CHAPTER ONE

THE HINDU SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY
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Introduction

The 'Hindu Social Philosophy' is based on the concepts of *varṇa*, *āśrama*, and *puruṣārthā*. The social life of a Hindu was divided into four parts, as the life of a student, the life of a family man, the life of a forest hermit, and the life of an ascetic. The Hindu society was divided into four groups as the group of priests (*Brāhmaṇa varṇa*), the group of the warriors (*Kṣatriya varṇa*), the group of the businessmen (*Vaiśya varṇa*) and the group of the labourers (*Śudra varṇa*). Human ends were *dharma* (virtue), *artha* (wealth), *kāma* (desire), and *mokṣa* (liberation). A study of these concepts clearly reveals the Hindu social philosophy.

The word 'Hinduism' denotes the ancient religion of India, under which comes a number of religious faiths such as Śaivism, Vaiṣṇavism and Saktism. Śaivism is one of the major schools of Hinduism. The 'Hindu social philosophy' is generally taken to be the social philosophy as found in the Sanskrit literature of Hinduism. Apart from the Sanskrit literature there are other ancient works in Tamil in which we have the Social Philosophy of Hinduism, as conceived by the ancient Tamilians. Here, over 2000 years ago, the Tamil people developed a fairly advanced civilization independently of the Aryan north: this region has throughout its history maintained a consciousness
of its difference from the north and has cherished its own language, while remaining part of the whole Indian cultural areas\textsuperscript{1}. Hence a study of the social philosophy of Tamil literature is brought under the broad heading, 'The Hindu social philosophy'. The social philosophy of the Hindus as found in Sanskrit literature is comprehensive. The traditional social philosophy of the Sanskrit origin can be explained with special reference to Manu Dharma S\textit{astra}. Manu is naturally considered as the founder of social and major order, as a ruler of man, and as a Rishi to whom sacred texts were revealed.\textsuperscript{2}

In \textit{Tirukkural} we have the quintessence of Tamil culture and its social philosophy. \textit{Tirukkural} is the dharma \textit{sastra} (\textit{தெய்விளைூலம்}) of the Tamils. The Tamil cultural tradition is independent, not derived, not imitative, it is Pre-Sanskrit, and from this point of view Tamils alone stands apart when compared with all other major languages and literature of India. \textit{Tiruvalluvar} was not a poet but a teacher: not art, but wisdom, justice, ethics is the basis of his work.

\textbf{Social Philosophy of Manu-Dharma S\textit{astra}}:

The word 'Manu' came from the root \textit{i\textsuperscript{n}u} which means truth. It also denotes the thinking human being. 'Manu is more than a law book'. \textsuperscript{5} About the biographical data of the author of \textit{Manu-s\textit{astra}} there is no definite answers. The \textit{Rg Veda}
and *Srimad Bhagavath Gita* mention four *Manus*, while the text itself mentions about seven *Manus*. They are *Svanibhuya*, *Svakisa*, *Auttonu*, *Tamas*, *Raiyata*, *Chakshusha*. The seventh is *Manu Vaiavastra* who presides over the present *manyantra*, the period of his regency. The four human values that *Manu* accepts are *Dharma*, *artha*, *kama*, and *Moksa* (*M.s.*224). By these four human ends life is balanced. A balanced view of life is emphasised by these four ends.

**Dharma (Virtue):**

The entire book emphasised the necessity of respect for the *Dharma* in all aspects of social life. *Dharma* is the basic rule and principle that rules the life of the individual and society. *Dharma* differentiates man from animal and raises him to the state of Divine. *Dharma* is the name for the rules which govern the other human ends like *artha*, *kama*, and *moksa*. *Dharma* is a comprehensive. It means many things, the innate nature of things, the duties, and morals of man, and the principles of unification, integration in things and society. But the most important meaning of *Dharma* is the moral duties of man. *Dharma* is an instrumental value as it is helpful in attaining other values. All the schools of Indian philosophy emphasise the necessity for a *Dharmonic* way of life. *Dharma* is the foundation upon which the 'Hindu Social Philosophy' stands. Therefore, *dharma* has an important place in the study of 'Hindu
Social Philosophy as a whole.

