

## KABIR AND THIRUVALLUVAR



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Today, let's delve into the profound wisdom of two eminent mediaeval poet-saints of India—Kabir and Thiruvalluvar. Both Kabir and Thiruvalluvar advocated for cultural and religious harmony. Their works emphasise universal human values, fostering a sense of unity and understanding among diverse communities. During their time, the dissemination of knowledge was primarily through oral traditions. Kabir and Thiruvalluvar's verses were passed down through generations verbally before being transcribed, contributing to the preservation of their wisdom. The verses of Kabir and Thiruvalluvar have inspired various forms of art and music. Kabir's *dohas* are sung in bhajans, and Thiruvalluvar's couplets are set to music, demonstrating the enduring influence of their literary creations. This adds layers to the legacy of Kabir and Thiruvalluvar, showcasing the richness and complexity of their contributions to Indian spirituality and literature.



### LEARNING OUTCOMES

After studying this lesson, the learners:

- Recognises the richness of culture and heritage in Awadhi and Tamil literature;
- Describes characteristics and style of Medieval literature;
- Analyses the wisdom imparted by Kabir Das and the moral preachings imparted by Thiruvalluvar in their couplets;
- Constructs a basic knowledge of the commonalities among some of the major Indian languages;
- Compares the themes in poetry by these two mediaeval saints and appreciates their efforts in social awakening and national integration .

**17.1 KABIR**

Kabir was a 15th-century Indian poet and mystic known for his devotional and philosophical verses. His couplets, often referred to as “*Kabir ke Dohe*” or “Kabir’s couplets,” are written in a simple and profound style. Kabir’s poetry is filled with mystical symbolism. He frequently used metaphors from everyday life, such as weaving and blacksmithing, to convey profound spiritual truths. Kabir’s verses resonate across religious

boundaries. His poetry is not confined to a specific faith but encompasses universal themes of love, humanity, and spirituality. This inclusivity has made Kabir a revered figure not only in Hinduism but also in Sikhism and Sufism. They explore themes such as spirituality, the nature of God, human existence, and the path to enlightenment.



*Fig. 17.1*

**Notes****SECTION 17.1.1****Transliteration:**

*Chalti Chakki Dekh Kar, Diya Kabira Roye  
Dui Paatan Ke Beech Main, Sabit Bacha Na Koye*

**Translation:**

Looking at the grinding stones, Kabir laments;  
In the duel of wheels, nothing stays intact.

**LET US UNDERSTAND 17.1.1**

This couplet by Kabir holds a deep metaphorical meaning, reflecting upon the impermanent and transitory nature of life and existence.

Kabir begins by describing a “chalti chakki,” which is a grinding mill used to crush grains. When Kabir looks at this grinding mill, he feels a sense of sorrow. The grinding process symbolises the relentless passage of time and the experiences that shape our lives.

The “dui paatan” mentioned in the second line refers to the two grinding stones that crush the grains in the mill. The metaphor is used to represent the opposing forces or circumstances that press upon individuals, grinding away their sense of self and identity. These forces could be interpreted as the dualities of life, such as joy and sorrow, success and failure, birth and death, and various challenges.

The couplet’s central theme is impermanence and the inevitability of change. Kabir is pointing out that nothing remains unaltered or unaffected when caught between opposing forces, just as grains are crushed between the grinding stones. This reflects the transient nature of life, where everything undergoes transformation and change.



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### INTEXT QUESTIONS 17.1.1

1. What is the central theme of Kabir’s couplet “Chalti Chakki Dohē”?
  - a) Joy and sorrow
  - b) Impermanence and change
  - c) Patience and timing
  - d) Compassionate communication
2. What does Kabir lament about while witnessing grinding stones at work?

### SECTION 17.1.2

#### Transliteration:

*Bura Jo Dekhan Main Chala, Bura Naa Milya Koye  
Jo Munn Khoja Apnaa, To Mujhse Bura Naa Koye*

#### Translation:

I set out to find the wicked, but none did I find.  
When I searched myself, ‘I’ found the wicked one.

**LET US UNDERSTAND 17.1.2**

In this couplet, Kabir reflects on the nature of judgement and introspection. The couplet teaches a profound lesson about self-awareness and the realisation of one's own flaws.

In the first two lines, Kabir describes how he embarked on a journey to find someone he deemed wicked or bad (bura). However, he couldn't find anyone who fit that description. This part of the couplet emphasises the idea that when we look for the negative in others, we often fail to see it. It suggests that we tend to judge others based on their perceived faults without acknowledging our own imperfections.

The couplet takes a turn in the last two lines. Kabir reveals that when he was introspective and looked within himself (jo mann khoja apnaa), he found that no one is more wicked than he is. This shift in perspective highlights the importance of self-awareness and recognizing our own flaws and shortcomings before passing judgement on others. Kabir acknowledges his own imperfections and points out that self-judgement and self-improvement are essential steps toward personal growth and spiritual understanding.

**Notes****INTEXT QUESTIONS 17.1.2**

1. Where does Kabir find the evil in this world?
2. What is the lesson he imparts through this observation?

**SECTION 17.1.3****Transliteration:**

*Aisee Vani Boliye, Mun Ka Aapa Khoye  
Apna Tan Sheetal Kare, Auran Ko Sukh Hoye*

**Translation:**

Speak such words, that you lose the ego of your mind.  
Let your own body be cooled, and let others find joy.

**LET US UNDERSTAND 17.1.3**

In this couplet, Kabir provides guidance on how to communicate and conduct oneself in a way that leads to harmony and well-being, both for oneself and others.

The first two lines encourage speaking words that are humble, truthful, and without ego. Kabir advises speaking with kindness and humility, shedding the sense of personal pride and ego. When one speaks with such an attitude, it leads to the dissolution of the ego-driven tendencies of the mind. Ego often leads to conflicts, misunderstandings, and negativity, so speaking without ego helps to maintain peaceful relationships.

The last two lines offer a metaphorical instruction. Kabir suggests that one's own body (tan) should remain cool, implying a state of inner calm and tranquility. When an individual is at peace with themselves, their interactions with others become more harmonious.

