



Humanism and Thiruvalluvar¹

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Abstract:

Humanism is a system of thought attaching prime importance to humans rather than divine or supernatural matters. Humanist beliefs stress human beings' potential value and goodness, emphasize common human needs, and seek solely rational ways of solving human problems. The Buddha was perhaps the first humanist in the world. After the Buddha, Thiruvalluvar was the most outstanding humanist in the Indian philosophical scene.

Thiruvalluvar categorically declares that all human beings are equal by birth. He believes in rational inquiry and condemns all superstitious beliefs. He asserts that all problems encountered by individuals and a society can only be solved by human beings and not by divine interventions. He mentions that everyone should realize that others are also like them, show love and compassion toward them, and help them in every way possible. Thiruvalluvar strongly believes that moral codes vary with respect to place and time, and the wise people in a society determine them at a particular period. His

philosophy is totally secular. Thiruvalluvar's views on human equality, rationalism, human effort, love and compassion, and secularism are completely compatible with those of modern humanists.

Keywords:

Humanism, equality, rationalism, superstitious beliefs, love, compassion, secularism.

The Principles of Humanism:

According to the Humanist Manifesto III adopted in 2003, "Humanism is a progressive philosophy of life that, without supernaturalism, affirms our ability and responsibility to lead ethical lives of fulfillment that aspire to the greater good of humanity." Prof. Stephen Law, a British philosopher and senior lecturer at the University of London summarizes the basic beliefs of humanism as follows:

- Humanists believe that science and reason should apply to all areas of life. No beliefs should be considered off-limits and be protected from rational scrutiny.

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- Humanists are either atheists² or at least agnostics.³ They are also skeptical about the existence of angels, demons, and other such supernatural beings.
- Humanists do not believe in reincarnation. They also reject the existence of a soul.
- Humanists strongly believe in the importance of moral values. They believe that moral and ethical values are derived from human need and interest as tested by experience and they should not be based on religious values.
- Life's fulfillment emerges from individual participation in the service of humane ideals.
- Humanists believe that working to benefit society maximizes individual happiness.

According to a Humanist Magazine,⁴ "Humanism is a rational philosophy informed by science, inspired by art, and motivated by compassion. It derives its goals of life from human needs and interest rather than from theological or ideological abstractions and asserts that humanity must take responsibility for its destiny." Many prominent scientists, Nobel laureates, doctors, philosophers, authors, and scholars have been and are humanists. Most of them subscribe to rationalism, atheism, or agnosticism ideologies. They have a sincere concern for human welfare and believe in the human ability to solve human problems without any help from supernatural powers. Humanists' main focus is on plans such as the prevention of wars, formation of a world government, promotion of rationalism, establishing social justice, protecting the environment, and eliminating economic inequality. In addition to these ambitious and lofty goals, humanists are compassionate people. They are also

concerned with the people's suffering from oppression, discrimination, poverty, hunger, and diseases and strive to mitigate such sufferings.

The concept of humanism is not of recent origin. As early as the sixth century B.C., the Buddha (563 BC – 483 BC) preached love and compassion. The Buddha did not believe in God. He ignored the questions regarding souls as irrelevant. Buddhism is more than a religion. It is a tradition that focuses on personal spiritual development. It is a philosophy and a humanistic way of life aimed at striving to lead a moral life, being aware of one's thoughts and actions, and developing wisdom, compassion, and understanding. Buddhism and humanism have a lot in common.

Confucius (551 BC - 479 BC) was a contemporary of the Buddha. He is the father of Confucianism, a system of thought that influenced China and other parts of Asia for several centuries. Although Confucius took the existence of gods and heaven for granted, his ethical and political philosophy was independent of such beliefs. Confucius is credited with the Golden Rule, which states, "Do not do unto others what you do not want them to do unto you. This is the only law that is needed. It is the foundation of all the rest." This Golden Rule is adopted in some form or the other by almost all religions and by many humanists.

According to Stephen Law, "Another significant philosopher from a humanist perspective is Protagoras (490 BC – 420 BC), the Greek philosopher. Protagoras' reasoning about morality and virtue was pursued without any reliance on theistic or religious doctrine or belief." In fact, Protagoras was a self-declared agnostic. He said:

2. One who denies the existence of God

3. One who is not committed to believing in either the existence or the nonexistence of God

4. http://americanhumanist.org/Humanism/Definitions_of_Humanism

Concerning the gods, I have no means of knowing whether they exist or not or of what sort they may be, because of the obscurity of the subject, and the brevity of human life.

