelvam kalvi yoruvaRku

maadalla matrai yavai (Kural 400)

Learning is excellence of wealth that none destroy ;

To man nought else affords reality of joy.

Learning is the true everlasting asset of excellence for a man; all other assets are not real assets.

Although, Valluvar is of the opinion that learning is important for everyone, by including the chapter on Education in the section on Kingship, he emphasizes that it is an essential characteristic of a king. In fact, he condemns the uneducated ignorant people by saying,

vilangotu makkaL anaiyar ilangunhool

katraaroadu Enai yavar (Kural 410)

Learning's irradiating grace who gain,

Others excel, as men the bestial train.

There is as much difference between the learned and the ignorant as between human beings and beasts.

Wisdom is the ability to think and act using knowledge, experience, understanding, common sense and insight. Wisdom is the ability to make the correct judgments and decisions. It is needless to say that wisdom has always been considered as a sine qua non for a leader of any organization. Therefore, it is not surprising that Valluvar should include Wisdom as an essential requirement for a king. He has dedicated a chapter on the Merits of Wisdom (Chapter 43).



The following Kurals highlight the significance of Wisdom for a king/leader :

aRivattranG kaakkunG karuvi seRuvaarkkum

uLLazhikka laakaa araN (Kural 421)

True wisdom wards off woes, A circling fortress high ;

Its inner strength man's eager foes Unshaken will defy.

Wisdom is a weapon to ward off destruction; it is an inner fortress which enemies cannot destroy.

aRivutaiyaar ellaa mudaiyaar aRivilaar

ennutaiya raenum ilar (Kural 430)

The wise is rich, with every blessing blest ;

The fool is poor, of everything possessed.

Those who possess wisdom, possess everything ; those who have not wisdom, whatever they may possess, have nothing.

selvaththut selvanj sevichselvam achselvam

selvaththu Lellaanh thalai (Kural 411)

Wealth of wealth is wealth acquired be ear attent ;

Wealth mid all wealth supremely excellent.

Wealth of knowledge gained through listening is the wealth of all wealth; that wealth is the chief of all wealth.

sevikkuNa villaadha poazhdhu siRidhu

vayitrukkum eeyap padum (Kural 412)

When 'tis no longer time the listening ear to feed

With trifling dole of food supply the body's need.

When there is no food for the ear, give a little also to the stomach. Our own interpretations and experiences boost our knowledge. Additional knowledge can also be acquired by listening to others.

Valluvar further elaborates on the benefits of listening as a means of acquiring knowledge from others.

Passion / Energy: In addition to mentioning energy as a prerequisite quality for a leader (in kural 382), Valluvar has dedicated a chapter (Chapter 60) for energy and its importance for one and all.

veLLath thanaiya malarnheettam maandhardham

uLLath thanaiyadhu uyarvu (Kural 595)

With rising flood the rising lotus flower its stem unwinds ;

The dignity of men is measured by their minds.

The stalks of water-flowers are proportionate to the depth of water; so is men's greatness proportionate to their minds.

Energy is the strength and vitality required for sustained physical and mental activity. It is the energy that enables one to achieve one's goals. According to Valluvar, energy is the ideal possession that one could possess and all other possessions are not real possessions (kural 591). In other words, one with energy can obtain and retain his wealth and other things of value under all circumstances. He adds that success and wealth will seek their way to the one with inflexible will and unfailing energy (kural 594).

In addition to having energy, he also advises that a king (as well as others) should always think lofty thoughts.

uLLuva thellaam uyarvuLLal matradhu

thaLLinunh thaLLaamai neerththu (Kural 596)

Think lofty thoughts always; even if they fail to materialize, it is still as good as having materialized.

In this kural what Valluvar really implies is that the combination of energy and lofty thoughts will lead to persistent hard work which will result in success.

Thoongaamaikalvithunivudaimaiimmoonrum

Neengaaanilanallbavarku. (Kural 383)

Alertness, learning and bravery are the three virtues that are necessary for a king. (kural 383)

Three qualities, as per Thirukkural, namely promptness in action (non-delaying), education, decisiveness and bravery shall never leave the leaders governing the Earth.

These 7 characters form the core of a leader. We can have a great many other characters, but these are table stakes without which the other abilities are not attractive. These qualities are applicable to leader or every corporate manager or ruler. When a leader starts to lose any of these, a change is needed to regain or refocus that character.