Furthermore, Kabir advises that by speaking kindly and without ego, one can bring happiness and comfort to others (auran ko sukh hoye). This implies that our words and actions have a significant impact on the people around us. Positive communication can uplift others and create an atmosphere of positivity and joy.



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### INTEXT QUESTIONS 17.1.3

1. What is the primary message of Kabir's couplet "Speak such words"?
  - a) Silence is golden
  - b) Speak softly and kindly
  - c) Truth hurts
  - d) Loudness is power
2. What kind of words does Kabir suggest to speak?

### SECTION 17.1.4

#### Transliteration:

*Dheere Dheere Re Mana, Dheere Subj Kutch Hoye  
Mali Seenche So Ghara, Ritu Aaye Phal Hoye*

#### Translation:

Slowly, slowly, O mind, everything happens at its own pace.  
The gardener waters the plants, and when the season comes, they bear fruit.

**LET US UNDERSTAND 17.1.4**

In this couplet, Kabir imparts wisdom about patience, timing, and the natural progression of events.

The first two lines emphasise the importance of patience and the idea that everything unfolds in its own time. Kabir advises the mind to move slowly and not rush things. He encourages acceptance of the natural pace of life, suggesting that trying to force or hasten events can lead to frustration and imbalance.

The metaphor of the gardener is used in the last two lines. Kabir compares the process of life to a gardener tending to plants. The gardener waters the plants consistently, caring for them with dedication. However, even with the gardener's efforts, the plants do not immediately bear fruit. It is only when the right season comes that the plants yield their fruits naturally.

The couplet teaches that just as the plants require time and care to bear fruit, the outcomes in life also require patience and the alignment of right conditions. Trying to rush or control events may not yield the desired results. Instead, it is important to act patiently and trust the natural progression of life.

**Notes****INTEXT QUESTIONS 17.1.4**

1. Why does Kabir suggest the mind to have patience?
2. What metaphor does he use to convey the essence of patience?

**SECTION 17.1.5****Transliteration:**

*Sayeen Itna Deejiye, Ja Mein Kutumb Samaye  
Main Bhi Bhookha Na Rahun, Sadhu Na Bhooka Jaye*

**Translation:**

O Lord, give me only as much as is sufficient to sustain my family.  
May I never be hungry, and may no saint go hungry.

**LET US UNDERSTAND 17.1.5**

In this couplet, Kabir offers a prayer that reflects his understanding of contentment, selflessness, and the well-being of all.

The first two lines express Kabir's humble request to the Divine (Sayeen or Lord). He asks for enough sustenance to provide for his family's needs. Kabir's focus here is not on seeking abundance or wealth, but on asking for just enough to maintain the well-being of his loved ones.

In the last two lines, Kabir extends his prayer to include the well-being of others. He desires that he himself never experience hunger, and also that no saint or ascetic should ever go hungry. This reflects Kabir's concern for the welfare of everyone, regardless of their social or spiritual standing. He emphasises a sense of shared humanity and compassion, suggesting that no one should suffer from lack while others have plenty.

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 17.1.5**

1. According to Kabir's couplet "Sayeen Itna Deejiye," what does Kabir desire for saints or ascetics?
  - a) Abundance of wealth
  - b) Never experience hunger
  - c) Worldly pleasures
  - d) Power and authority
2. How much is enough for Kabir to sustain the family?

**SECTION 17.1.6****Transliteration:**

*Bada Hua To Kya Hua, Jaise Ped Khajoor  
Panthi Ko Chaya, Nahi, Phal Laage Atidoor*

**Translation:**

What's the use of being big, like a date tree?  
The traveller finds no shade, and the fruit remains far away.

*Notes*

**LET US UNDERSTAND 17.1.6**

In this couplet, Kabir uses the metaphor of a date tree to convey a profound message about the significance of substance over outward appearance.

The first two lines imply that being big or outwardly impressive (like a tall date tree) does not necessarily equate to meaningful value. Kabir suggests that mere size or appearance doesn't inherently provide true worth or substance.

The metaphor of the traveller seeking shade and fruit is used in the last two lines. Kabir indicates that despite the tree's size, a traveller doesn't find shade under it, and the fruit is situated at a distant point. This points to the idea that even though something may seem impressive on the surface, its practical utility or value may be lacking.

The couplet's essence is that material possessions or external appearances aren't the sole measures of worth. True value lies in offering practical benefits, providing sustenance, and being genuinely helpful to others. Kabir encourages focusing on qualities and actions that provide tangible benefits and not getting lost in the allure of appearances.

**Notes****INTEXT QUESTIONS 17.1.6**

1. What does Kabir want to teach with the example of the date tree?
2. What is the essence of Kabir's couplet "Bada Hua To Kya Hua"?

**SECTION 17.1.7****Transliteration:**

*Kabira Khara Bazaar Main, Mange Sabki Khair,  
Na Kahu Se Dosti, Na Kahu Se Bair*

**Translation:**

Kabira stands in the marketplace, wishing well for all,  
Neither seeking friendship, nor holding enmity towards anyone.

**LET US UNDERSTAND 17.1.7**

In this couplet, Kabir conveys a message of equanimity, impartiality, and compassion for all beings.



Kabir describes himself standing in a marketplace, a place of diverse interactions and exchanges. He wishes well (khair) for everyone he encounters, regardless of their backgrounds, beliefs, or intentions. His intention is to bless and wish good for all, without any bias or discrimination. The next two lines emphasise Kabir's stance on human relationships. He says he doesn't seek friendship (dosti) from anyone, nor does he harbour enmity (bair) towards anyone. This means that Kabir does not differentiate between people based on personal likes or dislikes. He doesn't establish relationships driven by personal gain or grudges.

The couplet embodies Kabir's philosophy of treating everyone with an open heart and without any prejudice. It reflects his message of universal love, compassion, and acceptance. Kabir's position in the marketplace symbolises his presence in the world, interacting with people from all walks of life, and yet holding a neutral and loving attitude toward all.