**Artha (Wealth and wellbeing):**

*Artha* is the economic value in all its aspects, wealth, property, etc. *Artha-sāstra*, the ancient work on polity explains the economic value of the ancient Indians. In the *Vedic* hymns we come across poems revealing man's desire for wealth, and the material prosperity. In the early *Vedic* hymns we observe man's love for material wellbeing. *Artha* is the instrumental value, without which nothing worldly could be achieved by man. Social life of man becomes orderly and successful only by the power of the economic value. Therefore, Hindu ethical literature emphasises the importance of *artha*.

**Kāma (Pleasure of Desire):**

*Kāma* is a psychological value. It means both desire and satisfaction. Desire is the foundation of all action. Hence *kāma* gets an important place in India's social philosophy. *Veda* say that even the creation of the world is due to the desire of God. Often we come across this idea in the *Vedic* literature. Desire is the fundamental thing that deserves study as it is the starting point of all human actions.

One of the important meanings of *kāma* is the sexual desire as evident from the *Manu smṛti*. A careful study of
the Hindu literatures reveal the fact that the sexual life of man has not been condemned by the thinkers of India. The importance shown to this aspect of life can be known from the fact that some Tantric literatures elevate the sexual life of man and woman to the transcendental level as found in the 'Parī-
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ānka-yoga' of Tirumantiram of Tirumūlar. Hinduism did not set
aside kāma as the disvalue. In Bhagavad gītā, Lord Krishna
says that He is the embodiment of kāma which is not opposed to
or inconsistent with the pursuit and performance of dharma. In
Indian scheme of life the worldly pleasures are given a proper
place, it only condemns the mind which always hangs upon plea-
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sure and forgets the Supreme end which is mokṣa.

Mokṣa (Liberation):

Spirituality is the key note of Indian thought. Indian
philosophy directs man towards this spiritual end. The word
Mokṣa literally means deliverance, that is, deliverance of the
soul from its bondage. Mokṣa is the supreme puruṣārtha, and
is an end in itself whereas the other three puruṣārthas are
only means to it. Though different schools of Indian philosoph-
disagree about the nature of mokṣa (such as nirvāṇa, kaivalya,
jīvanmukti, viśeshamukti etc) all the schools affirm the need
for the liberation of the individual from the circle of life
and death. Mokṣa concept is the unique to Indian Philosophy.
Moksa does not demand that one should withdraw from the social life, and neglect his social responsibilities. Manu smṛti denies muktī to the person who thinks only of his own salvation and runs away from the society, neglecting his social duties.

Asrama:

Asrama literally means a stopping or halting place. Here, it means the four stages of man. They are (1) Brahmacarya āśrama (life of student), (2) Čṛhastha āśrama (life of a householder), (3) Vanaprastha āśrama (life of an anchorite-retreat), (4) Sannyāsa āśrama (life of an ascetic). There are evidences, to show that, there were only two stages in the beginning, and the third, and the fourth stages were subsequently added to them.

Brahmacarya āśrama:

This is the stage of student life of the men of the three twice born groups namely, the Brāhmaṇa varna, the kṣatrīya varna, and the śūra varna. A boy was accepted as student only after the ceremony of initiation (upanayana). Many important subjects were taught to him as a student but the most important was the Vedas, as they provided the foundation for all higher knowledge. The student studied for a long time staying at the resident of the guru for whom he did all services. Some students stayed for ever with the guru but many returned to the parents,
after the completion of the course. After the completion of the course a ceremonial bath (ganevarthan) was given to the students. After duly rewarding the teacher with reverence, the student with the permission of the teacher, returned to his house, in order to become a householder.