## OTHER VIRTUES

Valluvar also reveals a few other qualities that are desirable for a king to have, if he were to excel as a ruler. Even without these desirable qualities, one could be a king. But, these qualities would help him to become an outstanding ruler. Although this advice is general and applicable to everyone, in view of the importance of the responsibilities of the kings and leaders, the quality of “never giving up” or tenacity is more relevant to them.

Persistence

arumai udaiththendru asaavaamai vaeNdum

perumai muaRchi tharum (Kural 611)

Say not, 'Tis hard', in weak, desponding hour, For strenuous effort gives prevailing power.

No manly personality will be put off by the apparently mighty dimensions of the job facing him, Planned and persistent efforts will surely lead to success. When a task seems impossible, do not be disheartened. Persistent efforts will help you to achieve greatness.

vinaikkaN vinaiketal Ompal vinaikkuRai

theerndhaar in theerndhandru ulagu (Kural 612)

In action be thou, 'ware of act's defeat ;

The world leaves those who work leave incomplete !

Never give up tasks; the world abandons deserters. According to Valluvar, one should not become disheartened and give up persistent effort because the task at hand is daunting.

Adversity

idukkaN varungaal nakuka adhanai

atuththoorvadhu aqdhoppa thil (Kural 621)

If you encounter adversities, laugh at them. There is nothing like that to overcome them.

In order to act with determination and courage, Valluvar suggests that one should laugh at the adversity because that is the best way to overcome them

Speech

Insolaaleethalikkavallarkuththunsolaal

Thaankandanaithivvulagu. (Kural 387)

With pleasant speech, who gives and guards with powerful liberal hand, He sees the world obedient all to his command

Thirukkural suggests that those who are capable of magnanimously rewarding by pleasant-talks(nice-talks) shall see the whole world at his words. This couplet emphasizes the importance of communication skills of the leaders in governance besides his behavioral aspects.

Brilliance

kodaiyaLi sengoal kudiyoampal naankum

udaiyaanaam vaendhark koLi (Kural 390)

Gifts, grace, right sceptre, care of people's weal ;

These four a light of dreaded kings reveal.

Thirukkural defines the factors (or causes) of brilliance of leadership. Brilliance of leadership is simply possessing these four namely the trait of rewarding, giving grants, good governance and care for the welfare of the people.

## Employee

seyvaanai naati vinainhaatik kaalaththoatu  
eydha uNarndhu seyal

Let king first ask, 'Who shall the deed perform ?' and 'What the deed ?'

Of hour befitting both assured, let every work proceed.

Let (a king) act, after having considered the agent (whom he is to employ), the deed (he desires to do), and the time which is suitable to it.

## Ethics

Aran ilukkaadhuallavaineekkimaranilukka

Maanamudaiyadhyuarasu. (Kural-384)

Kingship, in virtue failing not, all vice restrains, In courage failing not, it honour's grace maintains To Thirukkural governance is just ethical behavior, devoid of all unethical ones, in high esteem. This implies that unethical behavior by the leaders is not governance but something else altogether. This couplet emphasizes the behavioral aspect of the leader and the ethical aspects of the behavior as well.

## Criticism

itippaarai illaadha Emaraa mannan

ketuppaa rilaanunG kedum (Kural 448)

A king without the courageous counselors who can rebuke him will destroy himself even if there is no enemy to destroy him

Kings and leaders are usually surrounded by sycophants who shower false praises and rarely offer any criticism. But, listening to the sycophants and ignoring those who dare to criticize is detrimental to a king or a leader. Valluvar considers that it is very important for a king to listen to his advisors who are bold enough to offer bitter criticism.

## Self-Control

seRivaRindhu seermai payakkum aRivaRindhu

aattrin adangap peRin (Kural 123)

If one exercises self-restraint with knowledge and intent,

He will gain distinction among the wise.

Knowing that self-control is knowledge, if a man should control himself, in the prescribed course, such self-control will bring him distinction among the wise. For all learning and wealth one is expected to be controlled and guarded in his speech and temper. Knowing the wisdom of such a line of action, if one practices self-control in respect of thought, word and deed, he will certainly come to be counted among the good people of the world.