### INTEXT QUESTIONS 17.1.7

1. According to Kabir's couplet "Kabira stands in the marketplace," what is Kabir's wish for everyone?
  - a) Wealth and prosperity
  - b) Good health
  - c) Spiritual awakening
  - d) Happiness and well-being
2. What does it reveal about his approach to human relationships?

### SECTION 17.1.8

#### Transliteration:

*Pothi Padh Padh Kar Jag Mua, Pandit Bhayo Na Koye,  
Dhai Aakhar Prem Ke, Jo Padhe So Pandit Hoye*

#### Translation:

Reading books and scriptures, the world dies; no one becomes a sage. The essence of love is found in two and a half letters; one who reads it, becomes wise.



*Notes*

**LET US UNDERSTAND 17.1.8**

Kabir emphasises that true wisdom and realisation do not come from mere bookish knowledge.

Reading numerous scriptures and texts does not make one wise or enlightened. The true essence of spirituality and understanding lies in the experience of love and devotion, represented by the phrase “two and a half letters” (referring to the word “prem” which means love in Hindi). Those who understand the depth of love and cultivate it in their hearts are the ones who attain true wisdom.

This couplet underscores the importance of experiential knowledge, particularly the knowledge gained through the practice of love and compassion, as opposed to the superficial knowledge acquired from reading books without genuine understanding. It reflects Kabir’s emphasis on the spiritual and experiential dimensions of learning.

**Notes****INTEXT QUESTIONS 17.1.8**

1. In Kabir’s couplet “Pothi Padh Padh Kar Jag Mua,” what is the key to wisdom according to Kabir?
  - a) Extensive reading
  - b) Deep contemplation
  - c) Memorization of scriptures
  - d) Practical experience
2. How does Kabir suggest to become wise?

**SECTION 17.1.9****Transliteration:**

Dukha Main Simran Sab Kare, Sukh Kahi Na Koye  
Jo Sukh Mein Simran Kare, Tau Dukh Kahe Ko Hoye

**Translation:**

In suffering, everyone remembers and meditates, but no one does so in joy.  
One who meditates in happiness, why would they experience sorrow?

**LET US UNDERSTAND 17.1.9**

In this couplet, Kabir contrasts how people approach meditation and remembrance of the Divine during times of suffering and happiness.

During times of suffering (dukh), people often turn to spirituality and meditation as a source of solace and relief. The first line implies that in moments of hardship, people are more likely to engage in simran (remembrance of the Divine) in order to find comfort and strength. Conversely, during times of happiness (sukh), people tend to become engrossed in their joyful experiences and often forget to engage in spiritual practices. The second line points out that when one is experiencing happiness, they may not prioritise spiritual remembrance.

Kabir's teaching in this couplet emphasises the importance of consistent spiritual practice regardless of life's circumstances. The idea is that if one practises simran and meditation during both suffering and happiness, they can attain a state of equanimity and inner balance. This balance helps to transcend the fluctuations of joy and sorrow. If a person can meditate during moments of joy, they are likely to maintain their inner peace and not be overwhelmed by sorrow when challenges arise.

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 17.1.9**

1. Why do we experience sorrow in Kabir's opinion?
2. What is his guidance on achieving a state beyond sorrow?

**SECTION 17.1.10****Transliteration:**

*Akath Kahani Prem Ki, Kutch Kahi Na Jaye  
Goonge Keri Sarkra Baithe Muskae*

**Translation:**

The untellable tale of love, words fall short to express.  
A mute person eating a raw mango, smiles.

*Notes*

**LET US UNDERSTAND 17.1.10**

In this couplet, Kabir is describing the ineffable nature of divine love. He suggests that the depth and intensity of love are so profound that they cannot be adequately described through words or narratives. The “akath kahani” (untellable tale) of love refers to the spiritual experience that transcends verbal communication.

The second part of the couplet uses a metaphor. Kabir describes a mute person (a person who cannot speak) eating a raw mango. Despite the inability to speak, the person’s joyful expression and smile convey their experience of the mango’s taste and delight. Similarly, Kabir is highlighting that the experience of divine love is beyond words and language. Just as the mute person’s smile communicates their experience, the love for the divine is felt deeply within, even though it cannot be fully explained or narrated.

**Notes****INTEXT QUESTIONS 17.1.10**

1. Kabir’s couplet “Akath Kahani Prem Ki” suggests that love’s story is:
  - a) Impossible to narrate.
  - b) A universal truth.
  - c) Best expressed in silence.
  - d) Full of joy and sorrow.
2. Why does Kabir refer to a mute person’s smile?

**17.2 THIRUVALLUVAR**

Thiruvalluvar was a Tamil poet and philosopher who lived around 2,000 years ago, and he is best known for his work called the “Thirukkural.” Thiruvalluvar’s magnum opus, the Thirukkural, is structured in 133 chapters, each focusing on various aspects of life, ethics, and governance. What’s fascinating is that these chapters are further divided into couplets, totaling 1,330 verses. The meticulous organisation reflects Thiruvalluvar’s



Fig 17.2

commitment to providing a comprehensive guide to virtuous living. Each couplet is written in a concise and poetic form, making it easy to remember and imparting wisdom to the readers. Thirukkural has been translated into numerous languages, gaining international acclaim. Its universal principles and practical insights have led to its recognition not only in India but also in countries like Japan, where Thiruvalluvar is celebrated as a sage of ethical wisdom. While translating poetry can be challenging and may not capture the full depth and beauty of the original, a simplified English explanation of some of the couplets from Thirukkural on various topics has been offered for the learners in this section.



*Notes*

### SECTION 17.2.1

#### **Transliteration:**

*VaiyaththuL vaazhuvaangu vaazhpavan vanu raiyum  
TheyvaththuL vaikkap padum*

#### **Translation:**

Who shares domestic life, by household virtues graced,  
Shall, mid the Gods, in heaven who dwell, be placed

### LET US UNDERSTAND 17.2.1

This couplet is from Thirukkural's chapter on "Wealth" (Vanjakathil). In this couplet, Thiruvalluvar imparts wisdom about the nature of wealth and its significance in one's life.

