CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION
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That the philosophy of Tirukkural transcends both time and space and that it has got an universal appeal is a common-chord frequently touched by all students of Valluvar from the time of the scholars of 'Tiruvalluva Malai' down to this day. The stanza standing in the name of Nakkirar\(^1\) claims some sort of revealed knowledge for Valluvar. Dr. V.Sp. Manickam,\(^2\) Vice-Chancellor of Madurai University, holds the view that Kural is the original work of a saint who has attained knowledge supreme. Indeed, this school of thought classifies Kural as a 'Mutal_Nool', the Tamil concept of an original work and its author\(^3\) 'Vimaliyin Ningi Vilangiya arivan'.

Another set of scholars, both ancient and modern, are inclined to view Kural as the essence of Sanskrit Vēdās.\(^4\) Gōyalar Kodun Chekkañnanar\(^4\) opined that Kural has thrown light upon the meaning of Vēdās and hence it contains everything that could be thought of. In a similar view, "Vannakkañ Cāttanār"\(^5\) claims parity for Tamil with Sanskrit as there is Kural in Tamil. However, Vellī Veṭṭiar\(^6\) has compared Kural with the Sanskrit Vedas and has brought out the distinguishing feature that Kural applied to all sections of society while the Vēdās are confined in its application
only to Brahmins. Couthamanär\textsuperscript{7} compares Kural with Vēdās from a different angle and asserts that Kural does not lose its lustre even though reduced to writing whereas Sanskrit scholars thought that Vēdās will lose their force if reduced to writing. In modern times, S. Vaiyapuri Pillai\textsuperscript{8} drew the attention of the learned world to the parallelisms between Kural and Sanskrit Sāstrās and concluded that Valluvar must be indebted to Dharma, Artha, Kama Sāstrās of Sanskrit.

However, no significant attempt has been made to compare the classical Tamil traditions with the philosophy of Kural and to bring out the similarities and variations. Dr. M. Varādaranar\textsuperscript{9} in his essay on 'Puratoi' (Revolution) has rightly pointed out that it would be naive to presume that Valluvar either ignored or forgot the Tamil literary tradition. Much ingenuity has been spent on tracing the influence of Kural in later Tamil works, whereas no serious attempt has yet been made to trace the influence of Tamil tradition in the philosophy of Kural. The scope of the present thesis is to examine Kural in the light of ancient Tamil traditions as found in Tolkāppiyam, Pattu-pañṭu and Etṭu-t-tokai, to discover and reveal the cultural heritage of the ancient Tamils underlying the thought of Kural. We consider this to be the prime need in Kural.
research and if this has been done previously, the tendency to derive everything from Sanskrit sources would have been curbed. Arasu. Narayanasamy Naidu has rightly pointed out in his essay in Kural Malar that the sources of Valluvar are to be found in Tamil Literature itself.

Nevertheless, there is an element of truth in other schools of thought also. The view that Kural contains revealed knowledge underlines the fact that there is much original thought in Kural. This originality when exaggerated becomes divinity itself which is beyond the scope of this research work.

There is also much truth in the Sanskrit school of thought - there ought to have been an ever-increasing exchange of ideas between Sanskrit and Tamil. This could not have been an one-way-traffic from Sanskrit to Tamil only and not vice versa, as pointed out by Dr. Caldwell in his monumental work "Comparative Grammar of Dravidian Languages". It would be unscientific to presume as S. Vaiyapuri Pillai did that whenever there is a parallel thought in Sanskrit Sāstrās it should have been borrowed by Valluvar. The reverse could be equally true. It would not be derogatory to hold that Valluvar must have been aware of the Sanskrit
works extant at his time. ParimŚalagar\textsuperscript{12} frequently points out the instances wherein Valluvar made conscious deviations from the Sanskrit traditions. There is no evidence to suggest that Valluvar knew Sanskrit - as an intellectual, he should have learnt about its treasures from his contemporary Sanskrit scholars. It is all the more natural that his thoughts must be deeply rooted in Tamil culture.

\textbf{Culture and Civilization}

Will Durant\textsuperscript{13} in his monumental work on 'Our Oriental Heritage' has remarked that 'civilization is social order promoting cultural creation. Four elements constitute it: economic provision, moral traditions and the pursuit of knowledge and the arts'. Geographical and economic conditions support the formation of culture and the absence of such conditions lead to the destruction of civilization.

Dr. S.R. Krishnamurthy\textsuperscript{14} in his thesis "Study on the cultural developments of the Čola period", avers that 'culture is no more and no less than the art of living an enlightened life and the actual and joyous fulfilment of the daily responsibilities to one-self,
one's family and country in the right spirit and the correct perspective.

