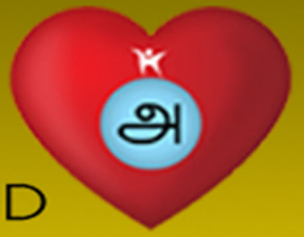


TAMIL HUMANISM

A MEANINGFUL LIFE IN THIS WORLD



Tamil Spirituality

SEENIVASA - MOODALI VERSION
Seenivasa (1861) & R.M. Moodali (1907)

THIRU MOODALI

Tamil Spirituality

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Thiru Moodali

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Transliteration by Professor Moon Moodley, set in moon.mTL

DEDICATED

To Tamil Humanists

The Tamil Humanist symbol

A is the first letter and with other letters forms the Tamil alphabet. It is also the first letter of the word 'Anbe'. 'Anbe' means love. So the letter A is a symbol of love.

The circle around the letter A symbolizes the earth. This emphasizes the universality of love and the philosophy of Tamil Humanism.

The shape of the heart around the earth is a symbol of love and healthy living.

Red, Black and yellow are traditional Tamil colours. Blue is the colour of the earth from space.

This Tamil Humanist symbol defines Tamil Humanism's unique identity and its philosophy's continued existence since the inception of the Indus Valley civilization to the present times. It is the symbol of humanism, human unity and cooperation.



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▪ **TAMIL SPIRITUALITY**

Tamil Spirituality are core spiritual principles that emanate from the Tamil Marai. It is universal and its principles and concepts of God are acceptable for all of humanity. The word ‘Tamil’ refers to the people inhabiting Tamil Nadu and Eelam (Jaffna Kingdom) or their language, culture, philosophy, spirituality or religion. Tamil is a dynamic and living identity. The word ‘Spirituality’ pertains to the spirit or soul or sacred things. It is also the foundation of the moral nature and results in blissful experiences. Tamil spirituality defines the concepts of God and soul from a humanist perspective which is universal and beneficial to all Tamils.

Tamil spirituality is guided by the humanist and rationalist principles of the Tamil Marai. The Tamil Marai is a book of moral guidance for people. The Tamil Marai has two parts, the Concept of God and the Attributes of God. The Concept of God is the basis of Tamil Spirituality and the Attributes of God is the foundation of Tamil Humanist Culture. The three themes of the Tamil Marai are virtue, wealth and love. Chapter 1: ‘The Praise of God’, in the Tamil Marai summarises Tamil spiritual principles, belief and the concept of God. It emphasises two points. Firstly, praise the one God who is inconceivable to the human mind and body. Secondly, declare your faith in the Eight Divine Virtues.

Tamil Spirituality is differentiated from other religions of the world in that it is unique to the Tamil people yet its principles are universal. It evolved out of the Tamil people and it is recorded in the Tamil language. Tamil Spirituality was practiced by the Tamil people for over 70 000 years. The belief system was practised in the form of oral tradition. It flourished among the Tamils in the Indus Valley civilization (3300 BC) and continued in the four Tamil Kingdoms of Chera, Chola, Pandya and Eelam (Jaffna Kingdom). In the year 31 BC, on the day after New Year’s Day, during Pongol, Thiruvallvar, the messenger of God was born. He received divine revelation and wrote the sacred Word of God, ‘The Tamil Marai’. The Tamil Religion is the oldest religion.

Tamil spirituality promotes virtue, wealth and pleasure. It is the path of love. It is a monotheistic faith of the Tamils where devotion is to one God. Tamil spirituality is devotion to the principles of the Tamil Marai. It promotes secular cultural and religious ceremonies emanating from the Tamil Marai. It encourages the use of the Tamil language in the worship of God.

Each human being should have their own individual and personal relationship with God without any other person or object between them and God. You should live your life according to your own understanding and realisations. Every human being irrespective of race, colour, gender or nationality is welcome to accept Tamil spirituality as their belief.

To be spiritual, there is nothing you need to do. You simply accept God’s grace. You do not have to do anything or be anything other than you. You do not have to be perfect. You do not need to do rituals or have fear. You just accept God’s grace.

▪ TAMIL MARAI VERSES

1.1. Tamil Marai

(SACRED WORD OF GOD for Tamils)

By **Thiruvalluvar**: The Messenger of God: 31 BC

Text

1. THE PRAISE OF GOD

Chapter 1

Praise God

1. அகர முதல எழுத்தெல்லாம் ஆதி
பகவன் முதற்றே உலகு.
2. கற்றதனால் ஆய பயனென்கொல் வாலறிவன்
நற்றான் தொழார் எனின்.
3. மலர்மிசை ஏகினான் மாணடி சேர்ந்தார்
நிலமிசை நீடுவாழ் வார்.
4. வேண்டுதல் வேண்டாமை இலானடி சேர்ந்தார்க்கு
யாண்டும் இடும்பை இல.
5. இருள்சேர் இருவினையும் சேரா இறைவன்
பொருள்சேர் புகழ்புரிந்தார் மாட்டு.
6. பொறிவாயில் ஐந்தவித்தான் பொய்தீர் ஒழுக்க
நெறிநின்றார் நீடுவாழ் வார்.

7. தனக்குவமை இல்லாதான் தாள்சேர்ந்தார்க் கல்லால்

மனக்கவலை மாற்றல் அரிது.

8. அறவாழி அந்தணன் தாள்சேர்ந்தார்க் கல்லால்

பிறவாழி நீந்தல் அரிது.

9. கோளில் பொறியிற் குணமில்வே எண்குணத்தான்

தாளை வணங்காத் தலை.

10. பிறவிப் பெருங்கடல் நீந்துவர் நீந்தார்

இறைவன் அடிசேரா தார்.

Transliteration

1. THE PRAISE OF GOD

Chapter 1

Praise God

kadavul vaazhththu

1. agara mudhala ezhuththellaam aadhi
pagavan mudhatrē ulagu.
2. kattradhanaal aaya payanenkol vaalafivan
nattraan thozhaaar enin.
3. malarmaisai ēginaan maañadi sērndhaar
nilamisai needuvaazh vaar.
4. vēñdudhal vēñdaamai ilaanadi sērndhaarkku
yaañdum idumbai ila.
5. irulśēr iruvinaiyum sēraa ifaivan
porulśēr pugazhpurindhaar maattu.
6. poñivaayil aindhaviththaan poydheer ozhukka
neñinifaar needuvaazh vaar.
7. thanakkuvamai illaadhaan thaalśērndhaark kallaal
manakkavalai maattral aridhu.
8. añavaazhi andhañan thaalśērndhaark kallaal
piñavaazhi neendhal aridhu.
9. kōlil poñiyiñ guñamilavē eñguñaththaan
thaalai vañanggaath thalai.
10. piñavip perunggal neendhuvar neendhaar
ifaivan adisēraa thaar.

Translation

1. THE PRAISE OF GOD

Chapter 1

Praise God:

PRAISE THE ONE GOD WHO IS INCONCEIVABLE TO THE HUMAN MIND AND BODY.

PRAISE THE EIGHT DIVINE VIRTUES ASPECT OF THE ONE GOD.

THE EIGHT DIVINE VIRTUES IS THE CULTURE OF LOVE, PEACE, TRUTH, RIGHT CONDUCT, NON VIOLENCE, HUMAN VALUES, HUMAN RIGHTS AND NATURE RIGHTS.

DECLARE YOUR FAITH IN THE EIGHT DIVINE VIRTUES.

1.

'A' leads letters; the eternal God 1
Leads and lords the entire world.

2.

That scripture is vain which does not glorify 2
God's good attributes; who knows all.

3.

Long they live on earth who gain 3
The attributes of God in a healthy mind.

4.

Who hold God's attributes; who neither likes nor detests in extremes 4
Are free from the births of negative thoughts.

5.

God's myths, told by those, are free from right 5
And wrong; the twins of dreaming night.

6.

They prosper long who walk God's Path, 6
Who controls the senses.

7.

God's attributes, alone can ease the anxious mind, 7
Whose likeness none can find.

8.

Who swims the sea of vice is one who 8
Clasps the attributes of the Path of Virtue's sea.

9.

Like senses uncontrolled, that head is vain 9
Which bows not to Eight Virtues Divine.

10.

The sea of births of thoughts; they alone swim 10
Who hold onto God's attributes and love God.

COMMENTARY ON ‘THE PRAISE OF GOD’

The Tamil Marai articulates Tamil spiritual principles in the following verse:

'A' leads letters; the eternal God
Leads and lords the entire world.

A is the first letter and with other letters forms an alphabet.

Written words are formed from the alphabet to communicate meaning, thought, ideas and knowledge.

The ancient Word of God leads the entire world.

The feet of God are a similitude of the attributes of God.

Births are a metaphor of the emergence of thoughts, images, mental activities and formless phenomena in the mind.

Birth is also a metaphor of the arousal of feelings in the body.

“The Praise of God” chapter of the Tamil Marai is the written word form of the pillar of Light that guides Tamils.

“The Praise of God” chapter defines the concept of God.

Verse 1 explains the nature of God. There is only one God who is inconceivable to the human mind and body.

Verse 2 explains the nature of scripture. The Word of God, traditional knowledge and songs of the saints discuss God’s attributes. That part of the songs and knowledge that does not glorify God’s attributes is in vain and should not be taken as guiding humanist principles.

Verse 3 explains the nature of a human being. A person has a soul and body and this person has an individual relationship with God. Those persons whose minds are saturated and ornamented with the attributes of God will live long on earth. This verse promotes reading, learning and teaching of Tamil Humanism to the next generation of Tamils.

