



Thiruvalluvar was a great Tamil Saint-poet, who lived more than two thousand years ago. 'Thirukkural' is the book of his teachings. It is greatly loved and respected even today.

Thiruvalluvar was a textile weaver. He wove beautiful fabrics and saris and sold them in the market. People said that he never got angry, never used bad words, never shouted at anyone.

In the same town, there lived a rich young man. He wasted most of his time roaming around with his friends. They often made fun of other people.

"I don't believe what people say about this Valluvar," said the young man one day. "I'm sure I can make him angry. Come on, let's have some fun today!"

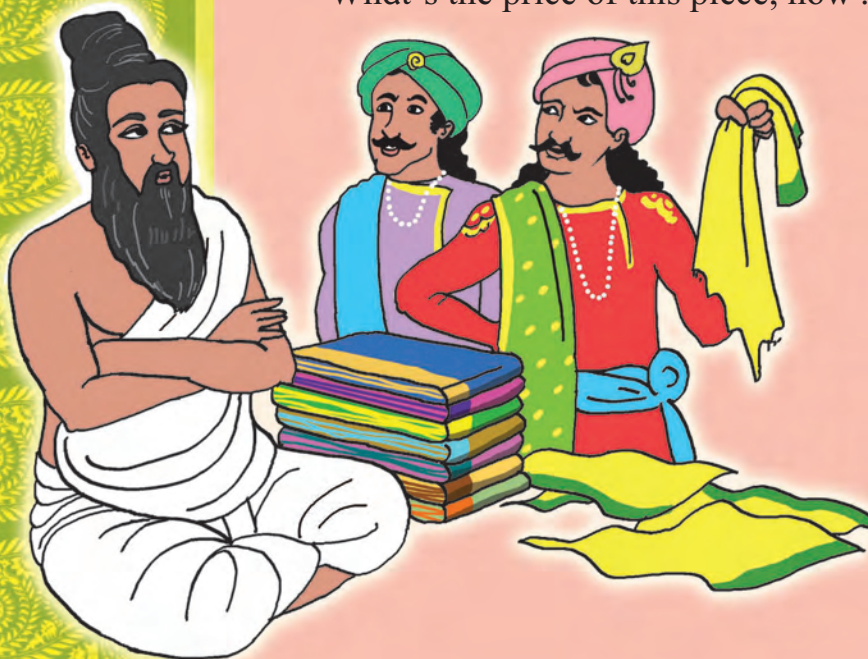
So the arrogant young man approached Thiruvalluvar in the market and picked up a beautiful piece of fabric.

"How much does this whole fabric cost?" he asked.

"Eight coins," the saint named the price.

The young man unfolded the fabric and tore it into two.

"What's the price of this piece, now?"



“Four coins,” the Saint answered politely.

The youth was taken aback. ‘Why doesn’t the man get angry?’ he thought. He then tore the half pieces into half again.

“And now?”

“Two coins!” was the answer.

Now it was the young man who became impatient and agitated. He tore the pieces into half again and again, saying, “And now? What’s the price now?”

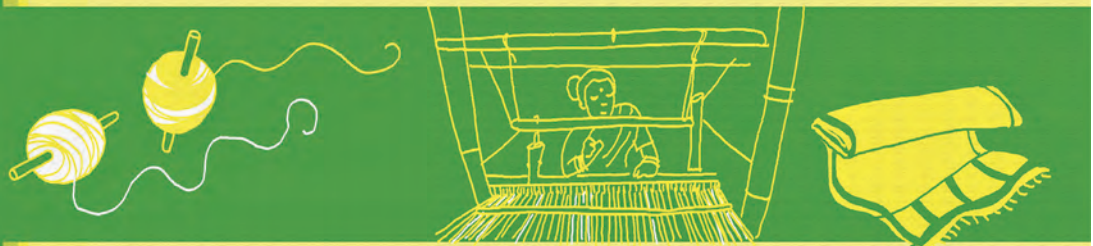


Thiruvalluvar calmly went on reducing the price to half every time.

At last, the fabric was reduced to rags. So, Thiruvalluvar said in a quiet tone, “Now this fabric has become worthless. I will not name any price for these rags.”