The first part of the couplet speaks about a person who lives by earning through honest means or through legitimate trade and occupation. This person is known as *vaazhpavan*, which can be translated as "a person who lives well" or "a righteous person."

Second part emphasises that the wealth earned through honest means and righteousness is capable of reaching even the heavens and can be offered to the gods. In essence, it suggests that wealth obtained through ethical and virtuous means has a divine and enduring quality.



#### **INTEXT QUESTIONS 17.2.1**

1. What qualities does Thiruvalluvar associate with a person who shares domestic life?

2. What does the couplet from Thirukkural's chapter on "Wealth" convey about the significance of wealth earned through honest means?

### SECTION 17.2.2

#### **Transliteration:**

*Iniya uLavaaka innaadha KooRal  
Kani-iruppak Kaaikavarnh thatru*

#### **Translation:**

When pleasant words are easy, bitter words to use,  
Is, leaving sweet ripe fruit, the sour unripe to choose

### LET US UNDERSTAND 17.2.2

This couplet is from Thirukkural's chapter on "The Essentials of a State". This couplet provides guidance on the characteristics of a good and effective ruler or leader.

The first part emphasises the importance of a ruler or leader (KooRal) who possesses the "pleasant qualities" or "noble virtues." (Iniya uLavaaka). In other words, a ruler should have admirable and virtuous qualities.

The second part of the couplet (Kani-iruppak Kaaikavarnh thatru) suggests that a ruler should work diligently and strive to eliminate (atru) the sufferings (noy) faced by the people, just as a farmer tends to the crops in the field (Kani-iruppak Kaaikavarnh).



#### **INTEXT QUESTIONS 17.2.2**

1. In Thiruvalluvar's couplet "When pleasant words are easy," what qualities should a ruler possess?
  - a) Cruelty and dominance
  - b) Indifference and arrogance
  - c) Pleasant qualities and diligence
  - d) Deceptiveness and cunningness
2. What qualities does Thiruvalluvar emphasise for a ruler or leader?

#### **Notes**

**SECTION 17.2.3**Kabir And  
Thiruvalluvar**Transliteration:**

*Theeyinaar suttapuN uLLaarum aaRaadhae  
naavinaaR sutta vadu*

**Translation:**

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

*Notes***LET US UNDERSTAND 17.2.3**

This couplet is from Thirukkural's chapter on "Avoiding Anger". This couplet imparts wisdom on the theme of anger and its consequences.

First part of the couplet (Theeyinaar suttapuN uLLaarum aaRaadhae) describes how individuals who have been harmed or wronged (Theeyinaar) should avoid harbouring anger and seeking revenge. Instead, they should refrain from responding with anger (aaRaadhae). Second part (naavinaaR sutta vadu) underscores the idea that individuals who have been harmed or wronged should not seek vengeance or harm the wrongdoer (naavinaaR). Instead, they should avoid responding with harm (sutta) in return.

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 17.2.3**

1. Thiruvalluvar's advice "Theeyinaar suttapuN uLLaarum aaRaadhae" suggests:
  - a) Revenge is necessary.
  - b) Ignore harm and wrongdoing.
  - c) Respond with greater harm.
  - d) Seek legal action.
2. What advice does Thiruvalluvar provide regarding responding to harm or wrongdoing?

**SECTION 17.2.4****Transliteration:**

*Edhilaar kutrampoal thangutranG kaaNkiRpin  
theedhuNtoa mannum uyirkku*

**Translation:**

If each his own, as neighbours faults would scan,  
Could any evil hap to living man?

**Notes****LET US UNDERSTAND 17.2.4**

This couplet is from Thirukkural's chapter on "Avoiding Slander". Here's an explanation of the couplet. This couplet addresses the harmful effects of slander and gossip and the importance of avoiding them.

First part of the couplet compares slander (kutram) to a weapon (Edhi) that can harm others. It suggests that slander is as damaging as using a weapon to harm someone. Second part emphasises that those who engage in slander or spread harmful rumours will ultimately suffer the consequences. The word **KaaNkiRpin** implies that they will face the harm they intended for others. It also suggests that such actions are detrimental not only to the person they target but also to their own soul (uyirkku).

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 17.2.4**

1. What does Thiruvalluvar compare slander to in the context of governance?
2. What does Thiruvalluvar advise regarding slander in this couplet?

**SECTION 17.2.5****Transliteration:**

*PuRaLthooimai neeraan amaiyum aganthooimai  
vaaimaiyaal kaaNap padum*

**Translation:**

Outward purity the water will bestow;  
Inward purity from truth alone will flow.



**LET US UNDERSTAND 17.2.5**

This couplet is from Thirukkural's chapter on "The Importance of Just Rule". This couplet highlights the importance of just and fair governance.

The first part underscores the idea that a ruler or leader who governs with justice and fairness (PuRaLthooimai) will be able to maintain their rule (amaiyum) effectively. In contrast, a ruler who governs unjustly and unfairly (aganthooimai) will face difficulties.

The second part suggests that the ruler's just rule and fairness will become evident (kaaNapadum) through their actions and decisions based on integrity (vaaimaiyaal).

*Notes***INTEXT QUESTIONS 17.2.5**

1. What is the essence of the couplet as explained in the provided passage?
  - a) The importance of water for rulers
  - b) Just and fair governance is crucial for effective leadership
  - c) The difficulties rulers face in maintaining rule
  - d) The significance of outward purity
2. What does Thiruvalluvar say about the importance of just rule in governance?

**SECTION 17.2.6****Transliteration:**

*Padaikuti koozh-amaichchu natparaN aaRum  
utaiyaan arasaruL ERu*

**Translation:**

An army, people, wealth, a minister, friends, fort; six things –  
Who owns them all, a lion lives amid the kings.

**LET US UNDERSTAND 17.2.6**

This couplet is from Thirukkural's chapter on "On not Slumbering in one's Duty". This couplet offers guidance on the qualities and responsibilities of a ruler or leader.