Verse 4 explains the nature of a person’s relationship to this world. A person should aspire for God’s attributes, be neither extremely attached nor detached and be neither obsessed nor have hatred towards this world. Those people are free from the birth of negative thoughts in their minds and embody the nature of a happy human being.

Verse 5 explains the nature of myths. It describes the saint's mythological songs and knowledge which are neither right nor wrong as myths cannot be proven through human senses. These praises and myths are like dreams.

Verse 6 explains the Path of Virtue that God has given to humanity. It is a path of prosperity. A person has to control their senses to experience prosperity and happiness.

Verse 7 explains the nature of God. There is nothing that can be compared or likened to God. Human beings or animate and inanimate objects cannot have God's attributes in full. A person aspiring for God's attributes can ease and bring relief to an anxious mind.

Verse 8 explains the nature of this world. This world has good and bad, vice and virtue. A person's journey of life may encounter bad habits and moral weakness. Those persons who practice virtue are successful. The attributes of God are infinite and similar to the vast sea.

Verse 9 explains the nature of faith. A person must declare their faith in the Eight Divine Virtues. The Eight Divine Virtues is an aspect of the one God. The Eight Divine Virtues is the culture of love, peace, truth, right conduct, non-violence, human values, human rights and nature rights.

Verse 10 explains a person's relationship with God. All people must surrender to God. A person must hold onto the attributes of God. Only then can the attention within the mind, journey through unaffected by the birth of many negative thoughts. This relationship is the union between a person and God.

▪ **TAMIL SPIRITUAL ASSUMPTIONS**

An assumption is where a thing is accepted as true without proof.

The following are Tamil Spiritual Assumptions:

1. The existence of God
2. The existence of the soul
3. The existence of the spiritual world
4. God has attributes
5. The Eight Divine Virtues are the attributes of God
6. God is loving, forgiving and caring
7. Every person is a child of God
8. Human beings have a soul.
9. The soul come from and returns to God
10. Thiruvalluvar is a messenger of God and is a Tamil prophet.
11. Tamil Marai is divine revelation and is the Word of God.

Tamil Spirituality discusses the concept of God and Soul as assumptions. It is not analysed or researched further as no scientific methodology can be used to prove its existence. Further, it does not use any other religious method to prove the existence of those concepts as religious methods have proven to lead to irrationality, delusional behaviour and division amongst people. It merely states that God and the Soul exist just as the mind and love exists but it does not attempt to explain the dynamics of it.

These assumptions cannot be proven as facts in this journey of life. Until it is proven it remains an assumption and not a fact. Tamil Spirituality does not permit any fallacies to be based on these assumptions. Arguments, religious conflict and violence, superstitions, rituals and cults disappear when we understand that each of us holds a spiritual assumption and there are diverse spiritual assumptions that one would never be able to prove scientifically.

- **YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD**

From the spiritual assumptions a person understands their relationship with God.

- **WHO IS GOD?**

God is spirit.

God is omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent. God is eternal, infinite, inconceivable, and invisible. The Tamil words for God are Pagavan, Iraivan, Kadavul. This knowledge about God is sufficient.

- **WHO ARE YOU?**

You are a spirit soul.

The Soul is the Invisible Self. The Tamil word for soul is Pasu. This knowledge about the soul is sufficient.

- **WHERE DOES YOUR SOUL COME FROM?**

You come from the spiritual world.

This knowledge about the spiritual world is sufficient.

- **WHY ARE YOU IN THIS WORLD?**

You took birth in this world to celebrate life, bring happiness to yourself and share your joy with others.

- **IS YOUR BODY PRECIOUS TO GOD?**

Your body is precious to God.

Like sugar dissolved in water makes the water sweet, so is the soul's presence in the body. The soul pervades the whole body and is inseparable from the body in its journey in this world. The body and the soul intermingle. The form of your body is most beautiful.

- **WHAT IS THE GOAL OF LIFE?**

The goal of life is to engage everything in the Eight Divine Virtues.

The aim of human life is to attain bliss and happiness. The activity of individuals is best when guided by the Eight Divine Virtues.

- **WHAT IS YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD?**

You are a child of God.

All souls are eternally related to God in a loving relationship.

- **WHAT IS GOD'S RELATIONSHIP WITH YOU?**

God is your guide in your life. Do not expect God to do anything for you.

God loves you. God forgives you. God's love for you is unconditional.

- **HOW TO DEVELOP YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD?**

You can develop your relationship with God by reciting the Tamil Marai and hearing and chanting the Holy Names.

There is nothing you need to do for God. You do not need to do sacrifices, rituals or abstain from meat. What you need to do is for yourself, your family and your community. This alone pleases God.

- **WHAT HAPPENS AT THE TIME OF DEATH?**

You return to God when your body dies.

This knowledge about the departure of the soul is sufficient.

▪ **METHODOLOGY OF UNDERSTANDING TAMIL SCRIPTURE AND WRITINGS OF THE TAMIL SAINTS**

The Humanist methodology of understanding ancient texts is through the values of humanism. The guide to formulating and developing our interpretation is the values and virtues of the Tamil Marai. Texts are filtered and analysed for their benefit through universally acceptable values. The meaning of scripture has to take society to a better future in this world. Values and virtues determine our understanding of texts.

The ancient texts are made up of words that were formulated over 5000 years ago. Over centuries the meanings of these words changed. These words took on new meanings depending on the ideology that dominated the society in that age. The pronunciation of words also changed.

Words frozen in time convey particular meanings and ideology that can affect an individual positively or negatively. Tamil Humanism does not accept the idea of the meanings of words is static or fixed. Just as the Tamil script evolved over 5000 years from the Indus Valley script to its present form so too does the meanings of words evolve and changes to be relevant to the times. Words evolve and the meanings of words also evolve. Therefore those words and their meanings which are not humanistic or benefit the human being in this world and humanity are rejected.

We understand the past, their culture, lifestyle and meanings from humanist values that benefit the present society. Those meanings of words and texts that promote humanism is captured and understood as the Tamil Humanist Scripture and Writings.

Besides the Tamil Marai, all other Tamil texts are the words of saints. Saint's Writings are written words with meanings to convey a message. The words of the Saint's Writings are written by an individual or a group of persons. These Saint's Writings are written in the ancient past of human history.

These saints had strengths and weakness who wrote about a society that had good and bad at a particular century where a particular ideology dominated. Every word in the text is not the absolute truth but in it contains truths relevant to the modern age. Contradictions, mistakes and errors in ancient texts are accepted, mistakes committed by saints are acknowledged and these are put aside because they do not further the humanist cause. Yet in those very texts virtue and values that are universal are spoken and that is accepted as it is beneficial.

Tamil Scripture and the Saint's Writings are in the form of words and poetry. The Tamils wrote their scripture in the form of poems. A poem itself is subject to many interpretations. In poetic writings, metaphors, similitudes and exaggeration of qualities is used to increase the impact of the poem. The inner import of phrases will make the literature meaningful and relevant to humanity. The meanings of words are therefore essential to the understanding of Tamil literature from a humanist perspective. Since Tamil is a classical language, we find that one word has several different meanings. It is important to select the humanist meanings of the word to

understand the inner meaning of the poem. Those interpretations that use the 16th century dictionary meaning of words as an authority to promote anti humanistic and fatalistic ideologies of Scripture or the Saint's Writings are rejected by Tamil Humanism. The words of Scripture and Saint's Writings must be understood with humanistic meanings. Sometimes it is necessary to reinterpret and define words to give them new humanistic meanings. Therefore in the modern world the humanist interpretation of ancient writings is meaningful and relevant as well as beneficial for the Tamils.

We look from the present universal values and project into the past. We accept humanist values as guiding principles to understand ancient words, texts and to formulate a humanist interpretation that is progressive. Tamil Humanists take the Tamil Marai values as a guide to interpreting all the Saint's Writings. Tamil Humanism understands the meanings of the words of those writings from a human point of view. The inherent humanity of a person determines the understanding of the words of scriptures. The inherent dignity of a human being determines the message of the scripture. The inherent virtues and human values of a human being determine the meanings of words.

The Humanist methodology is opposite of the Fundamentalist methodology. The humanist methodology's principle is that civilization evolves from a primitive state to a modern advanced state. People moved from a bad situation to a good situation. That which was written in the primitive age has good and bad beliefs and they are understood rationally. Only the good which is relevant to the modern age is taken and assimilated in the modern times.

The Fundamentalist methodology is used by those who use the past and then project it to the present. People in the present are asked to live and behave, dress and think according to the fundamentalist interpretation of the past. Ancient texts freeze the life of those times and may include discrimination on gender, caste and race and include fatalistic beliefs, superstitions, fears and backward practices.

Fundamentalists quote from a scripture and take its meaning as it was fixed in the 13 century and formulate an interpretation that is backward and retards society's growth. They form an ideology based on that interpretation and is unwilling to any progress because it is not in line with their meaning of words. These people normally quote a religious text, formulate an interpretation and claim it to be the only understanding of the text and present it as the supreme truth for all others to follow. Fundamentalist interpretation opposes humanism, science and rational thinking. It has a negative attitude to the scientific progress of society. They retard personal growth, promotes rituals, superstition and cults with backward practices. Those who use this methodology are called fundamentalists. Fundamentalists are prone to violence and criminal activities. The codified dictionary of meaning of words in a particular century, the cult's leaders views and prejudices and the figurative and mystical meaning of words of the Saint's Writings creates an interpretation of the fundamentalist methodology. Their arguments and justification of their beliefs is based on quotes from the scripture. They take the incomplete text to be the absolute truth and as the word of God.