The young man did not know what to say. But he was proud of his riches. So he offered to pay eight coins to the Saint. For the first time, Thiruvalluvar smiled but he refused to take the money.

“Young man, now this fabric is of no use. It has become worthless. Why? Because no one will be able to wear it now.”



“Do you know, the fabric was not made in a day. Many people have toiled to make it. The farmer who grew cotton in his field worked hard for months through sun and rain. He picked cotton from each boll and gave it for spinning. Then someone else carded the cotton and spun it into long, uniform threads. The threads were dyed carefully so that they took on these lovely colours. My wife and I wove the threads together, putting in beautiful designs. We thought, some day, someone will like this fabric, will be happy to

wear it. Then all our work would have been rewarded. When you destroyed the fabric, you destroyed all the love and labour that went into its making. Money cannot bring it back.”

The softly spoken words touched the young man’s heart. Now he was really ashamed of himself.

“And do you know,” Thiruvalluvar went on to say, “I can weave another fabric like this, but our life is also like this fabric. If you tear it apart with hasty, thoughtless actions, it will be destroyed. And you will not get it back again.”

Thiruvalluvar’s words opened the young man’s eyes. There and then he decided to give up his idleness and bad habits.

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- **boll** : pod of the cotton plant
 - **spinning** : process of making yarn or thread out of cotton wool
 - **carded** : cleaned and combed cotton to remove seeds
 - **spun** : drew out and twisted cotton (to make yarn or thread)
 - **rewarded** : when one is rewarded, one gets what he has worked for
 - **idleness** : laziness

POINTERS

1. Form pairs. Present in the class, the conversation between Thiruvalluvar and the young man.
2. Describe the following with the help of the story.
 - Thiruvalluvar
 - The rich young man
 - The fabric woven by Thiruvalluvar
3. Read aloud the speech in which Thiruvalluvar explains how the fabric was made. Present the process in the form of a chart. Draw pictures for the chart and label them.
4. Classify the words in (a) and (b) into ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ words.
 - (a) great, beautiful, arrogant, impatient, quiet, worthless, proud, happy, thoughtless, hasty
 - (b) shouted at, wasted, answered, offered, smiled, refused, toiled, grew, dyed, rewarded, destroyed.
5. Write the antonyms of the following words :
 - politely ×
 - calmly ×
 - softly ×
 - carefully ×
6. Find the following adverbs in the story. What verbs do they tell us more about? Write down the pairs of verbs and adverbs.
 - ago
 - greatly
 - today
 - politely
 - calmly
 - hard

7. Use the following phrases in your own words.
 - roam around
 - again and again
 - bring something back
 - there and then
8. Discuss in groups and think about it.
 - (a) List a few occasions on which you had become angry.
What do you do when you are angry?
 - (b) Mention three occasions on which you have made someone else angry.
What made that person angry? Can you avoid such things in future?
9. Choose any one of the objects we use daily and find out how it is made. Present the information in the form of a chart.
10. Visit a library : Read the biographies of other Indian Saints. Share at least one story from their life with your friends. What message does it contain ?
11. Form groups and display the quotes and messages from different saints in your classroom.

A Project : Fabrics

1. Find out the synonyms for the word 'fabric' from a dictionary.
2. How are fabrics used in our daily life? List all the things that are made up of fabrics in your home. (At least 25)
3. How many of them are personal articles? How many of them are used for beautification of your home? How many of them are meant for utility (to fulfil a useful function in the household)?
4. List at least ten articles which use fabrics in their making. (Umbrella, school bag, tents, shamianas, stage curtains, canvas, chairs, etc.)
5. Can you name different types of fabrics? Which is the most expensive fabric you know? Talk to your parents or to a textile shop assistant. Collect samples of as many types as you can and paste them in your scrapbook. Name each type.
6. Find out the different processes by which fabrics are made. Find illustrations and write a few lines on each process.
7. Name the type of fabric closely associated with Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation. Why did Gandhiji want all of us to use this fabric?
8. India is famous for its handloom fabrics. Write the story of a handloom kurta in your own words.