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**Notes**

First part describes a ruler or leader who is like the “koozh-amaichchu”. Koozh is a traditional South Indian dish made from rice or millet, and amaichchu refers to the person who prepares it. In this context, it symbolises a leader who works tirelessly for the well-being of their people, just as the cook prepares food diligently.

Later part highlights that a ruler or leader should have loyal friends and advisors (natparaN) who offer valuable counsel. Such advisors help the ruler make wise decisions.

“ArasaruL ERu” emphasises the importance of the ruler’s compassion (ERu) and benevolence (arasaruL). A good leader should rule with kindness and concern for the welfare of the people.


**INTEXT QUESTIONS 17.2.6**

1. What does Thiruvalluvar emphasise in “Padaikuti koozh-amaichchu natparaN aaRum ” regarding a ruler?
  - a) Military prowess
  - b) Empathy and care
  - c) Deception in war
  - d) Isolation from the public
2. What qualities and responsibilities of a ruler does Thiruvalluvar highlight?

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**SECTION 17.2.7**
**Transliteration:**

*Thothanaith thooRum maNaRkaeNI maandharkkuk katranaith thooRUm aRIVu*

**Translation:**

In sandy soil, when deep you delve, you reach the springs below;  
The more you learn, the freer streams of wisdom flow.

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**LET US UNDERSTAND 17.2.7**

This couplet is from Thirukkural’s chapter on “Seeking the Right Place” (Kural Arasaanigal). This couplet advises on the importance of choosing the right place and

acquiring knowledge.

The part in the beginning (Thothanaith thooRum maNaRkaeNI) suggests that one should leave or move away (thooRum) from a place (maNaRkaeNI) where there is no opportunity or scope for growth or development. It advises people to avoid staying in places that do not offer the potential for progress.

Second part (maandharkkuk katranaith thooRUm aRIVu) suggests that one should leave or move away (thooRum) from people (maandharkkuk) who lack knowledge or are ignorant (katranaith). It encourages individuals to distance themselves from those who do not possess wisdom and seek knowledge.



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### INTEXT QUESTIONS 17.2.7

- In Thiruvalluvar's couplet "Thothanaith thooRum maNaRkaeNI," what does Thiruvalluvar advise regarding seeking the right place?
  - Be content with where you are.
  - Constantly seek change.
  - Move to a prosperous city.
  - Find solitude in nature.
- What advice does Thiruvalluvar give about seeking the right place?

### SECTION 17.2.8

#### Transliteration:

*Perumaikkum Enich chiRumaikkum thaththam karumamae kattLaik kal*

#### Translation:

Of greatness and of meanness too,  
The deeds of each are touchstone true.

### LET US UNDERSTAND 17.2.8

This couplet is from Thirukkural's chapter on "Fortitude" (Kural Perumai). This couplet emphasises the importance of maintaining equanimity and self-control in both success and failure.




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**Notes**

The first part (Perumaikkum Enich chiRumaikkum thaththam) conveys that true strength (thaththam) lies in one's ability to maintain equanimity and composure whether they experience success (Perumaikkum) or face adversity or failure (chiRumaikkum). It suggests that a person's character is tested in both situations.

Second part (karumamae kattLaik kal) emphasises that restraint (karumam), which involves maintaining self-control and not being swayed by extreme emotions, is a valuable virtue or discipline (kattLaik kal).


**INTEXT QUESTIONS 17.2.8**

1. In Thiruvalluvar's couplet "Perumaikkum Enich chiRumaikkum thaththam karumamae kattLaik kal," what is the contrast presented?
  - a) Greatness and mediocrity
  - b) Wealth and poverty
  - c) Strength and weakness
  - d) Wisdom and ignorance
2. What does Thiruvalluvar emphasise about greatness and meanness?

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**SECTION 17.2.9**
**Transliteration:**

*veLLath thanaiya malarnheetham maandhardham uLLath thanaiyadhu  
uyarvu*

**Translation:**

With rising flood, the rising lotus flower its stem unwinds;  
The dignity of men is measured by their minds.

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**LET US UNDERSTAND 17.2.9**

This couplet is from Thirukkural's chapter on "The Importance of Self-Control" (Kural Kudimai). This couplet highlights the importance of self-control and inner qualities over external appearances.

The first part (veLLath thanaiya malarnheetham) refers to the external beauty and

appearance, specifically the beauty of a person's body or physical attributes (VeLLath) and the blossoming of flowers (malarnheetham). It suggests that physical beauty is fleeting and subject to change.

Second part (Maandhardham uLLath thanaiyadhu uyarvu) emphasises that the real greatness (uyarvu) lies in a person's inner qualities (Maandhardham) and character. It underscores the idea that one's true worth is determined by their inner virtues, such as kindness, compassion, integrity, and wisdom.



### INTEXT QUESTIONS 17.2.9

1. According to Thiruvalluvar's couplet "veLLath thanaiya malarnheetham maandhardham uLLath thanaiyadhu uyarvu," what is Thiruvalluvar's perspective on external beauty?
  - a) It is important for success.
  - b) It is a sign of inner purity.
  - c) It fades with time.
  - d) It determines one's character.
2. What message does Thiruvalluvar convey regarding external beauty and inner qualities?

### SECTION 17.2.10

#### Transliteration:

*Netunheer maRAvi matidhuyil naankum ketunheeraar kaamak kalan*

#### Translation:

Delay, oblivion, sloth, and sleep; these four  
Are pleasure – boat to bear the doomed to ruin's shore.

### LET US UNDERSTAND 17.2.10

This couplet is from Thirukkural's chapter on "The Importance of Control" (Kural Araththuppaal). This couplet highlights the importance of controlling one's desires and urges, particularly in the context of sexual desire.



*Notes*



### Notes

The first part (Netunheer maRAvi matidhuyil naankum) suggests that a person who can control their sexual desire (Netunheer) and remain chaste (maRAvi) even when faced with temptations or opportunities for indulgence (matidhuyil) is truly disciplined and virtuous. It implies that chastity and self-control are virtues to be upheld.

