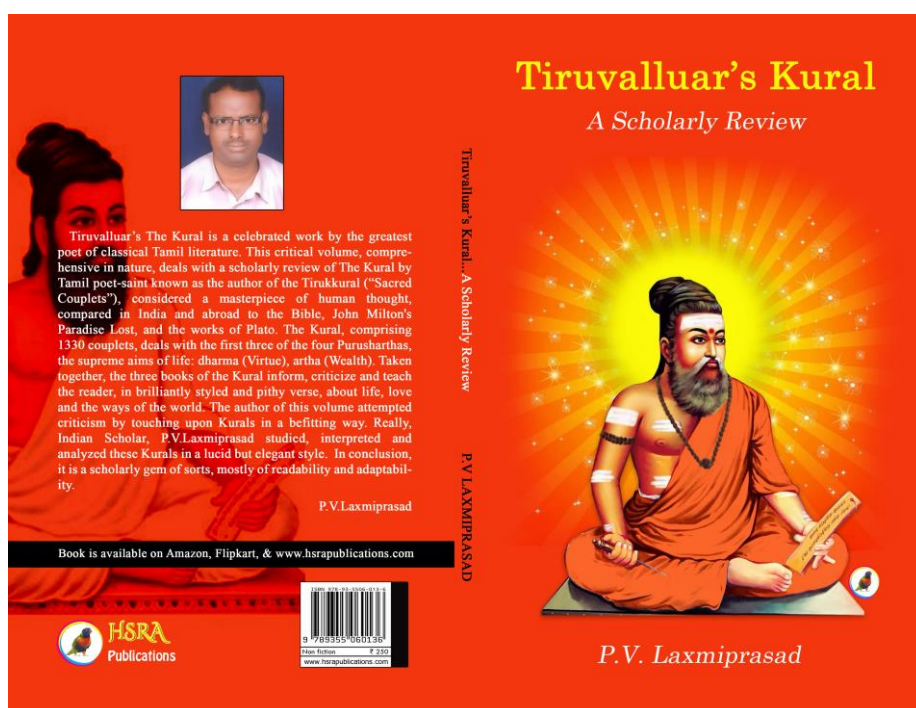


**Review of**  
**P.V.Laxmiprasad's Tiruvalluar's *Kural* : A Scholarly Review**  
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Dr. P.V. Laxmiprasad's review of Tiruvalluar's *Kural* is very thought-provoking and evergreen. Though it is written in the Tamil language basically it was translated by numerous writers in their own ways in various languages. Dr. Laxmiprasad writes in his 'About Thiruvalluar' that the couplets are relevant to any age and situation in the lives of all human beings. People commented that it is called a guidebook or a solution book. It is praised by a few like Buddhists; Shaivites and so on declared that the content in the Thiruvalluar's Kurals is like their own.

Dr. Laxmiprasad, born and brought up in Tamilnadu, introduces this great source to us and provides an opportunity to learn about this book. Thirukkural consists of 1330 couplets and is basically classified into three sections such as Aram- Righteousness (dharma or virtue), Porul-Wealth and Inbam-Pleasure. Various concepts discussed in the couplets are truth, honesty, love, courage, compassion, justice, community service, wealth and so on.

Dr. Laxmiprasad says that Thirukkural is so influential that they can be considered a source of inspiration for all ages. It was a special subject for the students who were studying in schools a couple of years ago but now our central government has announced that the *Bhagavad Gita* is prescribed for the students in the schools.

Dr. Laxmiprasad gives a bird eye view of Thirukkural in his highlights of Tiruvalluar's Life and Contribution. These details impress and encourage the fans of literature to read in-depth. A few of them are: This book consists of 1330 couplets in 133 sections. The first section (380 Couplets) deals with the moral and cosmic order, the second (700 Couplets) deals with political and economic matters and the third (250 Couplets) deals with pleasure.

Among all the three sections, the second is the lengthiest. Here, there are comparisons and contrasts observed in Kautilya's *Arthashastra*. The key elements in the second section are army, subjects, treasure, ministers, allies and forts.

Dr. Laxmiprasad in his Appreciation of the *Kural*, he brings to light 450 profound thoughts of Tiruvalluar. Like all the other epics, Tiruvalluar also starts with invocation of nameless God, Almighty and King in his book *Kural*. First 100 Kurals out of 450 are consolidated here.