**Grhaastha Árāma:**

Of all the Árāmas, Grhaastha Árāma was considered to be the highest one, because society depends upon the service of the householder. The social duty of the householder was the service to the men of the other three Árāmas, as well as to the lower beings as well. The man with his wife had many social and religious duties to perform. The most important of the social duty was the hospitable treatment of the guests and the most important religious duty was the performance of the five great sacrifices. The five great sacrifices are Brahma-yajña, the Pitri-yajña, the Deva-yajña, the Bhūta-yajña and the Ahiravajña. Teaching and studying are to be pursued as expressive of the brahma-yajña, which is offered to the memory of the distinguished and learned sages of the past (rishis); the offering of water and food known as turpana and offered at the śradh ceremony forms the sacrifice to the spirit or memory of the ancestors (pitri-yajña); oblations offered to the sacred fire (homa) have reference to the sacrifice to the gods (deva yajña); offering of food to alleviate and propitiate the spirits
which are supposed to influence human being constitutes the
bhuta-vājra; and the hospitable offerings of food and shelter
to guests and strangers (stithi-pujanam) has to be performed
in a spirit of sacrifice to man (pri-vājra). In short, the
gṛhaśṭha life was full of responsibilities. But, the most
important value for the householder as for the student was the
attainment of mokṣa (liberation). Hence, after having comple-
ted his domestic duties, and social obligations, and having
enjoyed the pleasures of the world according to the dictates
of dharma, now the householder left his house to the forest in
search of the ultimate truth. Therefore, the man entered the
stage of the hermit, (vānaprastha).

Vānaprastha:

The third stage in the individual’s life was the stage
of vānaprastha, or the hermit. When a man saw wrinkles in his
face, grey hair in his head, and the birth of his grand child-
ren he had to enter the life of the hermit. It was the prepa-
ratory stage to the final stage of saṃprāṇa. In his forest
life the holy man carried out only a few religious practices.
He was mainly concerned with such practices as would finally
enable him to attain mokṣa, for the purity of mind was the funda-
mental necessity for the attainment of liberation. That is
the reason why Buddhism gives the first place to the life of
virtue (sila). After this stage the man enters his final
stage of life called saṃyāsa.

**Saṃyāsa Astāma:**

This was the last stage in the life of man. The only concern of the man in this stage was the attainment of mokṣa. Sometimes he practiced austerities, but all the time meditation. We have evidence that goes to show that there were people who directly enter into saṃyāsa astāma without going to the stage of vānaprastha astāma.

**Yānā Organization:**

The Hindu society was divided into four social groups. They were known as yānās. They were the brāhmaṇa yama, the kṣatriya yama, the vaisyā yama, and the śūdra yama. They were based on division of labour. The brāhmaṇa had his duty of learning, and teaching the Vedas; conducting the sacrifices for himself, and for others; receiving, and giving gifts. In short, he was the teacher of other twice-born men, and religious guide of all the people. The Brāhmaṇas were considered to be the highest in society and treated as equal to God. They had to advise the kings on important religious, political, and judicial matters.
Kṣatriya Varna:

He was the man of politics. Kṣatriya was expected to rule the people according to the rules of the śāstras, and under the guidance of the Brāhmaṇa scholars. He had to protect the people, overcome the enemies, dispense justice in courts, and help people to enjoy happiness and experience peace.

Vaiśya Varna:

He was the businessman of the society, and trader in goods. He was to contribute to the economic stability of the society. His main occupation was trade in goods, and precious metals and stones, and the pursuit of agriculture. All these three groups of people were considered as twice-born, because they had attained the purification of body, and mind by undergoing the sacrament of upanayana, and thus had a second birth, in spirit.

Śūdra Varna:

The śūdra varna is the last among the four varnas. The śūdra had no upanayana, hence no education, and his only duty was to serve the men of the other three varnas. He had the lowest social status in society.
Social Philosophy According to Tamil Literature:

Tirukkural is the greatest ethical work in Tamil literature in which we have the social philosophy of Tamil in its purest form. 'There hardly exists in the literature of the world a collection of maxims in which we find so much lofty wisdom'. Tiruvalluvar is considered to be the best social philosopher in Tamil Nadu. Tirukkural is called as muñ-pāl which corresponds to the Sanskrit term Trīvṛkṣa.