Second part (ketunheeraar kaamak kalan) emphasizes that those who give in to their sexual desires (kaamak kalan) and act impulsively or recklessly in matters of passion are prone to suffering or negative consequences (ketunheeraar). It suggests that uncontrolled desires can lead to harm.



### INTEXT QUESTIONS 17.2.10

1. According to Thiruvalluvar's couplet "Netunheer maRAvi matidhuyil naankum," what is the virtue associated with controlling sexual desire?
  - a) Courage
  - b) Chastity
  - c) Ambition
  - d) Passion
2. What does Thiruvalluvar say about controlling one's desires?



### DO YOU KNOW

- Kabir was influenced by both Hindu and Islamic traditions. His verses often incorporate elements from both, reflecting a synthesis of diverse spiritual influences.
- The exact origin of Kabir remains uncertain, adding an air of mystique to his persona. He is believed to have been born in Varanasi, but legends surround his birth, including the mystical discovery on the riverbank.
- Thiruvalluvar's Thirukkural provides a comprehensive guide to ethical living. The work is organised into three books—Aram (Virtue), Porul (Wealth), and Inbam (Love), covering various aspects of life.
- The exact appearance of Thiruvalluvar remains unknown, leading to artistic interpretations. The 133-foot-tall stone statue of Thiruvalluvar in Kanyakumari,

India, is an iconic representation, but historical accuracy regarding his physical features is uncertain.

- Thiruvalluvar's influence extends beyond Tamil literature. His work has been translated into several languages, making it accessible to a wider audience and highlighting its universal appeal.

### LET'S DO

Compare and contrast the themes, styles, and messages received from the couplets of these two poets.

### LET'S LEARN



### Direct and Indirect Speech (Imperative Sentences)

In lesson 11, we learnt about Direct and Indirect speech and some rules to convert them into statement sentences. In lesson 13, we got acquainted with the interchanging of Direct and Indirect speech in interrogative sentences. In this lesson, we will proceed with the interchanging of Direct and Indirect speech in imperative sentences.

Imperative sentences are those that give commands, make requests, advice or offer a proposal. When converting imperative sentences from direct to indirect speech, there are specific rules to follow. Consider the following direct speeches with imperative sentences:

- Alok said, "Please close the door."
- The teacher instructed, "Complete your TMA by this week."
- Mridula said to her friend, 'Work hard so that you succeed'.
- Fahad said, 'Let's go to watch a movie.'

In the first sentence Alok is requesting; in the second sentence the teacher is instructing or ordering; in the third sentence Mridula is giving advice; and in the fourth sentence Fahad is proposing or offering.

When we change an imperative sentence into indirect speech we report what someone instructed, ordered, advised or suggested.



*Notes*




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**Notes**

To change an imperative sentence into indirect speech, the reporting verb (said, told, said to, etc) is changed to a reported verb which conveys the tone of a command or a request. A few examples of the reported verbs to be used when changing an imperative sentence into indirect speech are given below:

- **Command:** ordered, instructed, told
- **Request:** begged, requested, pleaded, asked, told
- **Advice:** advised, recommended, urged, suggested, recommended, told
- **Offer:** offered, proposed, told

Now, let's convert the above-mentioned imperative direct speeches into indirect speeches:

- a) Alok said, "Please close the door."  
Alok requested to close the door.
- b) The teacher instructed, "Complete your TMA by this week."  
The teacher instructed us to complete TMA by that week.
- c) Mridula said to her friend, "Work hard so that you succeed".  
Mridula advised her friend to work hard so that she could succeed.
- d) Fahad said, "Let's go to watch a movie."  
Fahad proposed that they go to watch a movie.

Notice that we have used 'to' instead of 'that' followed by the reported verb except the last sentence in which the reporting speech starts with 'Let's'.


**INTEXT QUESTIONS 17.3**

1. Change the following direct speech sentences into indirect speech:
  - i. "Please clean your room," Mother said.
  - ii. "Don't eat all the cookies," she warned.
  - iii. "Let's go to the park," he suggested.
  - iv. "Close the window," the teacher commanded.



- v. “Be quiet during the movie,” the usher requested.
  - vi. “Don’t forget to call me later,” Sarah reminded him.
  - vii. “Hand in your assignments by Friday,” the professor instructed.
  - viii. “Let me know if you need any help,” she offered.
  - ix. “Please don’t be late,” he pleaded.
  - x. “Finish your dinner before dessert,” Mom insisted.
2. Rewrite the following sentences from indirect speech to direct speech.
- i. She told him to be quiet.
  - ii. The teacher asked the students to submit their assignments by Friday.
  - iii. They suggested that we take a break.
  - iv. He told her not to open the door for strangers.
  - v. The manager instructed the employees to finish the project before the deadline.
  - vi. Sarah’s mother advised her to eat more fruits and vegetables.
  - vii. The doctor recommended that he get more rest.
  - viii. The tour guide suggested that they visit the museum first.
  - ix. The coach told the team to practise harder.
  - x. My friend asked me to help him with his homework.




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*Notes*

## LITERARY DEVICES

### Paradox

A paradox is a statement, proposition, or situation that appears to be self-contradictory or logically absurd, but upon closer examination, reveals a deeper truth or meaning. For ex,

- “I set out to find the wicked, but none did I find.”

The line presents a paradoxical situation where the speaker sets out to find the wicked but fails to find any. It contrasts with the expectation of finding wickedness when actively searching for it.




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**Notes**

- “In suffering, everyone remembers and meditates, but no one does so in joy.”

The statement presents a paradoxical situation where people tend to remember and meditate during times of suffering but not during times of joy. This contrast highlights a common tendency in human behaviour that may seem contradictory or unexpected.

### Oxymoron

An oxymoron is a literary device that juxtaposes two contradictory or opposing words or concepts within a phrase. For ex,

“A mute person eating a raw mango, smiles”

The line presents an oxymoronic situation where a person who is typically unable to speak (“mute”) expresses joy or satisfaction through a physical action (“smiles”). This contrast creates a vivid and striking image.