The Fundamentalist methodology's principle is that society was advanced and good in prehistoric times and has now degenerated to a primitive and bad state. The past was glorious

and perfect. The modern scientific age is regarded as bad and is the cause of people's miseries and is frowned upon. All that is written in ancient times is pure, good and brings happiness and prosperity to society. All knowledge of the modern civilisation is regarded as the cause of unhappiness and suffering. For the people's welfare, society must follow dogmatically the ancient texts. The past is romantically glorified. The bad beliefs and practices are accepted without questioning. The Fundamentalist methodology creates cults which eventually grow into sects which are alienated from the rest of the international community.

Tamil Humanism uses the Humanist methodology of understanding ancient Tamil Scripture and the Saint's Writings.

▪ **CONCEPT OF GOD**

There is only one God who is inconceivable to the human mind and body. God is love. God's name is love, God's form is love and God resides in love.

▪ **IS IT POSSIBLE TO UNDERSTAND GOD THROUGH YOUR SENSES?**

Human beings cannot use their senses to perceive God. The eye cannot see God. The ear cannot hear God. God is beyond your senses. God is inconceivable, unknowable and indescribable. People do not know God. This is because God cannot be proven as a material object and therefore there is no information on God. Tamil spirituality does not make speculative arguments on God.

▪ **IS IT POSSIBLE TO UNDERSTAND GOD THROUGH YOUR MIND?**

God is inconceivable to the human mind. The mind cannot comprehend, understand or perceive God. God is inconceivable by the human intelligence and imperceptible to human powers. The mind cannot create a complete and accurate image of God. Religious theories, conceptions, dogmas, metaphysical speculations, philosophy, ideas, images, paintings, pictures, statues, music, rituals and traditions cannot present God. Pictures cannot portray God, songs cannot glorify God, philosophy cannot explain God's existence, statutes cannot represent God's beauty and stories cannot describe the activities of God. God is beyond conventional mental conceptions and beyond the conceptions of thought. God cannot be defined or understood. God is beyond your mind. A person who uses the mind to see God will suffer hallucinations. The discussion, research and argumentation about God are futile.

▪ **IS IT POSSIBLE TO UNDERSTAND GOD THROUGH YOUR FEELINGS?**

Human beings are unable to experience God through their feelings, emotions and mental state. Physical or emotional torture and rituals cannot bring the presence of God. God is beyond your emotional and mental state.

▪ **IS IT POSSIBLE TO UNDERSTAND GOD THROUGH SCIENCE?**

God cannot be proven through scientific methodology. God has not revealed a name or form to anyone which can be independently proven by another person. God has no name and no form that can be scientifically proven. God is without birth or death. God is known by many names in every language, culture and religion. People attributed a name to God from their own language.

- **CONCEPT OF SOUL**

- ❖ **IS IT POSSIBLE TO UNDERSTAND THE SOUL?**

Every human being has a soul. The soul is inconceivable to the human mind. The soul is a being of love and peace.

The soul cannot be perceived directly as this is physically and psychologically impossible. It is a particle of energy. The soul cannot be proven through scientific methodology.

- **CONCEPT OF THE MIND**

- ❖ **WHAT IS THE MIND?**

The mind has cognitive faculties that enable consciousness, perception, thinking, judgement, memory, feeling, thought and allows the person to be aware of their world and experiences.

In its natural state, a clear empty inner space exists in the mind.

The mind is always united with one of the entities, God (Virtue) or Bondage (Sin), and it reflects the quality of the entity with which it is associated. The mind's nature is such that it does not stand alone. It is bound to some entity and reflects whatever it is with. If it is with God, it reflects virtue. If it is with Bondage, sin is reflected.

- **CONCEPT OF ATTRIBUTES**

- ❖ **WHAT ARE THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD?**

The attributes of God are the Eight Divine Virtues. The Virtues guide the individuals, community and nation. Virtue is guided by the Spirit of God. The Grace of God is the Eight Divine Virtues. Virtue is Divine.

The attributes of God are in principles or attributes only. It describes the nature, principles and quality of God. The attributes can only be expressed in words, song and poetry. They do not refer to any mythological entities, persons, animals, rituals or superstition. It cannot be expressed in idols, animals or humans and does not demand worship in the form of rituals.

All descriptive words of God are the similitudes of the nature of God. Similitudes explain or describe God. Similitudes provide understanding of God. The position of soul and God can only be illustrated by various analogies, for e.g. the 1st verse in the Tamil Marai which says that God is like the letter 'A'. This is an analogy of vowels of the Tamil language in relation to God. The primary sound that the human tongue can utter is 'A'. Babies' first sound is 'A' then 'ma' and 'pa'. Animals in cry or play sound the 'A'. 'A' is the sound of animals and humans and therefore is the similitude of the all-pervasive presence of God.

When God is apart from the world, God is inconceivable, pure infinite Love. When God is in relation with the world, God is perceived through God's attributes e.g. Light or Eight Divine Virtues. Energy is an attribute of God and the by product or effect of this energy is light. Light is the result of the presence of energy. An aspect of God is the Eight Divine Virtues. The Eight Divine Virtues is like the light and is the result of the presence of energy which is like God. Virtues are attributes of God and the effect of these attributes in people's lives is felt as love and peace.

God has unlimited number of attributes. The attributes are not God. People have taken the attribute and given it a name which defines that particular attribute only. Tamil spirituality rejects the creations of people who invented a form, create idols, myths and rituals for them. These created objects of people are not the attributes of God.

▪ JOURNEY TO FREEDOM

❖ WHAT IS YOUR BONDAGE?

Sin is bondage. Bondage is sinful activities that bind the soul to evil. Bondages are wrong perceptions, improper values, destructive ideas, out-dated beliefs, rituals, bad habits, delusional behaviour, superstition, ignorance, evil, illusions and the desire to control others and their activities. Bondage constrains a person from receiving the knowledge from God and to attain perfection and freedom. The soul, God, matter and objects of matter are all divine and good. It is the bondages from which we need to free ourselves. Sin keeps us away from our relationship with God and brings all misery.

❖ WHAT ARE THE ELEMENTS OF BONDAGE?

Sin is the absence of virtues which causes bondage. There are three main elements of bondage, namely ignorance, bad activity and bad material conditions.

Ignorance causes sin. Sin causes the imperfection and impurity of the mind and actions of the body. Lust, greed, anger, envy and jealousy are sin. Sin causes bondage.

Bad Activity is the principle of cause and effect, action and reaction linked to bad choices and bad values. You reap what you sow. Every action has a reaction. Activity is present in society. Individuals and families reproduce activity, its effects and consequences when deeds are passed on to the children in a family to perform. The activity is passed from one generation to the next in a collective community or nation. Education modifies action with each generation either for the better or worse. The selection of deeds or activities is a matter of choice for the individual. Actions are done by thought, word and deed. A good deed is action done through thought, word and deed that gives happiness to oneself and others. A bad deed is action done by the mind, word or body that inflicts pain on oneself and others. Each action whether good or bad has an effect and consequences which will be reaped by the individual. A bad deed is happening due to a person's bad choices of associating with bondages of ignorance, bad material conditions and bad activities. An individual is an instrument that bondages flow through them therefore bad things happen. If they can change their association to Divine Virtues then good things happens.

Bad Material Conditions is the result bad Relations of Production. Relations of Production are the social relationships that people enter into, in order to survive, to produce and reproduce their means of life. The totality of these relationships establishes the economic structure. This forms the material conditions which include social structures, prosperity and standard of living that influences the general thought of the public. Culture creates and uses the means of production and the relations of production and is instrumental in the social evolution of human beings.

Bondages results in obscuration of the mind. Obscuration and liberation begins with mental perceptions of the external world. When a person begins to do something about it then it alters the physical world. Obscuration caused by the bondages does not allow the mind to see its true worth and dignity as a human being. Obscuration is when the mind reveals the desire for sin and hides the desire for virtue. Obscuration is where virtue is veiled from the soul because of the person's choice. The soul comes into the world for it to experience, to learn and retrospect.

❖ HOW DOES GRACE MAKE ONE FREE?

Liberation from sin and ignorance, bad activity and bad material conditions is freedom from bondage. This is cultural liberation. Other forms of liberation are political, economic, social and religious. Liberation from the bondages is when the mind hides the desire for sin and reveals the desire for virtue. Liberation is visible to the soul who yearns to live by the Eight Divine Virtues. It is then that the shackles of the Bondages are broken.

Grace is revelation from God. The Grace of God is freely available to all people. God through the process of evolution in Nature inspires creation, preservation, dissolution, and obscuration and provides revelation. Grace makes liberation possible and grants freedom to all people through the Eight Divine Virtues. Everything that one experiences is perceived as the Grace of God.

❖ WHAT IS THE WAY TO FREEDOM FROM BONDAGE?

The Tamil Marai Chapters on sin discusses bondages and the way to freedom.

▪ TAMIL WORDS FOR GOD

❖ PAGAVAN

Pagavan means God. Pagavan is inconceivable and incomprehensible to the human mind and body. Pagavan means God of the entire universe. Pagavan is One God. Pagavan is the Eternal God. The word Pagavan has no links to any human being, idol, ritual, mythology or superstition. This concept of Pagavan is worshipped as God in Tamil spirituality.

❖ IRAIVAN

Iraivan means God. Iraivan is inconceivable and incomprehensible to the human mind and body. Irai means that which permeates everything. Iraivan is One God. Iraivan is the Eternal God. The word Iraivan has no links to any human being, idol, ritual, mythology or superstition. This concept of Iraivan is worshipped as God in Tamil spirituality.

❖ KADAVUL

Kadavul means God. Kadavul is inconceivable and incomprehensible to the human mind and body. Kadavul means that which is beyond everything. Kadavul is One God. Kadavul is the Eternal God. The word Kadavul has no links to any human being, idol, ritual, mythology or superstition. This concept of Kadavul is worshipped as God in Tamil spirituality.