Matthew Arnold has described culture as the art of acquainting ourselves with the past that has been known and said in the world and thus in a way with the human spirit. The fundamental basis of culture is a healthy and harmonious blend of the influences of nature, art, literature as well as of life. The root of culture is an attitude of the heart that gives a direction to the mind. All that contributes to the refinement of human life is directly concerned with culture.

Arnold Toynbee in his 'Study of History' has stated that 'I have already adopted P. Bagby's definition of culture as being' regularities in the behaviour, internal and external, of the members of a society, excluding those regularities which are clearly hereditary in origin. Further defining civilization, Toynbee opines that 'perhaps it might be defined as an endeavour to create a state of society in which the whole of mankind will be able to live together in harmony as members of a single all-inclusive family'.

A document of UNESCO on 'Inter-relations of cultures' has brought out the relationship between culture
and civilization as follows: 'The concept 'culture' in relation to civilization may be re-stated as follows: civilization is best comprehended as the outward manifestation of the condition of society in moral and political, social and economic, religious and aesthetic spheres; while culture denotes the inward refinement of the mind and spirit of man in a given social order'.

As one thinks more and more of this definition of culture as 'the inward refinement of the mind and spirit of man', one is convinced that this will be apt in its application to the thought of Kupal.

East and the West

For a long time, it was thought that everything remarkable in human culture and civilization originated from Greece and Rome. The Hellenic Heritage was for a long time presumed to be the home of human culture. The West looked down upon the East as inferior in culture. Soon the romances of archaeology revealed the glorious East in all its splendour. Excavations unveiled astonishingly ancient sites in Mesopotamia, Egypt and Mohanjo-Daro.

The fact that Greece was much indebted to Sumeria became evident. 'History, said Bacon, 13 is the planks of
a ship-wreck; more of the past is lost than has been saved'. The Polynesian civilization has been lost to us; the story of the lost continent of Sumeria is equally poignant.

According to Will Durant,19 'As the spades of archeology, after a century of victorious enquiry along the Nile, pass across Suez into Arabia, Palestine, Mesoopotamia and Persia, it becomes more probable with every year of accumulating research that it was the rich Delta of Mesoopotamia's rivers that saw the earliest known scenes in the historic Drama of civilization'.

Among others, Father Heras20 held the view that Tamil Nadu and its lost continent of 'Kamari' or Lemuria was the cradle of human civilization. In his "Proto-Indo-Dravidian-Mediterranean culture", he has propounded the theory that culture has spread to all the continents of the world from the lost continent of Lemuria. Although opinion has not settled down to the full acceptance of this theory, there is growing realisation that the theory of the lost continent is nearer the truth than any.

The East has often been described as unchanging, while the West is considered as dynamic, capable of immense
flexibility to keep pace with the changing needs of the time. The Eastern culture is mainly spoken as one of negation and the West credited with a positive attitude of life.

The foregoing impressions have been gaining ground as adequate attention has not been paid to the place of Kural in human thought and culture. The classical age of the Tamils had a war-like society as its basis. It had very often aggressive postures, let alone positive attitudes. It shall be our endeavour to throw light on the main-springs of Tamil culture underlying the philosophy.

What happened in human history is that the East has lost its leadership to the West. The industrious powers of the West are dominating the world. By its inaction and lethargy, the East has lagged far behind in economic and social growth. The most affluent nations of the world are western, with the lone exception of Japan. The East remains poor and underdeveloped.

However, there is a sense of awakening in the East and a sense of depression in the West. The East must quickly get the benefits of modern industry and science; and the intense materialism of the West must be evenly
tempered with the spiritualism of the East. But the spiritualism of the East should not be allowed to tamper with the progress of science and industry. Nor the spirit of the East be allowed to be choked with the materialism of the West.

Indeed, the East has much to learn from the West - the survival of human civilization depends upon a judicious blending of the East and the West.

Richard Mekeon²¹ of the University of Chicago has said well: 'The present juxtaposition of philosophies in the juxtaposition of cultures and the pressing importance of the practical consequences of philosophic differences in the ideological conflict concerning the relations of nations and cultures, has set problems for philosophers which may illuminate the relation between their respective methods of performing the proper tasks of philosophy'.

It is in this conflict of cultures that the message of Kural will help us to extricate ourselves from the growing tension in human relations.