#### ❖ God/Almighty (1-7)

A skill-based knowledge of a man is pure intelligence which ultimately leads a human to the blessed feet of God. Every human has to surrender at His glorious feet as He is a life-giver. His altruism blooms love for all mankind. If a man does any action heartfully, He will look after him and save him in any circumstance. That man will be a blue-eyed boy to the Almighty. If any man controls his five senses as well as his desires God shows a path of Dharma which is filled with eternal values. He is the saviour and destroyer for people of different mindsets.

#### ❖ Sea/Ocean of Birth (8-9)

Virtue is another name for victory. Every man has to undergo vice and virtue. Vicious is oppressed and virtue can be united with the blessed feet of God. Human actions will multiply virtues or vice. One can reach one's destination safely and come out of the ocean of tears.

#### ❖ Rain (10-17)

Rain is the harbinger or Elixir of human life. Moving water is the symbol of life. There is no question of hunger if rain greets the earth. There are no droughts and plenty of food grains will be available. Where there is rain there are festivals and celebrations. Rain and water are part and parcel of this universe.

#### ❖ Seeds of Bliss (Five Senses) (18-20)

If a man can control his senses, it is like attaining wisdom, perfection and bliss in life. Two types of people are introduced in these three Kurals, they are: never tried and tried and accomplished. Lord Krishna usually says, if you take a step to reach God, God will come to you ten steps forward to make

your dreams come true. He will bless people with willpower and commitment. This strength leads human beings to conquer the world.

❖ **Virtue (21-30)**

Theological touch is given by defining the word 'Brahmin, who is virtuous, kind-hearted, without prejudice and so on. Virtue grants people wealth and pays dividends in the coming future. Practicing virtue can give positivity, a pure mind and spotless. Hurting the feelings of others, jealousy, fury and longing for wealth are avoidable by the good. Dr. Laxmiprasad has briefed very aptly what Tiruvalluar pointed out in his Kurals. "Be good and Do well and don't waste time" is a great message from these Kurals. Character strength and goodness are virtuous which means vice.

❖ **A true householder (31-35)**

An illiterate wife who is a householder can handle and solve domestic problems with time adjustment, planning, labour, patience, commitment and devotion. Virtue and Dharma makes home a living paradise. A model householder, either wife or husband is nothing but God. 35<sup>th</sup> couplet is the best example of how to balance life with the money the wife/husband earns. Here, the wife is the centre of attraction. If a wife gives value to her husband the whole family is identified as glorious so reciprocation works to make the family virtuous.

❖ **A virtuous wife (36-42)**

A woman of chastity can treat her husband as God. She wants boundless love from her husband. If he is ready then the sky is the limit for her service. She will play various roles in the family like wife, mother, guide, guardian and so on. She not only brings respect to the family but also with her dedication she stands her family in a good position. Ultimately she feels that she gains the 'joy of heaven' with her husband's unconditional love and affection. There is a maxim in Telugu, people have to see the maintenance of the house first then the wife. The organized behaviour of a wife and disciplined children are the two oxen to balance the yoke of the family.

❖ **Blessed Children (43-51)**

Without children, the life of a human being is futile. Having brilliant and intelligent children is a blessing to parents. Children are the property of the parents. The words they speak are sonorous to their ears and the way they touch gives a soothing effect for them. A well-known proverb has to be recollected in this context that a tree is known by its fruit. If his son is born with a spark he will be noticed by the world. The mother's heart rejoices when the son grows and comes up in his life and gets a reputation in the family. Loving each other and one another is the method to maintain a bonding. Loveless life is a waste of effort. It symbolizes a barren land and a withered tree. The institution of the family will be survived with love by all the family members.

❖ **Hospitality (52-59)**

After family relationship, the next prominent thing to discuss is hospitality. Our tradition inculcated in our blood that the guest is God. Whoever may be the guest the importance is equal. Our culture proved that feeding a guest will never decrease our eatables instead we get in abundance. The heartfelt smile on the face of the guest relieved the host from all his troubles. Gathering more number of people in point is the point of sharing of love and affection. With whichever heart we host our guest it reflects in our life. Charity gives us great return gifts.