▪ TAMIL NAME FOR GOD

❖ WHAT IS THE ANCIENT TAMIL NAME FOR GOD?

The ancient name of God is Pagavan. Pagavan is the Tamil God.

▪ **TAMIL REVELATION**

❖ **WHAT IS GOD’S REVELATION?**

The ten verses of “The Praise of God” is the Word of God. It is scripture and it is God’s word to the people. That is divine revelation.

Knowledge is revelation. God inspires and reveals directly to you in your heart and intelligence. God has a direct relationship to every human being. God gives knowledge or inspiration directly to all persons intuitively and through intelligence. Human values, virtues and the actions that emanate from them is Revelation. The Revelation of virtues and actions is the Grace of God. God gives revelation to all people who have the culture of love, peace, truth, right conduct, non-violence, human values, human rights and nature rights.

Scriptural Wisdom is a means to Experiential Wisdom. Scriptural Wisdom is not an end itself or the book is not an idol that is worshipped separately in dogmatic fashion and not applied in practise by the individual. The scripture embodies virtue consciousness and when the individual experiences this virtue then that is Experiential Wisdom. This is the non-dual state where the individual is in oneness with God. Bliss and happiness follows in that person’s life.

▪ **TAMIL PROHETS AND SAINTS**

Tamil spirituality has no levels of hierarchy of religious people. All people are equal before God and all have the same potential to be God consciousness. All people are on the same spiritual level when they accept Tamil spirituality as their path.

❖ **WHO ARE MESSENGERS OF GOD?**

Messengers of God receive, write and proclaim God’s Word. Thiruvalluvar received, wrote and proclaimed God’s Word. Thiruvalluvar is a Messenger of God to the world.

❖ WHO ARE THE PROPHETS?

A Prophet is a person who is inspired by God to deliver a message. They receive divine revelation and the Word of God for all of humanity. The prophet receives inspiration of God. They emphasise pure ethics, values and virtues. The Divine revelation is relevant for all ages. They guide and uplift society. Prophets are messengers of God. Thiruvalluvar is a Tamil prophet.

❖ WHO ARE THE SAINTS?

A Saint is a Servant of God. The Tamil word for Servant of God is 'Atiyar'. A saint is a holy or virtuous person. Saints are teachers, philosophers and historians. A saint is also a hero. Saintly teachers guide and direct society in progressive stages. Philosophers synthesised Tamil philosophy. Historians wrote Tamil history and transcribed previous songs and hymns. All persons promoting Tamil spirituality, born after Thiruvalluvar, are saints.

The saints glorified the message of God through their devotion. God guides them through their intelligence. The saint teaches the scripture by using their intellect. They promote ethics and teach virtues in the various communities. They also express ethics from their own realisations. They explain to the people the scripture according to time, place and circumstances and may be subjected to the influences of the age as well as the political powers that existed.

Saints are poets and some of their statements are metaphorical and allegorical and are a product of their own imagination. That knowledge which is not Divine Virtue is relevant to that age only or to the specific person it is spoken to and should not be practiced by other individuals or practiced in another age. If that knowledge is not humanistic, then it is not universal.

Most Tamil poets glorified saints, kings and village chiefs and in their praises they described them as having supernatural and mythical powers. However all Tamils understand them as human beings and as saints and they are not God. Animals and trees were also given supernatural and mythical powers. Tamils understand them as animals and trees and they are not God.

All sculptors made idols and statues after reading or hearing these poems of the saints, animals and trees. These idols do not represent God but the imagination and creativity of the sculptors, painters and artist. The poets and the sculptors understand God as Spirit which is represented as Space or Light. They also understand the idols to represent the saints who paid them to write poems and make idols after their image. Their intention was not for these idols to become God.

Saints were given mythical and supernatural powers by poets and sculptors made idols based on the poet's description. Priests made rituals to worship the idols in order to make a living by charging a fee.

The words and books of the saints are called ‘Tamil Saint’s Writings’ which is for a certain time and circumstances under which people lived. The words and books of the prophets is Scripture and the Word of God relevant for all times and ages.

The Saint’s praises and songs addressed to God is their devotion to God. This is the Saints Writings. Each person’s understanding of God is their own realisations. Tamil saints relationship with God was an individual personal one. Tamil saints expressed their devotion, prayer and praise in the beautiful Tamil language to God. Tamil saints gave their realisations and understanding of God through their own perception, understanding and experiences. This is based on the historical, economic and ideological age in which they lived in. The philosophy of the Tamil saints was based on the ten verses of “The Praise of God”. Tamil saints by example advocated that each human being should have their own individual and personal relationship with God without any other person or object between them and God. The Tamil prophets, saints, poets, musicians, artists and sculptors realisations enrich the Tamil language and art. Their message is that there is one humanity and one God.

❖ WHO ARE THE SERVANTS OF SAINTS?

A servant of the saint is a Servant of the Servant of God. The Tamil word for a Servant of the Servant of God is ‘Anbar’ and ‘Atiyar Atiyan’. Most people are the Servants of the Servants of God. They are persons with both good and bad qualities and come from different walks of life. They serve the saints and are on the path striving for perfection and virtues.

❖ TAMIL SCRIPTURE

❖ WHAT IS THE TAMIL SCRIPTURE?

The Tamil scripture is the Tamil Marai. Tamil Marai means Sacred Word of God. It is the oldest scripture. Tamil scripture is written in the Tamil language. The worship and praise of God is done in the Tamil language. Its philosophy and beliefs conforms to rationalist and humanist principles. The mind-set is logical and progressive to all of humanity. It is free from rituals, superstition, priests and mythology.

▪ **TAMIL SPIRITUAL PRACTICES**

❖ **HOW DO TAMILS PRAISE AND WORSHIP GOD?**

Tamils worship God through praises. Praises are in the form of words, songs and hymns. The saints described this as an offering of a garland of words.

▪ **IS FOOD PART OF THE SPIRITUAL PRACTICE?**

The food eaten does not form part of the religious practice of the Tamils. The Tamil ancestors were primarily hunters. The Tamils who lived next to rivers were agricultural farmers and they were vegetarian. The Tamils who lived on the coastal area were fishermen and they ate fish. The Tamils who lived on green pastures and mountainous area were herdsmen and they ate meat. The Tamil diet is not prescribed by God. However their gene type requires low GI foods. God does not punish you for what you eat and drink. Feel no guilt in what you eat and drink. Being vegetarian does not make one more spiritual or God Conscious. God allows people to eat meat. God does not discriminate against those who eat meat nor does God stop people from eating meat. Those who eat meat need not have any fear. They will return to Heaven, the Kingdom of God in the Spiritual World, as pure souls.

▪ **WHAT IS THE DECLARATION OF FAITH?**

The declaration of faith is a process of Reversion to Tamil humanism. It is a reversion to their original spirituality, a return to the Tamil faith.

The Declaration of Faith is:

“God is Spirit and God’s attributes is Divine Virtues.

I am a child of God. I am human.

Thiruvalluvar is the Messenger of God.

I have faith in the Tamil Marai as the Word of God.

I will express the humanist culture of the Eight Divine Virtues in a devotional mood in my personal life.

I am a Tamil humanist.”

Every person has an opportunity to take the Declaration of Faith to be a Tamil humanist. Every human being belongs to the one specie of Homo sapiens. Every person is born pure and is born of love. All human beings are equal in dignity and worth. Every person is unique and special. Therefore every human being is entitled to convert to Tamil humanism without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, age, physical appearance, language, religion, creed, culture, caste, political or other opinion, belief, conscience, nationality, ethnic, social

origin, region, property, class, birth or other status, gender, pregnancy, marital status, sexual orientation and disability.

The Declaration of Faith reinforces a commitment to the core beliefs of Tamils which are:

1. Tamil Marai is the Sacred Word of God.

2. Thiruvalluvar is the Messenger of God.

3. There is only one God.

The Tamil words for God are Pagavan, Iraivan, Kadavul.

4. Praise the one God who is inconceivable to the human mind and body.

5. Praise the Eight Divine Virtues aspect of the one God.

The Eight Divine Virtues is the culture of love, peace, truth, right conduct, non-violence, human values, human rights and nature rights.

6. Declare your faith in the Eight Divine Virtues.

7. Express the humanist culture of the Eight Divine Virtues in a devotional mood in your daily life as an offering to God.

8. Read, learn and teach the next generation Tamil Spirituality, the Tamil Culture and the Tamil Language.

▪ WHAT IS DEVOTION?

Devotion is unconditional love for God. Your expression of the Eight Divine Virtues culture in your daily activities is your offering of devotion to God. Devotional service develops your forgotten loving relationship with God. Devotion has the following principles:

- ✓ Devotional service is joyful.
- ✓ Your devotion should serve principles, values and virtues above personalities.
- ✓ Contemplate upon the inner spirit.
- ✓ Confer your flaws before the Divine.
- ✓ Be led by your conscience and your intelligence.
- ✓ Recite the Tamil Marai.
- ✓ Repeat the Holy Names of God.
- ✓ Declare your faith.
- ✓ Practice Tamil spirituality and culture in the Tamil language.
- ✓ Take care of your physical, intellectual, cultural, linguistic, emotional and spiritual needs.
- ✓ Practice unity and cooperation with other Tamils
- ✓ Read, learn and teach Tamil Humanism to the next generation.

▪ **WHAT IS MEDITATION?**

- Meditation brings a state of physical relaxation in the body, clarity of mind and restores emotional balance.
- Meditation is a process of keeping one's attention on a clear mind.
- Mediate to keep a clear mind.
- Practice inner silence.
- Focus the mind on the Eight Divine Virtues.
- Chanting the Holy Names of God is a form of meditation.