Although there was a significant development in philosophical thought during the sixth and fifth centuries BC, that period did not have a monopoly in that field. There have been many outstanding philosophers in many parts of the world after the fifth century BC. About two thousand years ago, in the state of Tamil Nadu (the land of Tamil-speaking people), India, there was an extraordinary man who was an outstanding philosopher who analyzed almost all aspects of human life and offered practical guidelines for a purposeful life on earth. His ideas are considered by scholars to be eternally valid and universally acceptable. His name is Thiruvalluvar.⁵ His legacy is his magnum opus called Thirukkural,⁶ and it is regarded as a veritable guide for the "Art of Living." He is very well known in the state of Tamil Nadu where people of all ages study his book. Professor Moriz Winternitz (1863-1937), an eminent Austrian orientalist, says, "Valluvar's Kural is one of the gems of the world literature. He (Valluvar) stands above all races, castes, and sects, and what he teaches is a general human morality and wisdom. No wonder, that the Kural has been read, studied and highly praised in the land of its origin for centuries, but also found many admirers in the west, ever since it has become known." Dr. Albert Schweitzer (1875 – 1965) the German Philosopher, physician and, Nobel laureate admired Valluvar's positive view of the world and life as opposed to the "world and life negation" preached

by the religions of India. Leo Tolstoy (1828 – 1910), the famous Russian novelist, was very impressed with Valluvar's ideas about non-violence. Also, Mahatma Gandhi (1869 – 1948) was so fascinated by the Kural that he wanted to learn Tamil so that he could study the original version of the Kural. The Russians are said to have preserved important books of lasting value in the Kremlin in an indestructible Tungsten chamber so that they may outlast even a nuclear attack and be useful to posterity. The Kural is one of the books preserved in that chamber. Many other scholars and philosophers from various parts of the world have recognized and admired Valluvar's profound and yet pragmatic view of human life and the practical guidelines he has offered for a righteous life with love and compassion. The Kural has been translated into more than forty languages of the world. There are more than fifty translations of the Kural in the English language alone.

Valluvar on Human Equality:

Humanists are firmly committed to the protection and promotion of human rights included in documents such as the United Nations Organization's Universal Declaration of Human Rights. These rights represent shared values rooted in our common humanity and the shared human needs, transcending particular cultural and religious traditions. This regard for human rights, equal dignity, and equality of all human beings is one of the basic principles of humanism.

Like the humanists, Valluvar believes in the equality of all human beings. During his time, the Vedic idea that people in the world belong to four distinct classes - the priestly

5. There is no clear evidence to indicate that Thiruvalluvar was his real name. The term Valluvan refers to one whose job it was to announce the royal proclamations to the public by beating a drum. It might also mean one who served as a minister to a king. Valluvar is the respectful version of the word Valluvan. The term "Thiru" is an honorific prefix to anything that is considered sacred or divine. So, it is quite possible that Thiruvalluvar might not have been his real name, but that is how he has been referred to by others. In this essay, for the sake of brevity, we will refer to Thiruvalluvar as Valluvar.

6. In Tamil, the word "kural" means a two-line verse (couplet). Valluvar's book consists of 1330 kurals. As in the case of his name, the term "Thiru" is an honorific prefix to the book of kurals and hence his book is called Thirukkural. For short, his book is often referred to as "the Kural" (with an uppercase K) and the word "kural" (with a lowercase k) is used to refer to the individual couplet.

class, the warrior class, the business class, and the class of laborers - has already begun to have its roots in Indian society. There were others who were considered social outcasts and they did not belong to any of the four classes. The class of an individual is determined by the family in which he is born and there was no provision for migration from one class to another. In such a class-oriented society, it was indeed revolutionary on the part of Valluvar to proclaim that "All are equal by birth."

All human beings are equal by birth, but distinctions arise only because of the different qualities of their actions. (kural – 972)

The elitist document, "The Declaration of Independence," which was adopted by the Continental Congress of the USA in 1776, declares that "All men are created equal". It is obvious that women were not considered equal to men and people of color were not considered equal to white men. Women and people of color had to fight for their equality and they obtained equal rights only in the 20th century. Even in the 21st century, we find that in many countries women do not enjoy equality with men. Therefore, Valluvar's declaration regarding equality by birth is undoubtedly revolutionary and is consistent with the principles of humanism.

