

**Celebration of the Eminence of Thiruvalluvar – 2024 by the Mahatma Gandhi
Institute on Friday 26 April 2024 at 13:15 hrs**

Mr. Rajcoomar Rampertab, Director-General MGI & RTI

**Dr. Jeevendren Chemen, Associate Professor and Head, Department of Tamil
Studies**

The President of the Mauritius Tamil Temples Federation

Representatives of Socio-Cultural organisations

All protocol observed

Ladies and gentlemen

Allow me at the very outset to present the apology of His Excellency Mr. Prithvirajsing, President of the Republic of Mauritius, who has left Mauritius yesterday.

I must admit that I have not read the **Thirukural**, but I have read a lot **about** this masterpiece of the **Saint Poet Thiruvalluvar**. This explains my interest of joining you this afternoon so as to learn more about the Poet and his Thirukkural.

My interest in learning more about the Thirukkural is motivated by what famous personalities have said about this work. Mahatma Gandhi at one point of time is known to have said, "**I wanted to learn Tamil to enable me to study Valluvar's Thirukural in his mother tongue itself. It is a treasure.**"

More recently, Prime Minister Modi said **“I bow to the great Thiruvalluvar. Simple and vast in scope, his thoughts & writings have been a strong influence on humanity for centuries.”**

The Thirukkural is one of the most important works in the Tamil language. Just like ‘Ramayana’, ‘Mahabharata’, ‘Bhagavad-Gita’ and other scriptures, Thirukkural is also replete with words of wisdom, simple and profound messages. It is written that the Thirukkural has won the appellation of world Gospel or Universal Gospel.

It is considered a chef d'oeuvre of both Indian and world literature. To quote Albert Schweitzer **“There hardly exists in the literature of the world a collection of maxims in which we find such lofty wisdom as in Thirukkural”**. UNQUOTE

Ladies and gentlemen

In its essence, Tirukkural is a treatise par excellence on the art of living. Thiruvalluvar, the author, diagnoses the intricacies of human nature with such penetrating insight, perfect mastery and consummate skill absorbing the most subtle concepts of modern psychology, that one is left wondering at his range and depth.

His prescriptions, ethics, morality and humaneness are full of wisdom and practical to the core. They cut across castes, creeds, regions and ages and have a freshness which makes one feel as if they are meant for the present times.

It is a fact that moral values have declined in the society. That apart, the general behaviour among youngsters in the society is lacking in moral values, like, decency, respect for elders and others, hospitality, politeness, drug addiction. It is the need of the day to inculcate into them moral values and ethics by way of education. Perhaps

consideration should be given to propagate the principles enshrined in the Thirukkural among our youth.

In fact, the immortality and universality of Thirukkural are unquestionable. Its ethics and values are applicable to all religions, countries and times. The ideas expressed in Thirukkural are so universal that even after almost two millennia they are still relevant to-day.

Ladies and gentlemen,

There are no words to explain the eminence of the greatest work on Tamil Literature – the Thirukkural.

I prefer to leave the floor now for Dr. Chemen who will enlighten us on the ‘**Concept of Discipline in Thirukkural**’

Before resuming my seat, I would like to thank the Mahatma Gandhi Institute for inviting me to the celebration of the Eminence of Thiruvalluvar.