▪ **WHY RECITING IN THE TAMIL LANGUAGE IS IMPORTANT?**

The Tamil language is the oldest form of communication. The Tamil Marai is written in the Tamil language. Virtue is preserved in Tamil. Reciting the Tamil Marai promotes the Tamil language.

▪ **TAMIL PLACE OF WORSHIP**

❖ **WHAT ARE TAMIL SANGAMS?**

The Tamil Sangam promotes a shared vision, where their member makes shared sacrifices for shared gains. A Sangam is where people gather, discuss, learn and bring changes into their personal and social lives. The ancient Sangam accepted the Tamil Marai as a book of guiding values 2000 years ago.

Tamil Sangam is a community of families. It provides a sense of belonging. Tamil Sangam provides a structure to take care of your physical, intellectual, cultural, linguistic, emotional and spiritual needs. It eradicates socio-economic challenges. It also provides moral education and sustains social ethics. Further, it encourages devotion to God and promotes the Tamil language in worship. Tamil Sangams promotes Tamil Humanism. It establishes Tamil traditions and ceremonial life relevant to the age, time and circumstances.

❖ WHAT IS THE RAGASIYAM?

Ragasiyam means ‘secret to the senses’. It also means inconceivable, incomprehensible, and unfathomable. It simply describes God’s nature, which is a secret to the senses and the human mind. God’s nature is inconceivable and incomprehensible to the human mind and body. Space is similar to the nature of God. Therefore it symbolises the secret of God’s nature. This secret is freely available yet it is a secret or is hidden from ones perception. It is the birth right of every human being to benefit from the perception of the Ragasiyam.

In ancient days the Ragasiyam was the only building used by the early Sangams. Ragasiyam is the alter of the Sangam. It is a room with three walls, a roof and a floor. The dome on the roof is gold plated. It is square in shape and the front is open. A curtain is used to close it. It is a portion of empty space. From the ceiling of the room hang golden leaves. On each leaf is inscribed a Tamil alphabet.

The Space:

Space is a symbol that represents God.

Space is the best representation of what God is like. Space has no beginning and no end and it is not material in substance. It can only be said what it is free from. It cannot be measured. Space cannot be described but is known by material demarcations. Matter is also surrounded by space. The three walls and the roof and floor capture this space so that people may focus on it. Without the walls of the Ragasiyam that focal point of space is lost. Space is everywhere and extents into the outer space. Material objects may occupy space but empty space is free from all objects. Planets and comets float in the space of the universe yet space remains an entity on its own.

Space is the symbol used by Tamils to worship God. It is a perfect and universal symbol. Just like space, God cannot be described. God cannot be perceived. No other object can be a symbol of God but space. Meditation on the space of the Ragasiyam is an essential part of spiritual life.

The leaves:

The leaves represent books.

In ancient days Tamils wrote poems and verses on leaves. These leaves were bound into books. These books teach virtues. The mind focussing on the virtues of these books is essential.

Books are recorded knowledge for future generations to read and study and are the carriers of cultures. It plays a vital role in improving humanity and adding to the cultural heritage of humankind.

The alphabets:

The Tamil alphabets on the leaves represent words.

The alphabets on the leaves that are hanging from the ceiling of the Ragaisiyam are the building blocks of words which form sentences and are the core of languages. Languages carry ideas, thoughts and projects images and feelings.

These alphabets also represent knowledge and humanist ideas. The letters on the leaves represent universal consciousness. It represents the sum total of all knowledge contained in books which is the heritage of every human being.

Thiruvallvar and the Avaiyars mediated on the Ragasiyam and wrote their works in honour of the alphabets. The alphabets that hang from the ceiling of the Ragasiyam represent the Word of God, the Tamil Marai.

The Sangams:

Sangams are Tamil congregations. Ragasiyam is a place of worship used by the Tamil Sangams. Ragasiyam is the highest form of Sangam worship. Tamil Marai is the highest scripture of the Tamils. Reciting the Tamil Marai and singing the saints poems in front of the Ragasiyam fixes one in virtue. This was the traditional form of worship to God by Tamils for thousands of years. The buildings architectural layout and style is authentic to the Tamils only. For over 10 000 years all places of worship by the Tamils was the Ragasiyam.

The Building Alterations:

Ragasiyam was the only structure that was used for worship for thousands of years. In the 8th century, two additional rooms were added. A male statute and a female statute were placed in each room respectively to represent all the male saints and all the women saints. The statues served as reminders for people to remember their saints as role models. They are not God nor represent God. The Ragasiyam is the only structure that is used to represent and worship God.

Today the only temple in India that preserved the Ragaisiyam is in Chidambaram, called Thillai in ancient times. In the last 500 years Tamils began adopting Temples, Churches and Mosques as places of worship and have given up the Ragasiyams and Tamil Sangams. The only Ragasiyam built outside of India was in South Africa in 1870 by Seenivasa Padayachi. In South Africa too Tamils use temples instead of Ragasiyams as places of worship.

Meditation:

The meditation on the Ragasiyam takes place in stages. First a person focuses their attention on the space of the Ragasiyam. After the mind becomes clear, the attention moves from the space to

the leaves in the Ragasiyam. Thereafter the attention moves from the leaves to focus on the alphabets. The attention moves from the alphabets to focussing on a verse of the Tamil Marai. Virtue then flows into the clear mind and the individual experiences peace and love. Knowledge and science fills the empty inner space of the mind. Individual transformation takes place.

Internal meditation is done by focussing the mind inwards. The individual sits comfortably, closes the eyes and relaxes the body. The attention is focussed on the clear inner space of the mind. Each time the attention is attracted to a thought it is brought back to watch the empty inner space of the mind. The attention does not follow the thought. The thought dissolves away. When the person comes out of the meditation, they feel refreshed and alert.

The empty space represents the mind in its natural state of all people. The clearness of mind is an empty mental space. The mind rises to the ceilings of knowledge contained in letters and books where upon it acts on that knowledge. The mind searches for knowledge through the study of alphabets, words, language and the books of virtue such as the Tamil Marai. The universal consciousness is the Tamil Marai in words and is for the whole of humanity.

When a person sits in front of the Ragasiyam in deep meditation on that Space, they begin to focus on the inner space of the mind. The mind has an inner space that is generally full of objects, thoughts, feelings, images and colour. The mind carries these objects. When the person focuses on the space of the Ragasiyam, the inner space the mind becomes clear. It becomes empty of all thoughts. A clear empty inner space develops. The empty space of the Ragasiyam is now reflected in the empty inner space of the mind. The space of the Ragasiyam embodies complete peace, stillness and is free of disturbance. The inner space of the mind attains the peace of the external space of the Ragasiyam.

The emptiness of the space of the Ragasiyam is a symbol of a clear mind. The inner space of the mind in its natural state is like the emptiness of the space of the Ragasiyam. One should sit in front of the Ragasiyam and meditate on the empty space until the inner space of the mind is empty of all images, thoughts, feelings, interactions and inner dialogue.

The top of the Ragasiyam represents the intellect. The space of the Ragasiyam produces stillness and clearness of the mind. This space of the Ragasiyam which is clear of all objects also represents the consciousness of the individual which is clear of all images. The mind's inner space of clearness is represented by the outer space of the confined area of the Ragasiyam. This clearness and clarity is what one's mind should focus on. The universal consciousness of clearness and clarity brings peace. Thiruvalluvar says: 'From a peaceful mind love emanates'.

The mind in its natural state is free from images, thoughts and forms. Space is vast like the sky and thoughts and images are like clouds. When the mind focuses on the space of the Ragasiyam, it returns to the natural state. The mind takes the form of space. It becomes clear of thoughts, images and feelings like the space of the Ragasiyam. It takes on the qualities of space. The outer space captured by the Ragasiyam moves to the inner space of the mind.

The mind is part of the body. A human being lives in a family, community and nation. Thoughts, feelings, images stream constantly into the inner space of the mind. When it is over loaded, peace and love is displaced.

Therefore when one achieved a clear inner space of the mind identical to the outer space of the Ragasiyam then one realises peace. That is peace of mind. Thereafter by meditation on the alphabets and verses of the Tamil Marai, words of peace arise, words of virtue arise and also words of love arise. Meditation on the words of the Tamil Marai, gives rise to thoughts of virtue. These thoughts and ideas of virtues at the end of one's meditation bring action of right conduct into one's life, family, community and nation. The peace and love experienced in the inner space of one's mind is transported into the family and the community. The space of the Ragasiyam connects one to clearness, to God, to virtues, to peace and love.

❖ WHY IS THE LETTER 'A' USED AS A TAMIL SYMBOL?

'A' is a letter used as a symbol to represent God.

The letter 'A' is a symbol which people can meditate on. It is the first letter of the word 'Anbu'. 'Anbu' means love. God is love, God's name is love, God's form is love. The first letter of love (Anbu) is 'A' 'A' is the symbol to represent love. A person should focus their mind on love.

▪ TAMIL FESTIVALS

✓ Pongol Festival

The word Pongol means 'Uprising' and it is significant that the message of the Tamil Marai is uplifting and an uprising for each generation of Tamils.

14 January is Tamil New Year.

Tamil New Year is the 1st day in the first month of Thai in the Tamil calendar.

15 January is Thiruvalluvar Day

Thiruvalluvar was born on this day. He spoke Tamil and wrote the Tamil Marai, the book of virtues in the Tamil language for all Tamils.

16 January is Nature's Day

On this day Nature is recognised for its contribution to human society.

17 January is Family Day

On this day families get together and celebrate and give thanks. It is a Thanksgiving Day.