#### ❖ **Gratitude (60-63)**

Appreciating people is an art; it comes out of our broadmindedness. If we get any help from others we will be grateful to them throughout our lives and if we help others that cannot be discussed with anybody. Receiving the good from others and leaving the bad is praiseworthy. Actually, sins cannot be redeemed but a few amendments are there for some sins. Ingratitude is a sin which cannot be redeemed. Being grateful to the people becomes a very good practice.

#### ❖ **Wealth (64-66)**

Being wealthy is fine but getting money in illegal routes is not good. That money will never give any satisfaction as well as reputation. If we get money in an evil way it will be known to the people after some time. Losing name and fame cannot make us survive in society. 'Squint eye is better than blind' is to be recollected in this context that rather than earning money in an illegal way being poor is good. Being wise and knowledgeable is comparatively more appreciative than being rich in the wrong route.

#### ❖ **Equality and Self Control (67-70)**

All human beings should be treated in an equal way. People with inequality can face a lot of hurdles in the long run. Equality wins over inequality is a known fact. Unbiased decisions help society grow and build a good nation. If all human beings are impartial in thinking initiates health and wealth. Constant efforts to accomplish equality are possible with self-control. Self-control is called a treasure as it should be protected throughout our life. If we regulate our thoughts, emotions and behaviour anything with perfection will be achieved and accomplished.

#### ❖ **Modesty (71-73)**

A popular proverb is recollected that 'Speech is silver and silence is gold.' If our tongue is in control the atmosphere around us will be cool and calm. With a single bad word, one can lose a huge deposit. Blaming and misunderstanding are the results of distress and disappointment in life. So resorting to modesty can make life glorious.

#### ❖ **Right Conduct (74-82)**

Right conduct comes out of our blood as it is a moral principle and it adds beauty to our life. It should be protected and preserved to get a name and fame. Righteousness saves us from all adversities.

Knowledge becomes wisdom over a period of time that may be with our experience or age. Brahmins usually learn Vedas which gives abundant knowledge and leads them to free from all sins and evils. Good conduct always promotes us to higher levels in life whereas bad conduct leaves us in disgrace. People with good conduct will never commit any sin even without their notice.

❖ **Adulterers (83-85)**

Marriage/Family is an institution where there is no place for adulteration, misconceptions and misunderstandings. Four things - hatred, sin, fear and disgrace divide the couple and they become unpopular in society. Purity and chastity are not only essential for women but also for men. Reputation in public life should not be spoiled if it happens the couple becomes lenient in the words of the whole society. The couple should have patience like mother earth in bearing any marital issue.

❖ **Envy, desire, greed and slander(86-95)**

Envy spoils our behaviour and goodwill and finally, it becomes our enemy which makes us lose everything in our life. After envy develops it gives place for desire. Desire at heart's content is good but excessive desire destroys the homely culture and leads to disputes among the members of the family. After desire, the next quality to rise in mind is greed. No proof is there in culture that greedy people are not fortunate as luck will ultimately select only the wise and virtuous. The next inferior quality in a man is slandering others. Dying great is better than living in a false world by slandering others. Commenting on people can drag us to lower standards.

❖ **Vain speech (96-100)**

Addressing people is a very tough job, especially in public. If it is not worth enough it will be harmful to everybody present there. The image of the speaker also will be damaged if his speech is worthless. Unrefined speeches cannot fetch us anything that to these may lower the dignity of the speaker. Sensitivity and sensibility is the extraordinary quality of a speaker. The speaker's first and foremost duty is to grab the attention of the listener.

Dr. Laxmiprasad concludes by saying that Tiruvalluar's *Kural* is similar to Sanskrit works such as Manu's *Manusmriti*, Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, Kamandaka's *Nitisara* and Vatsyayana's *Kamasutra*. According to Zvelebil and Hajela, the *Kural* text is based on love, morality and kindness. The *Kural* text differs from Manu's *Manusmriti* in a few ways such as the caste system and the importance given to women. Dr. Laxmiprasad's quotes from versatile geniuses add grace to his scholarly review and he reiterates that the *Kural* text is a guidebook for developing morals and ethics in human beings.