Valluvar on Rationalism:

Merriam-Webster's dictionary defines rationalism as a theory that reason is in itself a source of knowledge superior to and independent of sense perceptions. Rationalism is the basic principle of humanism. Humanism's refusal to accept religious beliefs, supernatural phenomena, the existence of a soul, reincarnations, the immortality of the soul, etc. are all based on the fact that they cannot be verified by scientific methodologies. To a humanist, anything that cannot withstand the test of reason should be ignored as superstition.

From the humanist point of view, many of the religious tenets do not stand the test of reason. Also, a humanist finds that there are many inherent contradictions among the various religious beliefs. Therefore, it is not surprising that a humanist would remain skeptical of religions.

With respect to rationalism, Valluvar's ideas are in agreement with those of humanists. Valluvar says that one should verify the true nature of things and should not be misguided by their appearances.

Whatever be the apparent nature of things, it is wise to investigate their true nature. (kural – 355)

It is this type of free inquiry that forms the foundation of science. If Isaac Newton had ignored to investigate why an apple fell down to the ground instead of going up in the air, we would not have the laws of Newton. If Thomas Alva Edison did not pursue his investigations relentlessly, he would not have invented the incandescent electric bulb and would not have developed many devices in fields such as mass communication, sound recording, motion pictures, etc. Valluvar's suggestion that one should investigate the true nature of things is quite compatible with rational thinking and scientific methodologies.

Also, according to Valluvar, one should not accept others' statements as true without questioning them. He says that it is the mark of true wisdom to rationally analyze everything instead of taking them for granted.

True wisdom is to discern the truth in whatever is said by whomsoever. (kural – 423)

Questioning and verifying the statements made by others is a mark of critical thinking and critical thinking leads to increased knowledge. For example, if Charles Darwin had not thought critically and simply accepted religious teachings on creationism, he would not have come up with his theory on evolution. If Nicholas Copernicus had not

doubted Ptolemy's theory of geocentricity he would not have come up with his theory of heliocentricity which is regarded as the launching point of modern astronomy and the scientific revolution.

A typical religious person would not be open to questioning his own religious dogmas. The Buddha, the original humanist is supposed to have said, "Believe nothing, no matter where you read it, or who said it, no matter even if I have said it, unless it agrees with your own reason and your own common sense." Valluvar does not endorse any religion as the ultimate truth. He is open to the inquiry of all statements made by anyone. He echoes the Buddha when he says that individuals should investigate and believe whatever they feel comfortable and should not blindly follow any faith. The kurals mentioned above (kurals 355 and 423) are consistent with the humanists' philosophy that "No beliefs should be considered off-limits and all beliefs should be subjected to rational scrutiny."

Valluvar on Human Effort:

Throughout human history, man has invented remarkable devices to improve his quality of life. Researchers have been successful in developing medicines for many diseases to save human life. Thanks to the Wright brothers, we are now able to fly. Scientists and engineers have successfully sent human beings to the moon and brought them back. The invention of computers has revolutionized the world. There has been no evidence that these and other similar accomplishments materialized through the miracles of gods or their agents. These accomplishments have been made possible purely by human efforts. Lofty ideals, proper goals and objectives, careful and detailed planning, unflinching determination, and persistent hard work in executing the plans in spite of unexpected setbacks have been responsible for these and other

phenomenal achievements of individuals and organizations. Valluvar is a strong proponent of human effort rather than prayer. He suggests high ambition, appropriate goals and objectives, and unceasing hard work will lead to success in human endeavors. The following kurals illustrate Valluvar's emphasis on human efforts to succeed in life.

Importance of lofty ideals

The stalk of water-lily grows as the water level rises; so also, the greatness achieved by a man is determined by his lofty ideals.

(kural – 595)

Importance of having clear goals

Those who fear disgrace will not venture anything without having a clear goal in mind.

(Kural - 464)

Importance of Planning

Consider the pros and cons and the net gain before venturing into any action.

(kural - 461)

Nothing is difficult to attain for those who consult with knowledgeable people before venturing into action.

(kural – 462)

Actions should follow analytic decision resulting from deep deliberations; it is a disgrace to commence actions before such deliberations.

(Kural – 467)

One will be ruined if one does what should not be done; one will be ruined if one fails to do what should be done.

(kural – 466)

Consider thoroughly the resources, means, tasks, timing and place of action before embarking on action.