- **TAMIL CELEBRANTS**

- ❖ **Who are Tamil Celebrants?**

Andhanar is a Tamil word for Celebrant. Andhanars conduct the Tamil humanist ceremonies. In ancient times some Andhanars were saints. Tamil Celebrant is the popular name to describe the activities of Andhanars.

- **16. FALLACY**

- ❖ **ARE RITUALS RELEVANT IN TAMIL SPIRITUALITY?**

Tamil spirituality rejects rituals. Fear based rituals are meaningless, expensive and degrading to human dignity. No rituals were commanded by Tamil literature to be performed by all human beings as part of their worship to God. No rituals and superstition were codified as a duty for all Tamils to do. Tamil Humanists perform no ceremony that is abstract, useless, meaningless, mythical or esoteric.

The right or wrongness or good or bad of any spiritual activity is its benefit in terms of Humanist values is its material impact or benefit it has on the individual. It is the only measure humanists use for determining the benefit of any ritual or belief. The spiritual impact has to be seen and felt materially because we are human beings with a human body. Rituals are performed by the body and therefore all rituals have to be evaluated on their material benefit for the majority of the people. The soul in the human body does not need rituals and derives no benefit from them.

- ❖ **IS MYTHOLOGY IMPORTANT IN TAMIL SPIRITUALITY?**

Tamil spirituality rejects mythology. Mythology has obscure, irrational thoughts and speculations. Myths are fiction presented in a collection of stories and poems. Mythical poems and stories are not real and not factual. Mystics' esoteric beliefs and phantom entities in myths are not true and real. The mental images of mystics are presented in the form of words, statues and rituals. Authors and poets of myths used exaggeration, imagination, allegories, metaphors,

similitudes and irrational thought to convey their devotion and personal experiences. There are certain descriptions in myths that are without exaggeration, or the author's imagination or irrationality and those may be realistic of life in ancient times.

Tamil spirituality, philosophy and morality do not require myths. Mythologies are not meant to be core beliefs for humanity. A person's values, beliefs and activities should not have its foundation in mythology. Tamil spirituality does not accept any rituals that arise out of mythology.

❖ IS SUPERSTITION ACCEPTABLE IN TAMIL SPIRITUALITY?

Tamil spirituality rejects superstition. God pervades every object and atom. No other spirit exists in objects, animals or plants. They do not possess a bad spirit. Objects have no supernatural effect on human beings.

The Tamil Marai rejects falsehood and false belief. Fear and anxiety creates attachment to false beliefs, false ideas, old habits, rituals, addictions and obsessive compulsive behaviour. Falsehood despises the truth of science, reason, values and knowledge accumulated through the senses. When truth appears, a person should employ effort to reject falsehood and false beliefs.

The Tamil Marai rejects belief in:

1. Blind faith
2. Blind following of authority
3. Delusions
4. Illusions
5. Hallucinations
6. Dreams
7. Esoteric beliefs
8. Deities
9. Demi-Gods, Demi-Goddess and Semi Gods
10. Multiple Gods and Goddesses
11. Avatars
12. Devil
13. Demons
14. Evil spirits
15. Supernatural elements
16. Ghosts
17. Phantom phenomena
18. Karma
19. Life after death
20. Reincarnation
21. Nirvana
22. Hell or hellish planets for humans to suffer

23. Any fatalistic belief
24. Any belief that condemns life and humans to material suffering
25. Any belief that allows suffering in the present and promises of future happiness after death.
26. Suicide
27. Eternal damnation
28. Thoughts and ideas based on fear, sin, guilt and self devaluation
29. Condemning people for past sins and wrongdoing after rehabilitation
30. The false belief that the sins of adults falls onto their children
31. The false belief that a child is born with past sins or is a sinner
32. Rituals
33. Idolatry
34. Worship by making offerings of food to idols, statutes and carved objects
35. Fire sacrifice
36. Animal sacrifice
37. Self mutilation
38. Walking on burning coals
39. Body piercing
40. Trance
41. Altered states of consciousness
42. Mysticism
43. Mythology
44. Fear of the unseen
45. Superstition
46. Miracles
47. Magic
48. Witchcraft
49. Supernatural forms of distress, pain or suffering
50. Interventions of supernatural powers
51. Worship and praying to Gods for favours or any material benefit
52. Presenting the Gods with a petition of your needs
53. Cults
54. The false belief of a divine priest class that has the monopoly over God.
55. Godmen, Godwomen, Swamis and Gurus
56. Brahmins
57. Charismatic personalities and leaders
58. Selecting and appointing a human being, patrons, champions of the cause, fanatics, and priests to mediate between a person and God or to act on your behalf and represent you before God.
59. Horoscope
60. Fortune telling
61. Astrology
62. Bad luck
63. The false belief in planets determining your destiny
64. Predetermined fate or destiny by the Gods and Goddesses.
65. Prejudice

66. Racism
67. Sexism
68. Chauvinism
69. Fanaticism
70. Discrimination
71. The caste system
72. Caste surnames
73. Mendicant lifestyle
74. Ascetic lifestyle
75. Renunciation beliefs
76. Out-dated traditions, social customs and ceremonial practices
77. Bhajans
78. The use of Sanskrit ideology, mythology, concepts, words and language in Tamil spirituality and culture
79. Knowledge gathered through non-scientific means

❖ IS CULTS ALLOWED IN TAMIL SPIRITUALITY?

Tamil spirituality rejects cults. Cults are oppressive to an individual's freedom. Cults results in poor mental health of individuals. Cults demand from their followers to practice backward 16th century rituals, practices and to cling onto primitive superstitious ideas.

▪ FOUNDER OF TAMIL HUMANISM

❖ Thiruvalluvar



Thiruvalluvar is the founder of Tamil Humanism and is the author of the Tamil Marai. He is an internationally celebrated Tamil humanist. Thiruvalluvar's Path of Tamil Humanism is the Path of Virtue.

Thiruvalluvar was born in Mayilapur in Tamil Nadu on 15 January 31 BC. It is the day after the Tamil New Year.

Thiruvalluvar as a youth grew into a student, farmer and state advisor. He was a textile weaver by profession. Thiruvalluvar fell in love with Vasuki and their marriage was solemnised. She was a chaste, devoted and an ideal wife. Thiruvalluvar showed by example that a person can lead the life of a householder and at the same time lead a life of righteousness and with respect. A beautiful daughter was born. They named her Mullai and brought her up with loving care.

In 300 BC, Elala Chola, the King of the Tamil country ruled over Eelam. Elelasingan was his descendent and ship merchant of Mayilapur. He accepted Thiruvalluvar as his teacher and was his first disciple. One day in the evening, Elelasingan and Mullai met in a garden and they fell in love with each other. Thiruvalluvar solemnized his marriage with Mullai.

In 21 BC, Uggiraperuvazhuthi, the Tamil King, decided to send a delegation to Augustus Caesar and strengthen the trade link. He told the Romans visiting him that he is sending a delegation of merchants to Rome with Elelasingan as leader. Elelasingan left for Rome taking leave from Mullai. He left in the month of July and he promised Mullai he will return in December.

Thiruvalluvar saw that many people in this world are living without understanding humanist principles. He stayed in his house in Mayilapur and began writing his book under a LLuppai tree.

He formulated the concepts based on the 70 000 year old oral tradition of humanism and the 5000 year old Indus valley civilization, and the civilization of the four Tamil kingdoms of Pandya, Chola, Chera and Eelam. He wrote the philosophy of humanism into couplets in a book which he called Tamil Marai (Tamil Humanist Scripture). Thiruvalluvar also called it 'Muppai'.

Muppai means three kinds of subjects which are righteousness, wealth and love. Thereafter he decided to travel propagating humanist principles to all people.

He travelled to Madurai to submit his work, 'Muppai', to the Pandya king. The Pandya kings ensured that many Tamil poets flourished. The Tamil Sanggam of Madurai which is an assembly of eminent poets, scholars and researchers called his work 'Thirukural'. The Tamil Sanggam introduced the Thirukural to the world. The Tamil Marai is considered as the 'Sacred Word of God'. Thiruvalluvar is regarded as a Tamil prophet by the Tamil community.

Thiruvalluvar said to the King: 'a small dew drop depicts even a Palmyra tree, so also the Kural. Oh King, spread these spotless couplets. Preach to the world the humanist message of the Tamil Marai.'

The Tamil Calendar is dated from the birth of Thiruvalluvar and is called Thiruvalluvar Aandu.

The Tamil New Year begins on the 14 January which is the 1st day of the 1st month (Thai) of the Tamil calendar. The next day is celebrated as Thiruvalluvar Day as the 15 January is the birthday of Thiruvalluvar. This celebration of New Years Day and Thiruvalluvar Day is the Pongal Festival.

▪ LEADERS OF TAMIL HUMANISM

The two important leaders of Tamil Humanism are Mr. Seenivasa and Mr. R.M. Moodali. They are the two main authors of the books on Tamil Humanism. Therefore the books on Tamil Humanism are called the 'SEENIVASA - MOODALI VERSION'. They are the revivalists of Tamil Humanism.

❖ Seenivasa

Seenivasa Padayachi was a great advocate of the Tamil Religion. He tirelessly propagated Tamil Spirituality in Tamil Nadu and in South Africa.

The story of Seenivasa Padayachi is but a legend. The life of Seenivasa Padayachi and what we know is largely derived from oral traditions. What remains of his existence is the Tinley Manor Ragasiyam which he built in 1889 and the scriptures he recited with his last breathe in that Sanggam.

Seenivasa Padayachi was born in 1861 in Chidambaram. His father was Sabapathi. He was 28 years old when he arrived in Durban. He was educated in Tamil and English. His wife was Valliammal and she was born in 1867 in Chidambaram. Seenivasa and Valliammal had three children.