The central theme of Tirukkural is not any particular metaphysical theory but "the good life" based on moral norms. Its concern is about the good man (ගේගේගේගේගේ). Tirukkural is one of the greatest classics that can be compared with the great world classics such as Dhammapāda and the Bhagavad gītā. Tirukkural speaks about the good life that is acceptable to the people of all religions and even to the atheists. The Buddhists, the Jains, and the Christians interpret Tirukkural according to their philosophical backgrounds. Tirukkural is rightly known as a 'universal gospel' (කුවක්කයෙන නියෙකය වේ). It speaks to the humanity as a whole, and not to a particular sect of people.

Tirukkural consists of three parts known as aram (dharma: දාරුම), Purul (artha: ආරතිය), and Inbam (desire: ආරණය). It consists of 1330 couplets divided into 133 chapters. Tiruvalluvar speaks about the student (under educati
the householder (திருப்புருவன), the king (நாயன்), and the ascetic (நீர்வன). There is no reference to the caste or the varna, though there are couplets which show that the author of Tirukkural was aware of them in his time. In Couplet No. 39 he says 'The virtuous are truly called Anthenar; because in their conduct towards all creatures they are clothed in kindness.' Couplet No. 516 says 'Let 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', may be understood in the sense of division of labour also.

Householder in Tirukkural was given a high place. There is no other literature in Tamil which gives to the life of the householder such a high place. He equates the family life with dharma. In the couplet 49 he says, 'The marriage state is truly called virtue. The other state is also good, if others do not reproach it. The last part of the Tirukkural (செந்தூர் முனை) speaks about the love life between the man and woman as lovers, and as husband and wife.'

Tiruvalluvar gives great importance to learning. In the chapter on education (சோதன) he emphasizes the need for the practical application of education (தமிழ் உணவுக்கு பெரும்). The ten couplets in that chapter speak about the need for education, and the excellence of education. In the chapter
on 'non-learning' (அனியோல்கு), the chapter that follows the chapter on 'learning' (விள்ள), Tiruvalluvar, explains the evils of 'non-learning'.

Social Life According to Tiruvalluvar:

Among the four ends of human life first three (dharmas, artha, and kāma) are related to man's life on earth which comes within the range of social life. The fourth refers to the spiritual life of man. Tiruvalluvar refers the three ends directly and the fourth end is not referred to directly. Tirukkural gives importance to man's life on earth. Tiruvalluvar speaks about morality, education, and the virtue of 'non-killing', 'non-eating' of flesh, (உருவோர், மலர் என்பதோர்), speaking the truth, and the virtues that go to form his social philosophy.

Tiruvalluvar's culture may be taken to be relatively free from foreign influence. Under aram we study about the moral values of the householder and the ascetic. There are couplets that speak about the life of the student, the life of the householder, the life of the ascetic, the life of the arhatar, (learned), the life of the vaisya (way of accumulating wealth), and the couplets speaking about dharma (சமயம்). (The concept of dharma is essentially sociological). Ahimsā (non-injury), charity, and compassion are meaningless if they are not related to society. Dharma śāstra deal with the social life from the religious, and moral order; and artha śāstra deals with social
life from political-economic and judicial angles.