## Pure Mind

Without a pure mind other accomplishments are brought to naught. Hence Valluvar expects leaders to have a pure mind. How does a man become good? By keeping his mind pure, says Valluvar.

manaththukkaN maasilan aadhal anaiththaRan

aakula neera piRa (Kural 34)

Spotless be thou in mind! This only merits virtue's name ;

All else, mere pomp of idle sound, no real worth can claim

Let him who does virtuous deeds be of spotless mind; to that extent is virtue ; all else is vain show

## Time management

It is elucidated in depth later. Suffice here to know that Valluvar insists on doing things promptly. andraRivaam ennaadhu aRanjeyka matradhu pondrunaal pondraath thunai (Kural 36) Do deeds of virtue now Say not, 'To-morrow we'll be wise' ; Thus, when thou diest, shalt thou find a help that never dies Do not postpone virtuous deeds, as these alone will befriend you to the full, until, you die and even afterwards.



### Health

It is more important for every human being. The dietary control will help leaders on their extensive commitments and selfless dedication for themselves to the society. It may be difficult for them to follow all kinds of food that may be required by them to eat. It is more appropriate to quote the old saying "Food Is Medicine", "Health is Wealth", in the words of Valluvar, marundhena vaenTaavaam yaakkaikku arundhiyadhu

atradhu poatri uNin (Kural 942)

No need of medicine to heal your body's pain,

If, what you ate before digested well, you eat again.

No medicine is necessary for him who eats after assuring (himself) that what he has (already) eaten has been digested.

### Personality

It is not external appearance but what one is within. What counts is not physical appearance, but giving up what is despicable by people.

mazhiththalum neettalum vaenDaa ulagam

pazhiththadhu ozhiththu vitin (Kural 280)

What's the worth of shaven head or tresses long. If you shun what all the world condemns as wrong?

There is no need of a shaven crown, nor of tangled hair, if a man abstain from those deeds which the wise have condemned.

vaanuyar thoatram evanseyyum thannenjam

thaanaRi kutrap patin (Kural 272)

What gain, though virtue's semblance high as heaven his fame exalt, If heart dies down through sense of self-detected fault ?

What does a tall image count, if one's heart pins him guilty ? What avails an appearance (of sanctity) high as heaven, if his mind suffers (the indulgence) of conscious sin.

### Truthfulness

thannenhj saRivadhu poiyaRka poiththapin

thannhenjae thannaich sudum (Kural 293)

"Don't go against your conscience. If you do, it would scorch you."

Speak not a word which false thy own heart knows, Self-kindled fire within the false one's spirit glows.

Let not a man knowingly tell a lie; for after he has told the lie, his mind will burn him (with the memory of his guilt).

### Never be unjust

The subsequent chapters, Unjust Rule and Tyranny prescribe the don'ts for rulers/leaders. The negative qualities that a ruler should eschew are listed. Valluvar is categorical in this regard.

naatoRum naati muRaiseyyaa mannavan

naatoRum nhaadu kaedum (Kural 553)

Who makes no daily search for wrongs, nor justly rules, that king

Doth day by day his realm to ruin bring.

The country of the king who does not daily examine into the wrongs done and distribute justice, will daily fall to ruin

The communication quotient of leadership - The Word is the wand

Word expresses the thought and justifies the deed. Even as the Thought, the Word matters - the written word, the spoken word and the unspoken word. In management lingo the world of words is called Communication. What Valluvar says on communication deserves a separate paper. Nevertheless, communication is taken up here just as a leadership quotient.

### Expressions

Erudition is reflected in one's expressions.

NiRaimozhi maandhar perumai nilaththu maRaimozhi kaatti vidum (Kural 28)

The might of men whose word is never vain, The 'secret word' shall to the earth proclaim  
The hidden words of the men whose words are full of effect, will shew their greatness to the world.  
Valluvar identifies an important quotient of leadership here - the speech. As he opens his mouth, the leader reveals himself (This factor is covered at length in Chapter 10 Speaking Pleasantly and Chapter 65 Eloquence).

Be sweet-tongued

iniya uLavaaka innaadha kooRal

kani-iruppak kaaikavarnh thatru (Kural )

When pleasant words are easy, bitter words to use,

Is, leaving sweet ripe fruit, the sour unripe to choose

To say disagreeable things when agreeable are at hand is like eating unripe fruit when there is ripe. Leaders who meticulously follow these norms would be cherished. On the other hand, foul-mouthed leaders breathing fire would be breaching etiquette. (That the foul-mouthed cannot be taken as leaders is a different thing.) The one with sweet speech can always have his way; he will not fall a prey to wiles and vilifications. As warm looks matter in hospitality, kind words count in interactions. Valluvar elucidates it here. In Pleasant Speech, Each couplet presents an important aspect.

Be eloquent

solluka sollaip piRidhoarsol achchollai

vellunjol inmai aRindhu (Kural 645)

Speak out your speech, when once 'tis past dispute

That none can utter speech that shall your speech refute.