Seenivasa's father Sabapathi was a learned scholar and a Priest at Chidambaram. Some say he was a great yogi in Chidambaram. Sabapathi was born around 1801. Sabapathi taught Seenivasa the Tamil religion and culture in its purest form. He believed in Tamil Humanism and the Ragasiyam is the highest form of worship. He wanted all Tamils to worship in the Ragasiyam. Sabapathi's vision is: 'A Ragasiyam in every town and village'. However the Nayak Brahmins resisted and did not want all people to have the Truth.

Legend says that Sabapathi's grandfather who was born around 1681 was also a Priest at Chidambaram. He promoted the Tamil religion and the freedom of all to worship the Ragasiyam. The Ragasiyam is a Meditation and Cultural Hall. He resisted and challenged the Nayak Military rule.

However the Nayak Hindu Brahmins still dominated the villages and Tamil Religion was still forbidden. This led to a conflict between the Nayak Hindu Brahmins and Seenivasa Padayachi when he promoted the Path of Virtue, the Tamil Religion.

He condemned the village chief and Nayak Brahmins in Chidambaram for promoting South Indian Hinduism. He encouraged the villagers to follow Tamil Humanism which is the Tamil religion. The villagers protest was increasing against the Nayak Brahmin priests.

This conflict forced him into exile. If he continued living there his life and his family's safety was in danger. The Nayak Brahmin persecution forced him into exile. His exile brought him to the shores of South Africa, keeping the Tamil religion alive.

He took his only priceless possession the Tamil Marai and together with his family boarded the ship headed for South Africa.

Sabapathi gave Seenivasa his blessings to go to South Africa to protect the faith. He encouraged him to travel abroad to save the Tamil beliefs.

When Seenivasa arrived the first thing he did was to go and search for land to build the Ragasiyam as per his father's wishes. He found many Tamils living in the North Coast of Natal.

Seenivasa built the first Ragasiyam outside of India for the Tamils in Tinley Manor, Natal, South Africa. It was built out of wood and iron around July 1889. Alagiri also helped Seenivasa with the construction of the Ragasiyam.

The Ragasiyam is the Hall for the Praise of God. The congregation in Tinley Manor assembled there and in front of them is a room of empty space. In this room hangs the golden leaves with the Tamil alphabet on it. This Ragasiyam is the purist form of Tamil worship. Tamils worship God in this way for thousands of years. They recited the Tamil Marai and other scriptures and conducted their ceremonies in this Ragasiyam.

Seenivasa was involved in promoting the Tamil religion and culture in Tinley Manor. When his indentured contract expired after 5 years he moved to Germiston in 1894, Transvaal now called Gauteng. Seenivasa moved to Transvaal (Gauteng) because he knew there were many Tamils living here. In 1895 he built another Ragasiyam in Germiston. His vision was that wherever there is a Tamil community there should be a Ragasiyam.

During his stay in Germiston, he opened a cigar factory. He would travel from Germiston to Ottawa, Tongaat then to Tinley Manor to buy the Tobacco leaves and bring them to Germiston. It was a flourishing business as he supplied the mines and shops with cigars. He hired a factory manager to manage the cigar manufacturing while he was away in Tinley Manor. He was a highly spiritual person always in meditation and study of the Tamil religion. Around 1900, while he was away in Tinley Manor, his wife Valliammal made a mistake and had an affair with the factory manager.

On his arrival back to Germiston he came to know of it. He was disappointed but he forgave her. So he divorced her and decided to move back to Tinley Manor in Natal, KZN.

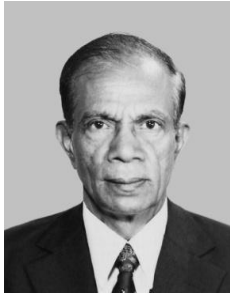
He gave her the house and the cigar business which made her financially independent. The children were well provided for and even their grandchildren still were financially well off. Seenivasa moved to Tinley Manor permanently in 1900. He lived there in meditation and study in the Tinley Manor Ragasiyam and established a Tamil Sanggam. He remarried to Alamalu and they had four children.

Alamalu was born in 1872. Alamalu was an excellent caregiver and took care of Muniamma like her own child. Alamalu together with Muniamma, Lutchmana and Subbu visited the Tinley Manor Ragasiyam in 1901. Seenivasa met Alamalu and admired her caring and family qualities. She lived with the Lutchmana Naik's family until she got married to Seenivasa Padayachi in 1901. When Seenivasa married Alamalu, she moved to Tinley Manor. She eventually lived in Tinley Manor for the rest of her life.

He propagated Tamil Humanism amongst the indentured labourers. He spent the rest of his life promoting the Tamil religion and culture in the Tinley Manor Ragasiyam.

His last day on earth was unforgettable. He took his wife and children to the Tinley Manor Ragasiyam. He entered the Sanggam. Seenivasa Padayachi sat down in the Tinley Manor Tamil Sanggam, facing the congregation, his friends, his family and children for the last time. He smiled at his loving wife, Alamalu, and his children and began to speak about Tamil Humanism. He praised God through words, recited all the Tamil scriptures in English and Tamil and while chanting 'Namasivaya' in the Sanggam he collapsed and died peacefully. And now the essence of Seenivasa Padayachi's recitation of Tamil Spirituality is presented to you.

❖ R.M. Moodali



R.M. Moodali



Kamatchi Moodali

R.M. Moodali is a political activist and an internationally renowned humanist. He made an immense contribution to the transformation of South Africa.

Rajoo Munisami Moodali was born on 31 October 1907. He was the son of an indentured labourer Thai. Thai came from a district called South Arcot in Tamil Nadu. In 1914, Thai died at the age of 41 years and R.M. Moodali was placed in an orphanage.

From 1918 to 1930, he worked on Apartheid farms for a Mr. G. Duncan. In 1931 he worked as a waiter at Victoria hotel. In 1935, he worked for the Hulletts family as a chauffeur. In later years he did part time bookkeeping for small companies as White businesses did not give him work because of the Job Reservation Act.

He went to the Wesleyan Missionary School in 1912, and had to leave school at Standard Four to work on the farm. In 1931 he completed a Bookkeeping course part time through correspondence. In 1940's he joined the Study Circles and learnt politics and economics. This was the beginning of his political career.

In 1940, he joined the South African Communist Party. Later he joined the ANC and the NIC. In the 1980's he joined the UDF in the anti- Apartheid struggle. He continued to be involved in politics until 1994, that's a total of 53 years struggling for Human Rights.

R.M. Moodali witnessed the rise and fall of Apartheid and participated actively in the Anti-apartheid struggle. Throughout his life, he was a Human Rights activist. He attended the protest meetings. He received pamphlets, posters, listened to Radio Freedom, the Voice of the ANC and distributed the pamphlets and messages from door to door. He was a freedom fighter against colonialism and Apartheid. His response is the way millions of people responded to the leaders, until the disbanding of the Natal Indian Congress and UDF structures.

R.M. Moodali was also a cultural activist. He belonged to various cultural organisations such as Stanger Youth Orchestra, Stanger Debating Society, The Rationalist Association of South Africa, Pretoria Tamil Rationalism Society, The Humanist Association of South Africa, Natal Buddhist Society, The Thirukural Society, International Movement for Tamil Culture: South Africa and many others. In the 1980's he suggested to his family and Babs about forming a Tamil humanist international society. He encouraged Mr Rowley Arenstein his old friend from the liberation struggle to join. R.M. Moodali was a loving person who went about his daily life with the universal principles of humanism. He was a humanist and a convinced atheist. He was talkative and an eloquent speaker.

He was also a cultural activist who promoted the reformation of Tamils by rejecting the caste system, superstition, rituals and fatalistic beliefs. The most important thing that had to change was the Tamil belief system in order for them to become progressive. He was involved in promoting the Tamil culture and language. His understanding of the Tamil Marai was from a Tamil perspective which is the concept of the Moodali version.

He promoted the Tamil language and he advocated other cultural and linguistics groups to promote theirs in unity and harmony as South Africans. He advocated South African multiculturalism to enrich the cultural fabric. The various cultural and linguistic identities of the world are the elements that make the world's multicultural social fabric beautiful and joyful.

R.M. Moodali has personally helped many people by providing them with financial, emotional support, advise and assisted them with legal issues. He helped people overcome their material needs. He was always helping people.

R.M. Moodali married Kamatchi Moodali, the granddaughter of Seenivasa Padayachi on 22 January 1944. She was a dutiful wife to R.M. Moodali and a loving mother. She was an exceptional cook and always generously took care of others. They lived mostly in Bull Bull Drive and Desainagar. They had two daughters and a son Thiagesan (Babs) Moodali who was a successful businessman and philanthropist. He read a lot of health books and how to prevent diabetes. He did not drink alcohol nor did he smoke. He led a healthy lifestyle.

R.M. Moodali conducted much research into Seenivasa Padayachi and reunited the two families from Gauteng and Natal, KZN. He retold the story of Seenivasa Padayachi to all who visited him.

He had many major achievements. In 1931 he became a certified Bookkeeper. In the mid 1930's he was expert at playing the Violin and the Banjo. From 1936 to 1941, The Safety First Association awarded him 6 Diplomas, a Bronze medal, then finally a Gold Medal for Driving. He always owned a vintage Borgward car. In 1960's he bought a 6 ¼ acre farm in Bull Bull Drive. On 3 October 1998 at Technikon Natal, R.M. Moodali was honoured for his role in the human rights struggle. In 1994, he was 53 years involved in political activity in the ANC, NIC

and SACP. On 23 September 2007, he celebrated 60 years of marriage to Kamatchi. On 1 January 2001, he was 71 years involved in cultural activity. On 31 October 2007, he celebrated his 100 years birthday. He passed away on 9 April 2008 in Tongaat.