### Antithesis

Antithesis is a rhetorical device in which two opposite ideas are juxtaposed in a parallel structure to create a contrasting effect. It involves the use of contrasting words, phrases, clauses, or sentences to highlight the contrast between them. For ex,

- “Neither seeking friendship, nor holding enmity towards anyone”

The line juxtaposes two contrasting ideas: seeking friendship and holding enmity. The antithesis in the statement highlights a balanced way of dealing with relationships. It suggests not getting too involved in making friends or holding grudges against others. Instead, it promotes staying neutral and calm in interactions with people.

- “Outward purity the water will bestow;  
Inward purity from truth alone will flow.”

The contrast between “Outward purity” and “Inward purity” highlights opposing ideas, emphasising the importance of both external and internal purity, albeit achieved through different means.

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

The contrast between the two lines, one describing the potential for healing in nature for physical wounds and the other emphasising the irreparable harm caused

by hurtful words to the soul, creates an antithesis. This contrast highlights the different outcomes of physical and spiritual afflictions.



### INTEXT QUESTIONS 17.4

1. Identify the figure of speech used in each sentence.
  - i. “Slowly, slowly, O mind, everything happens at its own pace.”
  - ii. “What’s the use of being big, like a date tree?  
The traveller finds no shade, and the fruit remains far away.”
  - iii. “Are pleasure – boat to bear the doomed to ruin’s shore.”
  - iv. “Of greatness and of meanness too,  
The deeds of each are touchstone true.”
  - v. “In sandy soil, when deep you delve, you reach the springs below; “
2. Create a sentence for each type of figure of speech:
  - i. Simile
  - ii. Metaphor
  - iii. Personification
  - iv. Hyperbole
3. Explain the meaning or imagery conveyed by the figure of speech in the following sentences:
  - i. “Time is a thief in the night.”
  - ii. “The wind whispered its secrets through the trees.”
  - iii. “Her smile was a ray of sunshine on a cloudy day.”

### LET’S WRITE

Read the following conversation between Bappa and Nitu and write a short paragraph based on it.

“Hey, how’s it going?” asked Bappa as he entered the room.



*Notes*



### Notes

“Not bad, just catching up on some reading,” replied Nitu, not looking up from her book.

“What are you reading?” Bappa inquired, curious.

“It’s a book on ancient Indian philosophy,” Nitu answered, finally lifting her gaze. “It’s quite fascinating.”

“I’ve heard about that! What’s it all about?” Bappa asked, settling into a chair.

“Well, it’s incredibly diverse,” Nitu explained. “There are different schools of thought, each with its own unique perspective on life and existence.”

“Interesting,” mused Bappa. “Can you give me an example?”

“Sure,” Nitu said. “Take the concept of ‘dharma’ in Hindu philosophy, for instance. It’s not just about duty; it’s about living in harmony with the cosmic order.”

“Fascinating,” remarked Bappa. “And what about Buddhism?”

“Buddhism focuses on the impermanence of everything and the idea of ending suffering through enlightenment,” Nitu elaborated. “It’s about understanding the nature of reality and finding inner peace.”

“Wow, ancient Indian philosophers were really ahead of their time,” exclaimed Bappa, impressed.

“Absolutely,” Nitu agreed. “Their insights still resonate today and offer valuable perspectives on life and the human condition.”



### WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNT

#### WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

- Both Kabir and Thiruvalluvar emphasise the importance of humility and simplicity in life. Kabir’s dohas often criticise ego and pride, highlighting the value of humility. Thirukkural advises that modesty and humility bring respect and peace.
- Kabir advocates for universal love and compassion, urging people to transcend religious and social divides. Similarly, Thirukkural underscores compassion as a fundamental virtue, stating that a compassionate heart brings happiness and moral integrity.

Kabir And  
Thiruvalluvar

- Kabir emphasises self-reflection, urging individuals to look within to find truth and God, rather than seeking external validation or ritualistic practices. Thiruvalluvar, too, speaks of self-control and inner purity, suggesting that a virtuous inner life is key to external success.
- Both texts caution against excessive attachment to material wealth and possessions. Kabir highlights the transient nature of life and the futility of material pursuits. Thirukkural advises moderation, stressing that true wealth lies in virtue and wisdom rather than in material accumulation.
- Thirukkural places great emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge, wisdom, and the pursuit of truth. Kabir also highlights the need for spiritual wisdom, urging individuals to go beyond superficial learning and seek deeper understanding and enlightenment.
- Both Kabir and Thiruvalluvar stress the importance of ethical conduct and moral values. Kabir’s dohas encourage truthfulness, kindness, and non-violence. Thirukkural offers a comprehensive guide on moral living, covering topics such as justice, charity, honesty, and family values.

*Notes***TERMINAL QUESTIONS**

1. What does Kabir lament about when witnessing grinding stones at work?
2. Where does Kabir find the evil in this world, and what is the lesson he imparts through this observation?
3. According to Kabir, how much is enough for sustaining the family, and what values does this reflect?
4. Why does Kabir refer to a mute person’s smile, and what profound message does this convey about divine love?
5. What does Kabir want to teach with the example of the date tree, and what message does it convey about substance over appearance?
6. In the couplet discussing the qualities of a ruler from the chapter on “On not Slumbering in one’s Duty,” what virtues and responsibilities does Thiruvalluvar highlight?
7. In the couplet advising on “Seeking the Right Place,” what does Thiruvalluvar




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**Notes**

recommend regarding the environment one should choose?

8. In the couplet from the chapter on “The Essentials of a State,” what qualities does Thiruvalluvar emphasise for a good ruler or leader?
9. What is the message in the couplet from the chapter on “The Importance of Self-Control” regarding the enduring value of inner strength and goodness?
10. Explain the wisdom conveyed in the couplet from the chapter on “The Importance of Self-Control” regarding the significance of inner virtues over external beauty.


**ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS**
**17.1.1**

1. b) Impermanence and change.
2. Kabir laments about the transient nature of life and the inevitability of change.