(kural – 675)

Importance of Persistent Hard Work

If those who have planned an undertaking, possess persistence, they will achieve what they desired as they have desired.

(kural – 666)

It is easy to achieve your goal, provided you keep it in mind persistently.

(kural – 540)

One should not give up by saying "It is impossible." Persistent efforts will lead to success.

(kural – 611)

Even if God cannot help you to attain your goal, you will be rewarded in proportion to your efforts and hard work. (Kural- 619)

Those who work with ceaseless industry will overcome unplanned adverse events. (kural – 620)

In the process of working towards a goal, there could be unexpected delays, disappointments, and other random interruptions to progress. Valluvar does not advise his readers to resort to prayer to overcome these difficulties. First, he suggests that one should be prepared to meet adversities in the course of a project and should not be under the false assumption that everything will go according to plan. In other words, one should expect all kinds of adversities and develop contingency plans to mitigate the risks that might arise from them. Also, according to Valluvar, the best way to overcome adversities is to laugh at them. Again, prayer has no place in Valluvar's scheme for achieving success.

He who does not crave for pleasure and realizes that adversity in life is natural is not affected by adversity. (kural – 628)

Laugh at adversity; there is nothing better than laughter to overcome adversity. (kural – 621)

As it can be seen from the above-mentioned kural, Valluvar places importance on goals, plans, and hard work rather than prayer. For achieving success, Valluvar's thinking is completely consistent with that of the humanists.

Valluvar on Love and Compassion:

Humanism is a philosophy of life that cares for the welfare of all human beings. According to humanists, there is no supernatural being that helps to relieve the sufferings of human beings. They believe that human problems must be addressed and solved by human beings. Empathy and compassion are essential to solve people's sufferings. Empathy is the attempt of one who is self-

aware to understand and even experience another person's situation and emotional state as their own. Compassion is taking a step further, where a person feels empathy and then tries to take actions to alleviate the suffering of the other person. In the case of compassion, the emphasis is on action. So, humanists' concern for others' sufferings is based on their empathy and compassion for others. Not only that humanists emphasize compassion, but they also believe that working to benefit the society maximizes individual happiness.

Just like the humanists, Valluvar does not expect that God will solve the problems such as poverty, hunger, and other miseries that besiege human beings. He emphasizes the need for love, empathy, and compassion to solve human problems. For example, he questions the value of a person's intelligence, if he does not feel others' suffering as his own. Also, he is of the opinion that the world functions only because there are people with compassion. Furthermore, he criticizes a person without compassion as a burden to the earth.

If one cannot treat others' sufferings as his own, what benefit has one gained from his intelligence? (kural – 315)

Sharing your food and other resources to protect all lives is the best of all precepts in the books of the world. (kural – 322)

Gracious Compassion is the uniquely great quality, because of which the world functions. (kural – 571)

The world exists and functions because there are people with compassion. If compassion is absent in a person, he becomes a burden to the earth. (kural – 572)

As mentioned earlier, Valluvar strongly believes in the equality of all human beings. According to him, only those who realize that all are equal are really alive. Those who

fail to realize the equality of all people are not really alive. Since all are supposed to be equal, people should have empathy and compassion for fellow human beings. Valluvar is of the opinion that a compassionate person should realize that the purpose of gathering wealth is to share it with the deserving people who are in need. Sharing of wealth could be either in the form of charity or philanthropy. Valluvar distinguishes between charity and philanthropy. According to Valluvar, charity tends to be a short-term, emotional, immediate response, focused primarily on rescue and relief, whereas philanthropy is much more long-term, more strategic, and focused on rebuilding.

He who realizes that he is just like all other human beings is the one who is really alive; all others are deemed dead. (kural - 214)

All the wealth gained through hard work is for doing service to the deserving people. (kural - 212)

Valluvar and Secularism:

Secularism, as defined in the Merriam-Webster dictionary, is the "indifference to, or rejection or exclusion of, religion and religious considerations." As a philosophy, secularism seeks to interpret life on principles taken solely from the material world, without recourse to religion. In accordance with its negation of religion, secularism as a philosophy requires that governments should remain neutral on the matter of religion and should neither enforce nor prohibit the free exercise of religion, leaving the religious choice to the liberty of the people. In other words, a secular state does not align itself with any particular religious or anti-religious point of view. So, in a secular society, religious people can feel just as much at home as a humanist can. In view of this, secularism and humanism can co-exist. As Dr. Steven Pinker points out, "Though humanism does not invoke gods, spirits, or souls to ground meaning and morality, it is by no means incompatible with

religious institutions." The world is not full of humanists. There are people with varying religious beliefs. So, from a practical point of view, humanists prefer to adopt secularism as the philosophy when it comes to public policies and the administration of a state.