The social philosophy of the Tamil speaks about the two aspects of man-woman relation, namely the 'secret love', and the 'wedded love'. They were known as 'ஏற்பாடு ', and 'சுருங்கள் ' respectively. Man had to enter the stages of love life first, and then marry the love of his heart. This is evident from the third part of the Tirukkuṟaḷ as well as from the Tamil works like Iravanār Kālavivāl and Kalithokai. The last part of Tirukkuṟaḷ, known as 'Kāmattuppāl' is an elaborate treatment of love life and married life. The word 'Kāman' is derived from the word 'kāman' which according to Tolkāppiam 21 stands for fulness or perfection. As such we notice very rich implications in this word. Kāmattuppāl does not stand for mere sexual happiness but for a happiness that results from a full life, an integrated life lived in society. Single note is not a harmony. Sex is like this. It is meaningful only in the full context and not as such. This is the striking point in Tirukkuṟaḷ, that while apparently dealing with sex life, sublimates it and elevates it to the pinnacle of spiritual companionship and inseparability. This will be a good preparation for realisation of inseparability between the finite soul and infinite.

As far as the moral values are concerned, the virtue of 'non-killing', and the virtue of 'truth-speaking', (காமேசாபால் அக்கார்கள்)
are considered the supreme moral values. The 'sangam literature' in Tamil clearly shows that the eating of meat, and animal sacrifice were common practice among the early Tamils. But Tiruvalluvar rejects these practices as anti-ethical. Another thing which Tiruvalluvar condemns is drinking of intoxicating liquors. This might have been due to the Jaina influence upon the thought of Tiruvalluvar. The chastity of woman was emphasised as well as the chastity of man.

The married man had many virtues to practise. One of them was the generous treatment of guests. The importance of asceticism is fully recognised by Tiruvalluvar. Man had to surrender at the feet of the God (எச்சிபுரவல்கட்டுமணி), and strive for the attainment of moksa. The pains of the transmigration of the soul, and the bliss of liberation, and the danger of delusion are clearly explained by Tiruvalluvar. Tirukkural treats extensively such important themes as education, love, marriage, earning, spiritual striving, and salvation.

Tiruvalluvar's Classification of the Four Āșramas:

Though Tirukkural does not emphasise the āșrama - concept of the Manu-smṛti, it nevertheless refers to them. The couplet 41 is clear indication of the fact that he was aware of the importance of the householder's life.
Student Life:

The student life was a life of humility, sincerity, and discipline. He was to study well and conduct himself morality so as to be a model for others. Tiruvalluvar explains the need of learning and the evils of non-learning in two chapters.

Tiruvalluvar gives a very high place for learning. Education is the indestructible property, and its fruits are many. In the couplet 400 he says, learning is the true imperishable riches; all other things are not riches. Hence he asks why a man should not try to pursue education till his death. In the couplet 397 he asks, how is it that any one can remain without learning, even to his death, when (to the learned man) every country is his own (country), and every town his own (town)? But, education means a practical education containing within itself the principles of morality. Therefore, he says a man must learn without any flaw and having understood, the meanings of life through learning, he should try to live accordingly. In the couplet 391 he says, let a man learn thoroughly whatever he may learn, and let his conduct be worthy of his learning. Education, since it reveals the truths of life is rightly described by him as the true eyes. In the couplet 392 he says, letters and numbers are the two eyes of man. While stressing the value of learning, he denotes a chapter to the criticism of non-learning (தள்ளுவல்).
Tolkāppiyam. After the enjoyment of love is fulfilled, being surrounded by the pleasure-giving children and having the virtuous relatives with them the husband and wife must perform what is best for the world and die for it. This is the way of reaping benefit of this life. Hence, Dr T.P. Meenakshisundaram says, 'Turavaram therefore represents a higher perfection and a more comprehensive love. Probably because of this interpretation Albert Schweitzer does not see any negativism or world negation, in Tiruvalluvar inspite of the latter having written 'turavaram'.

