

# THE POSSESSION OF SELF-RESTRAINT AS A SOURCE OF WEALTH: LESSONS FROM THIRUKURAL

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The **Tirukkural** (திருக்குறள், literally Sacred Verses), or shortly **the Kural**, is a classic Tamil language text consisting of 1,330 couplets or Kurals. The text is divided into three parts, each with aphoristic teachings on virtue (aram, dharma), wealth (porul, artha) and love (inbam, kama).

The Tirukkural text is considered to be a greatest administrative and personal life management book. Look at the order in which it was framed by the poet thiruvalluvar. The first part which talks about Aram (Virtue), here the poet describes about doing good deeds in life. Every persons thought, words and actions should be oriented towards performing good deeds only. The day to day performance of one's own virtue will be later converted in to one's life style which is thiruvalluvar himself call it as FATE. Therefore actually the order should be called as Aram which is converted in to one's fate and due to which the possession of wealth (Porul in tamil) is obtained. Here thiruvalluvar speaks about wealth creation based on one's virtue only. The last part is termed as Kamam (Love) which speaks about the love and marriage life of a couple.

Considered one of the greatest works on ethics and morality, it is known for its universality and secular nature. Its authorship is traditionally attributed to Valluvar, also known in full as Thiruvalluvar. The text has been dated variously from 300 BCE to 5th century CE.

This article want to explain the possession of self-restraint (controlling oneself) as a source of greatest wealth a person and even a corporate organization should practice in life in order to achieve the richest wealth of both money and happiness. The Self restraint is one of the couplets which comes in the 121<sup>st</sup> serial order and has the title named as The possession of self restraint. In tamil it is called as Adakam Udaimai. ( Adakam means control and Udaimai means possessing that as wealth). Let us explore the glory of each couplets from serial order 121 to 130.

## **SELF CONTROL**

Control of self does man conduct to bliss th'  
immortals share; Indulgence leads to deepest night,  
and leaves him there.

Self-control will place (a man) among the Gods; the want of it will drive (him) into the thickest darkness (of hell). The first couplets speak about one's self control in thoughts, words and action. Any behaviour and action out of control will lead to disaster. Here the poet mentions about the benefit arising out of self-control and he says people possess this control will be placed among gods. But in a contemporary world we want to look this in a different approach. Placed among gods should be presumed as people of honesty, truthfulness, integrity, discipline and also with high intellectual knowledge, wealth and power. So a man of high self-control will be naturally moved up in life and be placed in great heights.

## **TREASURE**

Guard thou as wealth the power of self-  
control; than this no greater gain to  
living soul!

Let self-control be guarded as a treasure; there is no greater source of good for man than that. Every one of us will be willing to possess wealth in the form of treasure. Material wealth is considered to be majority people's happiness. But all physical material wealth will be vanished or perished one day. At the same time a man possessing self control should guard that quality as a greatest treasure in life. The poet even says the practice of self control is a biggest asset to the human soul. He didn't mention about perishable human body. He mentions about the soul which will be passing after death also. All material pleasure is for the human body and all of us give importance to protect and give pleasure to human body only. To our five senses but for soul which is permanent the only way human beings to give it pleasure are self control.

## **KNOWLEDGE**

If versed in wisdom's lore by virtue's law you self  
restrain. Your self-repression known will yield you  
glory's gain.

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. The highest knowledge in this world knowing oneself. That will be acquired by self control

only. Those who have the quality of self control will move him to the place where wise people reside. In a management perspective a self controlled person will be automatically elevated to the corporate ladder and find a place in the board room.

### **ASCRIBED STATUS**

In his station, all unswerving, if man self  
subdue Greater him then mountain proudly  
rising to the view.

Loftier than a mountain will be the greatness of that man who without swerving from his domestic state, controls himself. As mountain in its image is very big, similarly is the image of a person who posses self control. In management it is termed as Ascribed status. A status which is obtained by the birth and people who possess the quality of self control will be naturally acquiring the image of self respect which is greater than the mountain.

### **HUMILITY**

To all humility is goodly grace; but chief  
to them with fortune blessed, -'tis  
fortune's diadem.

Humility is good in all; but especially in the rich it is (the excellence of) higher riches. Generally people who are very rich are highly respected in the society. In this world few people are rich and many people are moderate. The richness of people will be respected by their wealth but there is a perception that wealth brings ego in a person's mind. Therefore a person with wealth and having the quality of self respect will be highly respected in this society.

### **SAFE GUARD**

Like tortoise, who the five restrains  
In one, through seven worlds bliss obtains.

Should one throughout a single birth, like a tortoise keep in his five senses, the fruit of it will prove an safe-guard to him throughout the seven-fold births. Here the five senses of man (i.e) Eyes, nose, ears, tong and mouth should be regulated through self control. A tortoise will keep its five senses inside the shell when problem occurs, similarly we should completely control our five senses. This control will be done by practice and mind determination. Now the benefit of this mind control and sense control will be helpful in protecting a person from all external perils not only in this birth, but from future births also.

### **TONGUE CONTROL**

Whatever they fail to guard, o'er lips men guard  
should keep; If not, through fault of tongue, they  
bitter tears shall weep.

Whatever besides you leave unguarded, guard your tongue; otherwise errors of speech and the consequent misery will ensue. In the last couplet we spoke about sense control. The poet says if you don't able to control all the senses, then at least try to control your tongue. It means one should speak what is needed from him to others and what other people asks him only. This control of tongue will make sure that he will not get in to giving false hope to others.

### **GOODNESS**

Though some small gain of good it seem to  
bring, The evil word is parent still of evil  
thing.

If a man's speech be productive of a single evil, all the good by him will be turned into evil. We should notice that all our five senses will not do the evil. It depends on the mind our five senses are regulated. Now among all the senses the mind which is the top most source of one's knowledge will should not be carried away by any one evil thought and deeds. So the poet warns the any one evil word originated from mind will spoil the entire goodwill earned by a man by other deeds he performed by the same mind.

### **HEALING**

In flesh by fire inflamed, nature may thoroughly heal the  
sore; In soul by tongue inflamed, the ulcer health never  
more.

The wound which has been burnt in by fire may heal, but a wound burnt in by the tongue will never heal. Here again and again thiruvalluvar warns about the role of words emitted by one's tongue. In business context we make commitments and contracts in dealings. For all of these the verbal commitments to the customers and client will be more important and if your words hurt another person it will definitely permanently be in the thoughts of the other people.

### **VIRTUE**

Who learns restraint, and guards his soul from  
wrath, Virtue, a timely aid, attends his path.

Virtue, seeking for an opportunity, will come into the path of that man who, possessed of

learning and self-control, guards himself against anger. Here people who can practice self control in young age will gain the special power of virtue and this will protect them in the latter part of their life. It's like what you practice before as an investment will be coming back to them as a reward in latter part of their life.

In management we have studied various control techniques. But among the quantitative control techniques self control is the biggest wealth which will help people for both spiritual and professional development. When we go through all these control techniques as said by the poet, it will be a biggest wealth one can achieve in life. The simple fact is if you possess self control all other wealth will be naturally gained by man.