Deliver your speech, after assuring yourself that no counter speech can defeat your own.

All good speakers are not good leaders; but all good leaders are invariably good speakers. They have got to be, if they want to succeed.

Judge the audience

avaiyaRinhadhu aaraaindhu solluka sollin

thokaiyaRindha thooimai yavar (Kural 711)

Men pure in heart, who know of words the varied force,

Should to their audience known adapt their well-arranged discourse.

Let the pure who know the arrangement of words speak with deliberation after ascertaining (the nature of) the court (then assembled). Speakers matter, say those who get up functions, whereas speakers say, the members of the audience matter. Yet speakers should judge the audience before waxing their eloquence.

Don't dismay the audience

katraarmun katra selachchollith thaamkatra

mikkaarul mikka koLal (Kural 724)

What you have learned, in penetrating words speak out before

The learn'd; but learn what men more learn'd can teach you more.

(Ministers) should agreeably set forth their acquirements before the learned and acquire more (knowledge) from their superiors (in learning). Indications are given here to those on the top echelons and those who want to reach there. Always bogged down with the burden of presentations and group discussions, they can take cues from Kural. Experts of this sort become leaders, commanding claps; the rest remain just clapping hands.

Scan the information and respond

epporuL eththanmaith thaayinum apporuL

meyporuL kaaNpadhu aRivu (Kural 355)

Whatever thing, of whatsoever kind it be,

'Tis wisdom's part in each the very thing to see.

The knowledge is the perception concerning everything of whatever kind, that that thing is the true thing. Having acted upon false, prejudiced and want only distorted information one might regret his responses. They say they got misled. Would it not be wise to rate the veracity of information, whatever it was, and then respond? The information flow in any office is tremendous these days. Those holding responsive positions have to act on that flow, judging the veracity of every bit of information. Judgement is important in responding to information received from even the highly placed sources.

Be a Devoted listener

Listening presents a vital component of leadership. Most commentators hold that Listening, as wealth through the ear, is an additional source of learning, besides the formal one. So it is; but not just that. Taking listening as a substitute for learning or a supplementary epistemological source is a limited reading of Kural 'sintent. Involved and sympathetic listening educates even the learned. It makes them stay tuned. Patient hearing makes one affable. The capacity to listen to others, whoever they be, whatever be the circumstances, is an asset for leaders. Leadership experts lay emphasis on this. That is why Valluvar opens this episode with the assertion:

selvaththut selvanj sevichselvam achselvam

selvaththu Lellaanh thalai (Kural 411)

Wealth of wealth is wealth acquired be ear attent;

Wealth mid all wealth supremely excellent.

Wealth (gained) by the ear is wealth of wealth; that wealth is the chief of all wealth. The most precious wealth is the one through the ear. This couplet means that one can eat, provided he has no work for his ear. It could be said that even one is hungry, ready to take his food, he should listen to others, if they come to tell him something. A leader should not give inkling that he is hungry and that he would not listen. He should be willing to listen to anybody anytime, without getting irritated.

seviyiR suvaiyuNaraa vaayuNarvin maakkaL

aviyinum vaazhinum en (Kural 420)

His mouth can taste, but ear no taste of joy can give!

What matter if he die, or prosperous live ?

What does it matter whether those men live or die, who can judge of tastes by the mouth, and not by the ear? Thoughts and words are no stand-alone components; they contribute to deeds.

Influenced by thoughts and words the deeds gain fame or notoriety. One should be cautious in deeds, more so the leaders and leader aspirants.

## CONCLUSION

The thematic unity is that a good man makes a good leader. Thirukkural not only presents a concept of leadership but also suggests that, perhaps there are some born leaders but leaders can also be made ! Besides, this concept is also consistent with traits theory of leadership, behavioral theory of leadership, social cognitive resource theory of leadership and ethical theory of leadership of the modern times as well! Efficiency of an organization, be it a company at a micro level or a country at a macro level, is primarily determined by the efficiency of the resources such as raw materials, machines, buildings, policies, capital, etc. (Chendroyaperumal, 2007.) The competence of these means depend on the efficiency of additional factor namely Human Resource. However, the efficiency of all resources including human resource is determined by the quality of the leadership. Various scholars have studied leadership over time and thus various concepts of leadership exist today. India had produced brilliant leaders in her history that the mankind would find it difficult even to believe that such people walked on this earth. A few examples are namely Lord Buddha, Mahavir, Gurunanak, Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi, etc