A careful study of the Kural leaves room for the interpretation that Valluvar believed in a creator and that he also believed in the existence of a soul and its permanence. These were his personal beliefs. As discussed earlier, he leaves it to the individuals to rationally analyze and come to their own conclusions and not to accept any statement made by anyone. When it comes to matters like morality and administration of a country, he is a secularist.

Valluvar is convinced that feeding the hungry and helping the poor are human solutions to address the poverty of fellow human beings. One cannot be more emphatic than Valluvar in promoting charity and philanthropy as a means to help the poor people. Valluvar advocates charity and philanthropy towards poor people out of genuine love and compassion for them and not by expecting any rewards in this life or in a future life.

If benevolence would result in one's ruin, then it is worth securing that ruin by selling oneself, if necessary. (kural - 220)

There is nothing better than philanthropy either in this world or in heaven (kural - 213)

According to Valluvar morality should be based on society and not be mandated by any particular religion. Observance of good conduct is an end itself and not a means to attain any reward either in this world or the next. He values morality more than life itself.

Since right conduct leads to eminence, it should be preserved more carefully than life itself. (kural - 131)

Right conduct should be carefully preserved and guarded. Though one knows and excels in many virtues, right conduct alone will come to one's aid.
(kural – 132)

Valluvar's ideas regarding the administration of a country are strictly based on secular principles. There are two hundred and fifty kural in his book about the governance of a country by a king and one hundred kural about how a minister should carry out his duties. Nowhere in these kural, we find any mention of religious preferences or bias of the king or the minister in discharging their duties. So, Valluvar and the humanists share the same points of view with regards to secularism.

Valluvar on Morality:

Merriam-Webster's dictionary defines morality as the set of principles concerning the distinction between right and wrong or good and bad behavior. Religions claim that principles that constitute morality come from God. According to religions, it is God who determines what is right and wrong and what is good and bad. The moral codes as determined by God are communicated to the people through the agents of God. The Ten Commandments as revealed to Moses and the Sermon on the Mount as delivered by Jesus Christ are examples of religious moral codes. Almost all religions promulgate their own moral codes as revealed by their gods or their god's agents.

There are inherent contradictions among the religious moral mandates. What one religion approves as moral behavior is condemned by another religion as unacceptable behavior. For example, one religion prohibits the consumption of alcoholic beverages. Whereas, another religion considers that as an acceptable behavior and even incorporates it in some of the religious ceremonies. One religion prohibits the killing of animals whereas

another religion considers that animals can be killed and eaten by human beings. One religion permits a man to marry up to four women, whereas other religions do not accept that as a morally acceptable behavior. There are other examples of contradictions among religious beliefs in the case of moral codes. So, morality based on religions is relative and the guidelines are not absolute. If an individual does not like the moral codes of his religion, he can convert to another religion and continue his immoral behavior.

In addition to the contradictions and inconsistencies in the moral codes as decreed by the religions, there is also another problem. They are aimed at regulating human behavior by the promise of rewards and punishments. Those who violate the moral codes are told that they would be punished and those who follow the codes of behavior are promised good life on earth and in heaven after their death.

It should be noted that there are about a billion people who do not belong to any organized religion or do not believe in any religion or supernatural beings. What about the moral codes of behavior for them? In view of the fact that religious moral codes are relative and do not apply to all of humanity, they are not the ideal or the right set of codes that all people can follow. Perhaps, that is why the renowned scientist, Albert Einstein said, "There is nothing divine about morality, it is a purely human affair." In agreement with Albert Einstein, the humanists are of the opinion that the moral codes are not to be based on religions, but instead, they should be based on scientific method, compassion, and egalitarianism that guides our sense of fairness. As philosopher Paul Kurtz said, "The goal of humanistic morality is the enhancement of the good life, happiness, and well-being for the widest number of individuals."

Valluvar's stance on morality is very similar to that of the humanists. Valluvar's morality is based on equality, non-violence, and compassion. As mentioned earlier, he believes in a classless society where all are equal by birth. There is no room for discrimination of any kind in Valluvar's philosophy. According to him, since all are equal, everyone should help the poor without expecting anything in return. He believes that the purpose of gathering wealth is to help the deserving others. His advocacy for charity and philanthropy is based on love and compassion towards fellow human beings and not based on any anticipated benefit either in this birth or in the future. In fact, he says, even if one does not get to go to heaven, it is better to be practice charity.