**17.1.2**

1. Kabir finds the evil within himself, not in the world around him. Through introspection, he realizes that the true source of wickedness lies in his own mind and heart.
2. The lesson Kabir imparts is that self-reflection is essential. Instead of judging others, we should examine our own flaws and work on self-improvement, as true understanding and growth come from within.

**17.1.3**

1. b) Speak softly and kindly
2. Kabir suggests speaking words that are gentle, compassionate, and uplifting to others.

**17.1.4**

1. Kabir suggests the mind to have patience because he believes that everything in life unfolds at its own pace.
2. Kabir uses the metaphor of a gardener watering plants to convey the essence of patience.

**17.1.5**

1. b) Never experience hunger.
2. According to Kabir, 'enough' means having just sufficient to care for his family and ensuring none goes hungry.

**17.1.6**

1. Kabir uses the example of the date tree to convey the idea that mere physical size or grandeur is not inherently valuable if it does not serve a practical purpose or provide benefit to others.
2. The essence of Kabir's couplet "Bada Hua To Kya Hua" is to emphasise the insignificance of material wealth, power, or physical stature if they do not bring about positive change or benefit others.

**17.1.7**

1. d) Happiness and well-being.
2. This couplet reveals that Kabir's approach to human relationships is one of neutrality and benevolence. He neither seeks friendship nor holds enmity towards anyone, indicating a stance of equanimity and goodwill towards all individuals.

**17.1.8**

1. b) Deep contemplation
2. Kabir suggests becoming wise not merely through extensive reading or memorisation of scriptures but through deep contemplation. Thus, Kabir emphasises the importance of introspection and understanding rather than rote learning.

**17.1.9**

1. Kabir believes we feel sad because we focus too much on our troubles and bad times. We often think about them, making ourselves feel even worse.
2. Kabir suggests that if we learn to let go of both happiness and sadness, we can find peace. Instead of only meditating when we're sad, we should also do it when we're happy. This helps us understand that joy and sorrow are just temporary feelings, and we can rise above them by finding inner peace through meditation.

*Notes*




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**Notes**
**17.1.10**

1. a) Impossible to narrate.
2. Kabir refers to a mute person's smile to emphasise the idea that expressions of love can transcend verbal communication. Even without words, the mute person's smile communicates joy and contentment, highlighting the power of non-verbal communication and the depth of emotion that love can evoke.

**17.2.1**

1. Thiruvalluvar associates qualities like sharing domestic life and possessing household virtues with a fulfilling life.
2. The couplet highlights the significance of wealth earned through honest means, suggesting it brings respect and spiritual fulfilment, even to the extent of being honoured among the gods in heaven.

**17.2.2**

1. c) Pleasant qualities and diligence.
2. Thiruvalluvar emphasises the importance of possessing pleasant qualities and diligence for a ruler or leader.

**17.2.3**

1. b) Ignore harm and wrongdoing.
2. Thiruvalluvar advises against responding to harm or wrongdoing with further harm or retaliation. Instead, he advocates for maintaining one's composure and not stooping to the level of those who have wronged you.

**17.2.4**

1. In this couplet, Thiruvalluvar compares slander to a form of governance or leadership. Specifically, he likens slander to a ruler or authority figure in the context of governance.
2. Regarding slander, Thiruvalluvar advises against it. He suggests that if everyone focused on their own faults instead of maliciously scrutinising those of their neighbours, no harm or evil would befall anyone.

**17.2.5**

1. d) The significance of outward purity.



2. Just and fair governance, rooted in truth and integrity, is crucial for effective leadership and societal well-being.

**17.2.6**

1. b) Empathy and care
2. Thiruvalluvar highlights the qualities of a ruler such as military prowess, wealth, ministerial competence, and the support of friends and fortifications.

**17.2.7**

1. d) Find solitude in nature.
2. The advice is to continuously seek knowledge and wisdom, as it leads to a better understanding of one's surroundings and finding the right place in life.

**17.2.8**

1. a) Greatness and mediocrity.
2. Thiruvalluvar emphasises that the deeds of each, whether they are great or mean, serve as a true touchstone. This implies that both greatness and mediocrity are tested or judged by their actions, indicating the importance of one's conduct regardless of their status or achievements.

**17.2.9**

1. c) It fades with time.
2. Thiruvalluvar emphasises the importance of cultivating inner virtues, as they are enduring and contribute to one's true greatness.

**17.2.10**

1. b) Chastity.
2. Thiruvalluvar advises people to resist the temptations of pleasure-seeking behaviours and instead focus on discipline, diligence, and mindful action to avoid downfall.

**17.3**

1. i. Mom asked him to clean his room.  
ii. She warned not to eat all the cookies.

*Notes*




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**Notes**

- iii. He suggested going to the park.
- iv. The teacher commanded us to close the window.
- v. The usher requested to be quiet during the movie.
- vi. Sarah reminded him not to forget to call her later.
- vii. The professor instructed us to hand in assignments by Friday.
- viii. She offered to let her know if she needed any help.
- ix. He pleaded not to be late.
- x. Mom insisted on finishing dinner before dessert.

2.
  - i. “Be quiet,” she told him.
  - ii. “Submit your assignments by Friday,” the teacher asked the students.
  - iii. “Let’s take a break,” they suggested.
  - iv. “Don’t open the door for strangers,” he told her.
  - v. “Finish the project before the deadline,” the manager instructed the employees.
  - vi. “Eat more fruits and vegetables,” Sarah’s mother advised her.
  - vii. “You should get more rest,” the doctor recommended.
  - viii. “Let’s visit the museum first,” the tour guide suggested.
  - ix. “Practise harder,” the coach told the team.
  - x. “Help me with my homework,” my friend asked me.

**17.4**

1.
  - i. Repetition, Personification
  - ii. Simile, metaphor, imagery, irony, symbolism
  - iii. Symbolism
  - iv. Antithesis, parallelism, metaphor
  - v. alliteration, metaphor, imagery
2. Individual answer
3. Individual answer