Thirukkural represents a part of the wisdom on Management. The leadership qualities recognized by the Thirukkural are: never failing, daring, courage, magnanimity, intelligence, enthusiasm (382), promptness, education, decisiveness and bravery (Kural-383), pride of ethical behaviour Kural-384), magnanimity, nice-talk (Kural-387), justness, impartiality, mercilessness (in disciplining) (Kural-388),

tolerance (Kural-389); Thirukkural also identified the following behaviour of leaders : ethical behaviour, avoiding unethical behaviour (concern for the people) (Kural-386), rewarding, nice-talk (people oriented) (Kural-387), protecting the followers (Kural-388), rewarding, giving grants, good governance, care for the welfare of the people (concern for the people and orientation towards the people) (Kural-390). Thirukkural is fully consistent and agreeable to the Ethical Theory of Leadership. Thirukkural even goes to the extent of defining leadership behaviour as ethical behaviour only. Thirukkural has also recognized that the leader is only one of the causes for the effectiveness of the leadership and that there are four factors namely rewarding, giving grants, good governance (management) and care for the welfare of the people. Thus Thirukkural advocates the social cognitive theory of leadership as well.

In fact the leadership is not a position, it is the responsibility of directing successfully an organisation towards the fixed goals. A potential leader has the critical responsibility of doing right things and making others to do those things right. A leader should do right things. Make others to do the right things. A leader should be courageous. During the tough times, he has to make solid decisions, he cannot be soft peddling, and he has to handle the situation bravely. He needs moral and physical courage to face the unexpected failures. In those days kings met enemies face to face in war fields, to-day it is the mental battle in making crucial decisions. Bravery is a must, whether it is for physical or mental deed. A leader should be generous or considerate towards his subordinates, it should be kept in mind, if right persons are not rewarded at appropriate time, they will become demoralized. A leader should handle the work related worries of workers with care and concern. A leader should be generous while sanctioning compensations and merciful while granting remissions. A leader should be knowledgeable, he should be intelligent enough to weigh the pros and cons of issues by using the reasoning, reflection and foresight. He should come out with corrective measures to resolve the issues. A leader should have power to motivate others, in case of most critical time, he has to motivate himself by using auto suggestions. He should not expect his subordinates to motivate him in critical times. A leader should be always alert, it is an inevitable ingredient in an effective leadership. Mental alertness and physical vitality will help to plug certain organisational loop holes.

The political, social, economic, scientific and technological developments that have occurred during the past two millennia have completely reshaped the world. For example, in many countries monarchies have disappeared giving room to democracies; theocracies have been replaced by secular governments. The societal values have changed considerably. People recognize the need for the elimination of discrimination of all kinds based on caste, race, language, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin etc. Such a Utopia may never exist, but people are at least thinking on those lines. In the case of the economy, the modern day trade, commerce and world - wide markets are a long way from the rural economy based on a barter system of the past. Science and technology have been constantly evolving and reaching new heights which could not have been even by imagined by our forefathers. In spite of these evolutionary and revolutionary changes undergone by the world during the past two thousand years, Valluvar's ideas are still valid and are valuable even today. Valluvar's ideas on leadership are examples of his ageless wisdom and its universal and eternal applicability.

Who did Tiruvalluvar, the author of Tirukkural ; have in mind when he wrote the Kural ? The king ? The minister ? The citizen ? The lad ? The lass ? The wife ? The husband ? The mother ? The father ? The son ? The teacher ? The pupil ? The thief ? The spy ? The addict ? The gambler ? The saint ? » He keeps in mind almost all those who form the society. As Prof K. Kunjunni Raja observes, "The emphasis is on the individual rather than on society."

As acknowledged by scholars, Thirukkural is an extraordinary work on the art of living, delving deep into the unshifting foundations of human nature. We can find the quintessence of the best gems of thought in Kural, a living ethic of love and liberation. It will remain and can never die. Request all of you to try and practice the principles of Thirukkural in the day-to-day life, grasp the positive vibrations and accomplish the human life thoroughly.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aiyar, V.V. S. Thirukkural. Sri Ramakrishna Thapovanam, Tiruparaithurai, Tirucirapalli District, India: 2001.

Aiyangar, Krishnaswamy Essays on the Early History of South India, London 1911.

Smith, Vincent A, Oxford History of India, Oxford, 1924.

Bharati, Dr. Shuddhananda, Saint Valluvar, Thirukkural with English couplets, ASSA Editions, Grand Rue 180, 1454 L'Auberson – Suisse.