To give to the needy alone is charity. All the rest is an investment in anticipation of a return.
(Kural – 221)

Even if it is good (for the ascetic) to receive charity from others for livelihood, it is still bad. Even if heaven is denied to the giver, giving (charity) is still good.
(kural – 222)

Since words and actions that hurt others originate in the mind, Valluvar insists on cultivating a mind without any blemishes. He says that one should never even think of an evil thought at any time towards anyone. Also, in accordance with the "Golden Rule" of Confucius, he says that one should avoid doing things to others that one finds harmful to oneself. In fact, he goes one step further and states that we should do good deeds to those who do evil to us so that they will be vexed. Valluvar's stance on non-violence can be seen in the following kural:

The best punishment for those who do evil to you is to shame them by returning good for evil and after doing good in return, just forget the evil that was done to you as well as the good deed you did.
(kural – 314)

What benefit does someone derive from his intelligence (knowledge, wisdom), if he does not treat others' suffering as his own? (kural – 315)

What one has realized as causing pain to oneself, one should not inflict on others.
(kural – 316)

It is the supreme virtue not to have a harmful thought about anybody in any degree at any moment.
(kural – 317)

Why does a man inflict upon other living beings those things he found harmful to himself?
(kural – 318)

Good conduct varies with respect to the location and the time period in which one lives. What is considered good conduct in the western countries may not be considered good in the eastern countries and vice versa. Also, the societies change over a period of time. For example, in the past, same sex marriage and divorce were not considered acceptable and nowadays they are considered acceptable behavior in many countries. Since what is good conduct varies with respect time and, location, Valluvar says good conduct is the one that is determined by the wise people of the society where one lives and not by the religion to which one belongs. Therefore, as Greg M. Epstein concludes in his book, "Good Without God: what billion non-religious people do believe", there can be good without God and Valluvar is in agreement with that.

Those who fail to conduct themselves in harmony with the world are ignorant despite their vast learning.
(kural – 140)

Conclusion:

Valluvar recognizes human equality. He emphasizes rationalism as the approach to understanding the true nature of things and the truth in all statements made by anyone. He is emphatic about human efforts rather than prayer for success in life. He stresses love and compassion towards one and all and helping others without expecting anything in

return. He is secular in his approach to the governance of a country. For him, morality should be independent of religion, and it should be determined by wise people. Based on these facts, it is evident that Valluvar was a humanist, and his book is indeed a manual on humanism.

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Dr. Prabhakaran was born in Mannargudi, Tamil Nadu. He holds B.Sc. and M.Sc. degrees in Mathematics from the University of Madras, Chennai. After working as a lecturer in engineering colleges in Tamil Nadu for six years, he migrated to the USA and obtained his M.S. and Ph.D. in Computer Science and MBA in Information Management from U.S. universities. He has held senior positions in private companies, and he has also managed and directed Supercomputing facilities for NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) and U.S. Army.

Dr. Prabhakaran is passionate about the Tamil language, Tamil literature, Tamil culture, and the Tamils' welfare. He has served as President of the Washington Tamil Association, Secretary of the Tamil Nadu Foundation, and Vice President of the Federation of Tamil Sangams of North America.

In 2003, Dr. Prabhakaran founded the Tamil Literary Study Group in Washington, D.C. Under the auspices of this group, he conducted classes on Tamil literature. He has coordinated and successfully conducted major international conferences in the USA on Thirukkural, Puranaanuuru, and Kurunthokai.

Dr. Prabhakaran has authored several blogs on Thirukkural, Puranaanuuru, Kurunthokai, and other Tamil literary classics. He has authored books on Puranaanuuru and Kurunthokai. He has also published his Thirukkural related essays in English as a book under the title, "The Ageless Wisdom (As embodied in Thirukkural)." His book on Thirukkural, "Puthiya paarvaiyil Thirukkural (புதிய பார்வையில் திருக்குறள்)," was released recently.

He has delivered several lectures on Thirukkural and Puranaanuuru in various cities in the USA and India. His lectures are available on YouTube.

Dr. Prabhakaran considers promoting Thirukkural and Sangam Literature in western countries as his mission in life. He lives with his wife Geetha in Maryland, USA. ■