❖ **Thiagesan Rajoo Moodali (Babs)**



Thiagesan Rajoo Moodali

Thiagesan Rajoo Moodali, known to family and friends as Babs, was born on 26th April 1951. He is the son of R.M. Moodali. Babs was an outstanding entrepreneur and a successful businessman and a great philanthropist.

His philosophical religious outlook was similar to that of his father. He was a committed Tamil Humanist. He never performed any rituals nor did he believe in any superstition. He tirelessly kept the flame of humanism alive by advocating it among family members and the South African community. He began writing the Biography of R.M. Moodali but did not see its publication.

He had a quiet personality who never complained about anything. His disposition was always pleasing others and even making sacrifices at his own expenses. He was hardworking, honest, generous and a charitable person. He valued punctuality. He always had a smiling face and a unique laughter.

He completed his schooling at Chatsworth High School. He enjoyed drawing and sketching as a hobby. His other interests were baking and he made the best Christmas cake and pudding. He

also specialised in making sweetmeats and his favourite was Chana Margan and Burfi. On Sundays he also made scones for tea time and he helped his mother Kamatchi Moodali to make queen cakes.

He started off his career when he was in school by repairing cars. He enjoyed fixing things at home. He repaired the Borgward car engines and did welding and spray painting. He worked as a manager of a Bus company in Durban. He thereafter took a career in the field of instrumentation. He was a highly skilled person with great entrepreneurial skills. He became the CEO of Zimbali Engineering and he negotiated many contracts with SAB.

He bought land at Desainagar, Tongaat and built a big family house and owned a luxury Mercedes Benz. He loved his gardening and spent hours maintaining it. He took care of both his parents giving them the best lifestyle and health care. He was always conscious of his health, eating correctly and exercised. He also read a lot of health books and how to prevent diabetes. He did not drink alcohol nor did he smoke and also led a healthy lifestyle. Although he had excellent qualities as a father, he never married nor did he have any children.

He supported many charities and NGO's such as the Association of Mouth & Foot Painters. He also supported the Charity Circle. He made donations to Childline, The Avril Elizabeth Homes of South Africa, Age-in-Action, and St John. Childline offers counselling and support to children. Age-in-Action makes a difference in the lives of the aged. The Avril Elizabeth Homes allows the mentally handicapped to live their lives in a warm and nurturing environment. St John provides medical assistance.

He was involved in community projects of Desainagar. He attended Civic meetings and strove to keep high standards of maintaining the suburb. He was also a member of the ANC of the local Tongaat branch. He helped organise feeding schemes in the informal settlement and held meetings with their leaders.

In October 2013 he was diagnosed with leukaemia and was hospitalised for three weeks undergoing chemotherapy. On 2 December 2013, he sadly passed away. His death at an early age was a great loss for the Tamil Humanist community.

▪ ABOUT THE WRITER



Thiru Moodali

Thiru Moodali is an academic, a researcher, a Life Coach, and a social and cultural activist.

After high school he completed a B.Admin degree from the University of Durban-Westville (UKZN). He successfully completed his post graduate qualifications at the University of South Africa, graduating in a Honours Degree, Hons. B.Admin (Unisa), and a Master's Degree, M.Admin (Unisa).

He belonged to the University SRC publications committee and SANSCO which was affiliated to the UDF during the anti-apartheid campaign. He participated in many mass marches and protest activities.

He took part in various social and cultural activities and assisted many community projects such as creating awareness of Human Trafficking, feeding schemes, clothes distribution and book distributions to promote the 'culture of reading'. He assisted the aged, the orphans, and the homeless in these drives as well as the HIV/Aids homes. He has been on many committees of charity that supported feeding schemes.

Thiru Moodali spent the past 25 years in Marketing and as a Senior Manager involved in coaching and mentoring employees to reach optimal performance. This experience meant that he came face to face with the concerns and challenges facing employees at all levels up to top management level.

After he read Tamil literature, and understood its true meaning, he discovered that his purpose in life is working with people one on one or in groups to transform their lives so that they can develop their full potential. He believes that every person should live a life of excellence and quality.

As a qualified and certified life coach, Thiru Moodali holds the following certificates:

Life Coach

Negative Emotional Therapy Practitioner

Neuro-linguistic Programming Practitioner

Transformation Coach

He is actively conducting workshops that campaigns for a humanist lifestyle and creating support groups that will sustain a humanist culture.

He has written and edited several books. As a spirit-writer (ghostwriter) for R.M. Moodali, he recorded the oral tradition of humanism and wrote the following books:

1. Tamil Humanism
2. Tamil Spirituality
3. Tamil Humanist Scriptures
4. Writings of the Tamil Saints
5. Biographies: Tamil Prophet and Tamil Saints
6. Humanist Meanings in Tamil Religious Literature
7. Tamil Humanist Ceremonies
8. Tamil Humanist Readings
9. Tamil Calendar
10. Diacritic Tamil
11. Timeline of Tamil History
12. UNKNOWN CITIZEN: A Biography of R.M. Moodali

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www.projectmadurai.org



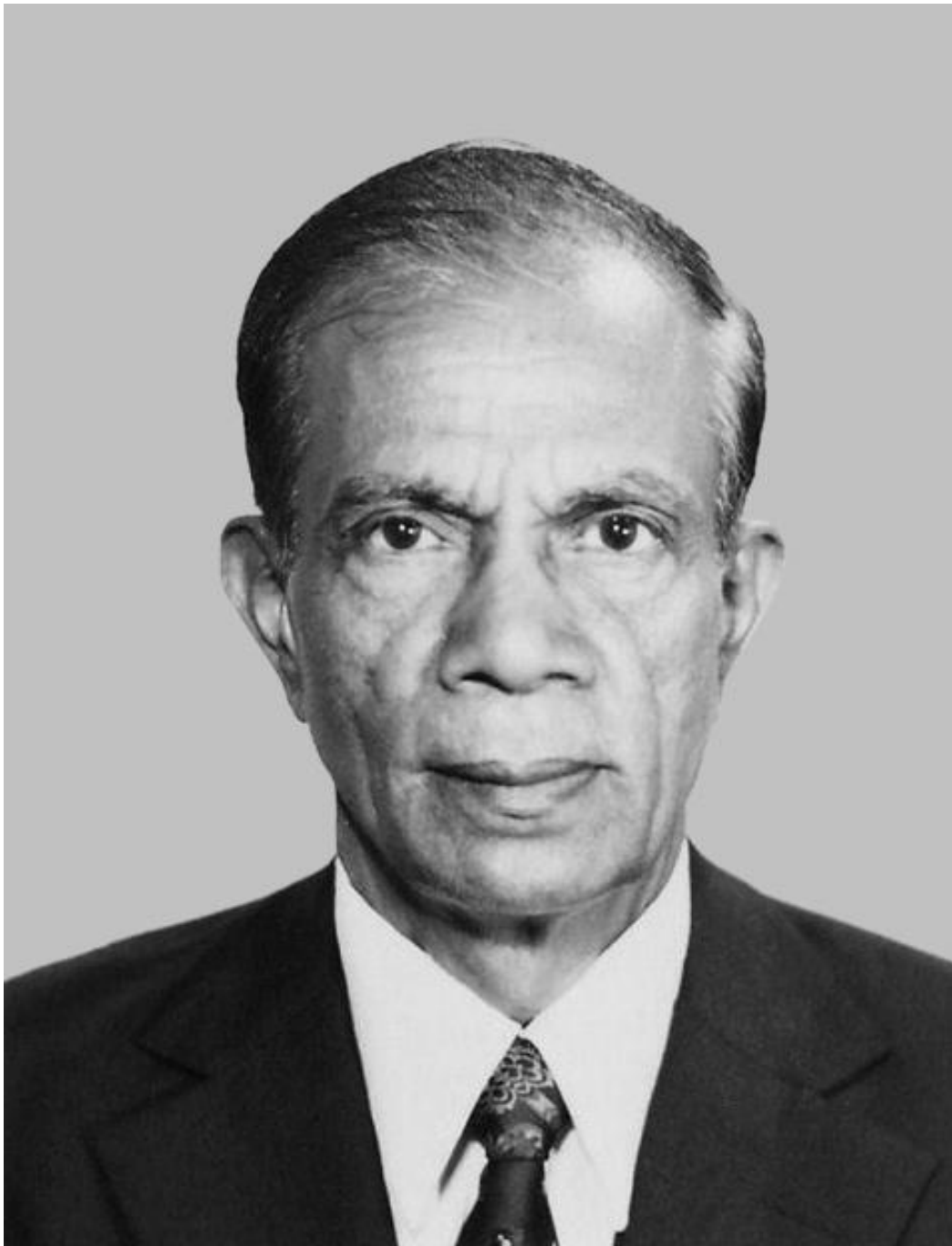
Thiruvalluvar



Thiruvalluvar Statue



Ragasiyam



R.M. Moodali

Life Coach



Thiru Moodali

Thiru Moodali is a Life Coach helping those who want a meaningful life in this world. The counseling and coaching given is based on the principles of Tamil Humanism.

He provides coaching for all life situations such as:

- Relationships, Family and Marriage issues
- Finances and business issues
- Work, Career and Entrepreneur challenges
- Health and Wellness issues
- Parenting and early childhood development issues
- Educational challenges
- Retirement challenges
- Death, Divorce and loss of loved ones
- Anger Management
- Low self-esteem
- Stress
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Alcohol And Drug Abuse

Life Coach

Negative Emotional Therapy Practitioner

Neuro-linguistic Programming Practitioner

Transformation Coach