Chendroyaperumal, Chendrayan and Meena, M. Archana, Indian Theory of Leadership from Thirukkural (March 30, 2007). Available at SSRN: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1334703> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1334703>

Covey, Stephen R. Principle – Centered Leadership. Simon and Schuster, London; 1991

Diaz, S.M. Thirukkural. Volumes 1 &2. Ramanandha Adigalar Foundation, Chennai: 2008.

Drew, W.H., Lazarus, John, Rev. Thirukkural – English Translation. Asian Educational services, Madras (Chennai): 1996.

Drucker, Peter F. the Essential Drucker, HarperCollins Publishers, New York, NY: 2001

Gulshan SS, Devesh Bhikshu The Mahabharata and Management (New Delhi, Sultan Chand, 2004) P. 8

Harvard Business Review. HBR's 10 Must reads on Leadership. Harvard Business School Publishing Corporation, Boston, Massachusetts 02163; 2011

Hrishikesh, MP and Saravanan K, Project Planning Excerpts from Tamil Classical Literature Thirukkural, International Journal of Emerging Research in Management & Technology ISSN: 2278-9359 (Volume-2, Issue-10)

Iyengar, Sessa TR, Dravidian India, An account of the Tamils of the Early ages drawn from Literature and Epigraphy. Madras, 1925.

Iyengar, Srinivas, P.T., History of the Tamils- from the earliest times to 600 AD, Madras, 1929.

Iraianban, Swamiji, Ambrosia of Thirukkural, Abhinav Publications, New Delhi, 1997.

Krames, Jeffrey A. Jack Welch and the 4E's of leadership, The McGraw Hill Companies, 2005  
Maxwell, John C. The 21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader. Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, Tennessee. 1999

Muniapan, Balakrishnan, Rajantheran M, Ethics (business ethics) from the Thirukkural and its relevance for contemporary business leadership in the Indian context, International Journal of Indian Culture and Business Management, Vol. 4, No. 4, 2011

Naachimuthu K P , Kalaiselvan K, MANAGEMENT LESSONS FROM THIRUKKURAL, International Journal of Management and Business Strategy, Vol. 1, No. 1, October 2012.

Nambi, Agamudai, K.C. Thirukkural (With English verses). K.C. Agamudai Nambi, Madurai, 2004.

Narayanasamy, J. (2010). Thirukkural. Transliteration and Translation. Chennai: Sura Pathippagam.



Natarajan, R, Leadership as propounded in Tirukkural and the Mahabharata, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, 2005, P. 38-53

[http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/61752/8/08\\_chapter%202.pdf](http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/61752/8/08_chapter%202.pdf)

Popley, H.A, The Sacred Kural or The Tamil Veda of Tiruvalluvar, selected and translated with Introduction and Notes, Oxford University Press, Calcutta, 1931.

Raj, John Felix, s.j. (n.d.), Thiruvalluvar. His economic ideas & their relevance today. The Goethals Indian Library and Research Society. Retrieved on June 16, 2014 from <http://www.goethals.in/collections/felixrajarticles/thiruvalluvar.htm>

Rev Dr G U Pope, Rev W H Drew, Rev John Lazarus and Mr F W Ellis , TIRUKKURAL English Translation and Commentary, The South India Saiva Siddhantha Works Publishing Society, Tinnevely, Madras, India , 1982.

Sharma G.D Management and the Indian Ethos (New Delhi, Rupa, 2001) P.55

Subrahmanian. N and R. Rajalakshmi The Concordance of Tirukkural (Madurai, Ennes Publications, 1984)

Sundara Srinivasan "Thirukkural and Modern Management"—2001 Minerva Press S. Sundara Srinivasan-P9.

Siromoney, Gift – et al – Thirukkural in Ancient Scripts, Department of Statistics, Madras Christian College, The Diocesan Press, Madras, 1980.

Srinivasan, V. New Age Management Philosophy from Ancient Wisdom. The Lotus Collection, An Imprint of Roli Books Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi 110048: 2006

Venkatachalam, M.S. Socio-Political Philosophy of Thiruvalluvar. Homeland Publications, Tiruchy: 2005.

Vylder, Gerrit De, (et al) Kautilya versus Thiruvalluvar. Inspiration from Indian Ancient Classics for Ethics in Governance and Management

<https://lirias.kuleuven.be/bitstream/123456789/484911/2/thiruvalluvar-kautilya-mulla-de-vylder-2.pdf>