The Four Varnas (Brahmana, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Śūdra):

Bṛāhmana:

In Tirukkural we are coming across the words 'Anthanar' (அஞ்சனர்), Vāṇipem Seivör (வாணிபம் சீவர்), Ulavār (உலவர்) etc. They are not equated with brahmana, kṣatriya, vaiśya, and śūdra of Manu's social order. By Anthanar Tiruvalluvar means one who loses all the beings without any difference and considers all the beings alike. In the couplet 972 he categorically states that all beings are equal in birth, but their differences are social, due to professional distinctions. He says, all human beings agree as regards their birth but differ as regards their characteristics because of the different qualities of their actions.
Even the reference to **Brahmana** is more to emphasise his moral perfection, than to his **varna**. He says, the virtuous are truly called **Athanar**, because in their conduct towards all creatures are clothed in kindness. 35

**Kṣatriya:**

In the second part of **Tirukkural**, **Tiruvalluvar** speaks about the king. **Tiruvalluvar** explains about the various duties of good king, and the qualities of good government. The second part of the **Tirukkural** is divided into three parts such as 'politics' (**politi**), the 'divisions of politics' (**politi**), and 'the division which says about the citizens' (**politi**). **Tiruvalluvar** equates the good king with God. He says, that king will be esteemed a God among men, who performs his own duties, and protects (his subjects). The king ought to be morally good and politically efficient. The six necessary limbs of a country are referred by **Tiruvalluvar** in order to give in a nutshell the nature of the kingdom under the monarchy. He says, that he (the king) who possesses these six things, an army, a people, wealth, minister, friends and a fortress, is a lion among kings. The principle of **aram** is always emphasised as the guiding principle for the actions of men, the king also included. **Tiruvalluvar** says that 'he is a person who with manly modesty, swerves not from virtue, and refrain from vice.
Vaisya:

In the couplet (120) he emphasises the good quality of the merchant. Tiruvalluvar says the true merchandize of merchants is to guard and do by the things of others as they do by their own. He must treat other's wealth as his own and do his business accordingly. The couplets from 751-760 speak about the wealth and the way of earning it. (Way of Accumulating Wealth).

Sūdra:

There is no reference about the sūdra in Tirukkural. Presumably the social philosophy of Tirukkural has not been influenced by Manu as this concept is an important one in Manu's social philosophy.

The Human Ends:

Dharma:

'To him Dharma is omnipresent. It is the perfection of the man, material, intellectual, domestic spiritual and moral. He believes in the perfect men who are the embodiments of the Dharma, the standing examples for the world to follow. He also believes in nature's help in the path of righteousness. He believes in God, the inner inspiration of all the universal Dharma. Dharma has been described in terms of the individual
is quite different and has significant spiritual meaning.

'If there is true poetry anywhere in Tirukkaṟṟuḻ, it is here, in the erotic couplets of the third book. Because here, the teacher, the preacher Valluvar has stepped aside, and Valluvar speaks here almost the language of superb love-poetry of the classical age. Tiruvalluvar's Kāmathuppāl is utterly different from any of the Sanskrit Kāma Jāstra. While Vātsyāyana's work (and all Sanskrit erotology) is jāstra, that is objective and scientific analysis of sex, the third part of the kūṟal is a poetic picture of eros, of ideal love, of its dramatic situations'.

Mokṣa:

The chapter on 'asceticism' (संकर्मम्), may be taken to imply the concept of mokṣa. Tiruvalluvar gives ten couplets in praise of asceticism, since, the attainment of mokṣa (vīdu), the supreme value of man is possible through renunciation alone. (Renunciation, 341-350). Renunciation means not only going away from objects but also the destruction of one's own desires for objects, and overcoming the sense of 'I' and 'mine'.

Ethics of Tirukkuṟṟaḻ:

The Tirukkuṟṟaḻ is a book of life. Chapters on ethics, politics, economics and human enjoyment are all actuated by one purpose - the development of the human personality.
in terms of love and compassion. In one chapter Tiruvalluvar speaks about the ḫil (karma) but in four other chapters he speaks about the way to overcome the karma. Tiruvalluvar emphasises the humanistic way of life in the couplet 997. He says 'Though sharp their wit as file, as blocks they must remain, whose souls are void of 'courtesy humane'.

Ethics of Tiruvalluvar is social and practical. He wants a society in which, to use a modern expression, there will be employment opportunities for all and honest living but if life has to be maintained by begging, then, Tiruvalluvar calls down a curse on the creator of the world.