The East is the home of almost all religious movements of the world - Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Confucianism, Buddhism and Jainism.
It had been the land of the sages, prophets and philosophers whose teachings spread far and wide to all the corners of the world. It is religion which has transformed the selfish and avaricious creature that man was into a selfless and noble worker. Realising the dangers inherent in a denominational creed, Tiruvalluvar has risen above religion and speaks to all mankind with a message for a noble social order without poverty and exploitation.

**Tamil concept of culture**

The words denoting culture in Tamil are the following, 'panpu', 'panpudaimai' and 'panpādu'. 'Panpu' has been defined as, 

'Panpēnāp paduvatu padarig toḻugal'  

Individual culture or personal refinement of the mind consists in conforming one-self to the nature and conduct of others. Kural has a chapter on 'Panpudaimai' which is interpreted by Parimōḷalagar as that quality of mind which does not deviate from gentlemanliness and dignity and as that mode of conduct that is unison with the nature of all sorts of persons. A flexible and adaptable mind is stressed. Tiruvalluvar himself has not defined 'Panpudaimai', but has enumerated certain qualities that go to the making of it. A flexible nature
in dealing with every other human being with whom we come into contact leads to mental culture and refinement of manners. Further kindness to all and a good family environment pave the way for a cultured mind.

Kural extols the nobility of cultured people but for whom this world would have ceased to exist. There is a striking parallelism in 'Puranānūru' in the stanza beginning with 'Undāl Amma'.\(^{25}\) Pāndiyān Kadalūr Māṅga Ilamparuvallūtā shares his thoughts with us. The memorable poem can be summarised as follows:

'If at all this world deserves to exist it is because of the fact that cultured gentleman continue to live with us in this wretched world. Even if the celestial nectar is to be given to them, they won't drink it alone - i.e., they would like to share it with their brethren. Eschewing anger and laziness, they are afraid of committing sins. For the sake of fame, they will willingly lay down their lives. If it will lead to infamy, they will not accept, even this world as gift. Steeped in such high traditions, they do not live for themselves alone but for others'.

Kural must have derived its inspiration from this noble poem which is a shining example of the Tamil.
traditions. Of course, scholars like Dr. M. Rajeswara
hold the view that Kural is anterior in time to all 'Tokai
Nool' and that Poets of 'Puranānūru' expounded the thoughts
of Kural. However, it may be humbly pointed out that
here in this particular stanza, Pandyan Kadalul Mayanta
Illamperuvalutti speaks of concrete people in flesh and
blood and not of abstract principles as laid down in Kural.
One of the cardinal principles of psychology is that human
thought progresses from the concrete to the abstract and
not vice versa. Kural might have given shape to abstract
principles in its neat couplets at a later stage. The
essence of Tamil culture is selfless service to humanity —
'Tanakkena Vaḻap pirarkkēna vaḻunar'.

In modern times, the word 'panpādu' has been
coined to denote the culture of a country. The verbal root
of the word is 'panpaduttal' or 'refined nature'.
In this context, it is apt to recall what that eminent
historian Will Durant has to say about the origin of the
words 'culture' and 'civilization'.

Culture suggests agriculture, but civilization
suggests the city. The first form of culture is agriculture.
Civilization begins in the peasant's hut but it comes to
flower only in the town.
The corresponding Tamil words 'paapadu' and 'Nākarikam' bear close resemblance to the roots of 'culture' and 'civilization'. The verbal root of 'paapadu' is 'paapaduttaal' which means 'cultivation of land' and has now come to indicate 'cultivation of the mind'. Similarly the word 'Nākarikam' is derived from the word 'Nagar' which means Town.

The catholicity of outlook, symbolised in the renowned line of 'Puranānum',

"Yātum ūrē yāvarum Kōlir,"\(^{29}\)

All the world is mine and all are our kith and kin is part and parcel of Tamil culture. The elegant prose writer and the renowned Tamil scholar Thiru V. Kalyanasundaram Mudaliar\(^{30}\) has stated that the universal philosophy of Valluvar has its origin in ancient Tamil Tradition. He even goes so far as to see its impact in Marxism and Ghandism.

The cosmopolitan nature of Tamil culture is also well illustrated by 'Pattinappālai'\(^{31}\) in its description of the port city of Kavēripoompāttinam as a place where many languages are spoken. The maritime commerce of the Tamils was conducted with such variety that men from all corners of the world were stationed in Kavēripoompāttinam.
This maritime commerce of the Tamils must have broadened the vision of the Tamils and made them look beyond their borders. And it is this broad vision which must have animated Valluvar in his Kural.

A detailed examination of the various aspects of Tamil culture enshrined in the philosophy of Tiruvalluvar will be attempted in the following pages and our findings will be summed up in the concluding chapter.

The Age of Tiruvalluvar

The divergent schools of thought on the Age of Tiruvalluvar could be summed up as follows:

1. That it preceded the extant Canon works, 'Pattu-pāṭṭu' and 'Etṭu-t-togai' and may be assigned to Third or Fourth century B.C. The versatile scholar K. Appaduraiyār holds the view that it is a Pre-Tolkappian work and the original wave of human culture is to be found in Kural.

2. That it stands between the twin epics of Cilappatikāram and Manimākalai on the one hand and the 'Togai Nool' on the other.

3. That it is the product of a Jain saint who lived in 600 A.D.
Many grammatical points prevent us from subscribing to the view that Kural is a Pre-Tolkappiyam work. This has been adequately explained Dr. A. Damodaran in his 'Tirukkural Mörköl Vilakkam'. On linguistic analysis, it appears certain that the language of Kural is more related to that of Cilappatikāram and Manimūkalai rather than 'Pattu-p-pattu' and 'Bṭtu-t-togal'.

Those who hold the view that Kural preceded Togai Nool cite the lines of 'Puranānāra' in support of their claim:

'Seiti Konvorkku Uyti Illena
Aram Patire Ayilai Kanava'34

It is nothing but a presumption that the reference here to 'Aram' means Kural. It may well be some other work which is not available now. Further, the crimes listed in this stanza - cutting the nipples of a cow, causing abortion of women, doing wrong to elders - are referred to in Kural nowhere.

The assumption of Thiru S. Veiyapuri Pillai35 is equally far-fetched in characterising Valluvar as a Jain saint who lived in 600 A.D. Among others, Thiru N. Murugesan Mudaliar36 in Srimatha Swarnambal Endowment lectures, and Prof. M. Arokiasamy37 in his work on 'the
classical Age of the Tamils' have rebutted the theory of Vaiyapuri Pillai. The latter has characterised Mr. Pillai's opinion as 'juvenile', while the former has demolished the basis of his opinion by a careful comparison of the conception of 'polity in Kural' with that of Kautilya in 'Artha Sastra' in Sanskrit.

The view that is more acceptable on literary, linguistic and historical grounds is that Kural was written towards the close of the classical age which need not necessarily be confined to the first three centuries of the Christian Era but may be extended to the three centuries preceding the birth of Christ.

Dr. M. Sundaram in his unpublished thesis on Historical material in Caṅgam Literature has arrived at the conclusion that the age of Caṅgam may be fixed as ranging from about B.C. 400 to A.D. 300.

The widely accepted date of Valluvar is 31 B.C.; opinion has almost settled down to accept the date fixed by the redoubtable scholar Maraimalai Adigal Valluvar Era as enumerated by the Saiva Siddantha Publishing Society is also based on it. This has also gained currency in public as well as in Government circles. And it is but natural to assume that Kural, being the work of
a life time, may be safely assigned to the first half of the first century A.D.

It is quite germane to recall here that Tolkāppiam was written at the end of an epoch when Nilam Tam Tiruvir Pāndiyān conquered Himalayas and Ganges to offset the loss of 'Kumari' and Pahruli in the South. There is every reason to believe that Kural was written not at the height of the glory of the Gaṅgam Age but at the close of it. Perhaps, Tiruvalluvar wanted to be a Mentor of Tamil Nadu first and addressed himself to the world at large.

Dr. Kailasapathi\(^4\) thinks that Tiruvalluvar's conception of a country indicates the dominating

\[ \text{'Nami neerum Maññum Malaiyum Añinilar'} \]

\[ \text{Kadum udaya tarañ'} \]

is derived from 'Velir ātci', i.e. feudal chieftainship, where the mountains, forests, and \textit{moats} were regarded as adequate fortification. Towards the close of the Gaṅgam Age, the crowned kings of Tamil Nadu have ceased to exercise dominant power over the petty chieftains. This state of affairs could be easily inferred from

\[ \text{'Palkuluyum pal-ceyyum utpakaiyum vendalaikkum'} \]

\[ \text{Kol Karumbum Illatu Nadu'} \]
Internal strifes and multiplicity of power seekers have weakened the political fabric of Tamil Nadu; and there is also a reference to marauding intruders.

Tiruvalluvar's silence about Tamil kings and chieftains is deliberate as he aimed at the universal application of his ideals. Throughout his work, he is more concerned with the abstract ideas rather than with any concrete entities. When all was not well within the political structure of Tamil Nadu, Tiruvalluvar was quick to realise the seeds of disintegration that has crept into the culture and civilisation of the Tamils. In order to avert the calamity of its disintegration, he codified the laws of the land.

Valluvar ought to have studied all the Tamil works existing at his time. 'Noolōr Toguttavarrul Ellām Talai' refers to the system of values found in various scholarly works. This reference clearly indicates the erudition of Tiruvalluvar. He might have also been aware of the stream of thought contained in Sanskrit works of his age. In the true tradition of Telgappian, after assimilating the thought and philosophy, he thought systematically,

'Mantu Nool Kandu Muraippada enni.'
Thus Tiruvalluvar wrote his masterly thesis, Kural, which is as comprehensive as life itself. Nor could he confine himself to mere scholarship. A study of Kural reveals that he was one of the keenest observers of human life. Time and again, he might have ruminated over the strength of the society in which he lived. Then he set forth to lay down an integrated whole of the values of life. True, he was one of the greatest thinkers of the world. Thus one of the greatest and noblest monuments of human thought came into existence.

Social conditions at the time of writing Tirukkural might have deteriorated in so deep a manner as to warrant the codification of conduct rules for life. The twin evils of concubinage and drink had been eulogised by caignam poets, and there is not even a single instance in which these evils of a social nature has been condemned. Perhaps, Tiruvalluvar was the first to condemn social evils and individual lapses in unmistakable terms. Indeed, he is the chief priest of individual morality.

At the same time, it is better to guard against too much emphasis on the negative directions of Kural as they do not warrant any inference regarding utter lack of moral order in the society in which Valluvar lived.
Maraimalai Adigal in his 'Manickavasagar Kalasam Araichiyum' has very well rebutted this kind of reasoning. Social order was so well established in Tamil Nadu at the time of Valluvar they had an unwritten code of conduct as gleaned from 'Pattuva Thogayum' which Valluvar wanted to refine and improve upon.

Having assigned Tirukkural to the First Century A.D. we may conclude that some Caṅgam poets might have preceded Valluvar; some might have been his coevals; and some might have succeeded him. As a general rule it may be stated—of course, there may well be good exceptions—that whenever there is a coincidence of ideology between Kural and Caṅgam traditions, some aspects of Tamil culture is revealed and that whenever there is a divergence of views between Valluvar and Caṅgam poets, there is an indication of the original thought of Valluvar irrespective of the immediate proximity of the time factor.

Ingredients of culture

Dr. Devendra Kumar Raja Ram Patil in his thesis on 'cultural History from the Vayu Purana' has listed the following aspects of culture:

1. Social organisation
2. Woman and marriage
3. Political Institutions
4. Religion
5. Yogas and the system of chronology
6. Towns, Villages and dwellings
7. Dress and ornaments, Food and drink
8. Music and dancing
9. War and Weapons

The first five aspects pertain to intellectual culture, and the last five to material culture. Tiruvalluvar was mainly concerned with the refinement of mind even though he has also copious references to material culture.

While lecturing on aspects of 'Ancient Indian culture', Prof. A.L. Basham has dealt with the following:

1. Social life
2. Political life
3. Moral order
4. Religious life

It shall be our endeavour to attempt analytical comparison of Kural with Cangam works and to arrive at a synthesis of the philosophy of Tamil culture as revealed in Kural. Incidentally, this will also bring out the qualitative contribution that Valluvar had made to the development of human thought.
There are two aspects of culture as observed by Dr. S.R. Krishnamurthi in his 'Study on the cultural developments of the Cōla period'; one based on external varieties, on ideals which are for all time and for all races and other which adapts and adjusts itself to the changing requirements of time and environments. Tiruvalluvar has consciously attempted to portray the first phase of culture although Kural is not altogether free from, as we shall see in the following pages, the traces of regional culture.
NOTES

3. Tolkkkāppiyar - Pāyiram 4-6.
4. Ceyalūr Koṇṉu Chennanar - Tiruvalluva Mālai, stanza 42.
5. Vannakkan Cattanar, Tiruvalluva Mālai, stanza 43.
7. Coutamanār, Tiruvalluva Mālai, Stanza 15.
15. Mathew Arnold, Notes towards the definition of culture, page 15, January 1948.
17. UNESCO 1963, Inter relations of cultures' page 42.
22. Kalittölagai, Neytal, stanza 16.
23. Paramēlagar, Commentary on 'Panpudaimai'.
24. Kural 361.
25. Puranānūru, Stanza 382.
27. Puranānūru, Stanza 382.
29. Puranānūru, stanza 192.
34. Puranāṇūra, stanza 34.


41. Tolkappiyam, Pāyiram 4-6.


43. Dr. Devendrakumar Rajaram Patil, cultural History from the vayu Puranam, page 7, 1958.
