

## **Hospitality as an Ethical Practice – A General View in *Thirukkural***

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### **Introduction**

Culture is an anthropological aspect of the human community. Literature is a Sylvan historian which records the events of the past. Present and future emerge by the past experiences. The author records his experiences and provides moral etiquettes to lead a better life. In this modern era, etiquettes are inundated due to technological advancements. Direct communication disappears and people communicate through technological devices. Food is a basic necessity of life. Hospitality was followed by our ancestors which made their bond strong.

### **Hospitality as a Purpose**

As Oxford Learner's Advance Dictionary defines hospitality as a friendly and generous behaviour towards guests.

“Men set up home, toil and earn  
To tend the guests and do good turn” (81)

The main feature of family life is to exercise hospitality. It is the pattern of domestic state of living. Every human should ceaselessly toil in their fields to serve their guests. As it is the design of family life, men work in the field and serve people. In spite of all differences, all creatures are equal in front of God. Service is the main difference between human and other living creatures.

“To keep out guests cannot be good  
Albeit you eat nectar-like food.” (82)

Guests should not be insulted in any circumstances. If a person eats the food of immortality without sharing with his guests and lets them be outside is not preferable. They need to be treated in a kind manner. Kindness is also a feature of hospitality. Guests are virtuous as gods and they should be received with kindness and not ignore them. No guests should be ignored. They should be treated in an equal manner.

“Who tends his guests, day in and out  
His life in want never wears out.” (83)

Sharing and caring is the main motto of hospitality. A person who is eagerly waiting to receive guests to his home and feels satisfied in welcoming them achieves eternal happiness his life. He will not suffer from poverty. It is a great achievement which is incomparable. The civilised human community feels pleasant in serving the visitors.

“The goddess of wealth will gladly rest  
Where smiles welcome the worthy guest.” (84)

Entertaining the virtuous guests with the smiling face is a necessary factor which makes the goddess happy. It is a boon to human souls that make the goddess to be with them. Almighty supports the activities of hospitality and save human who favours it.

“Should his field be sown who first  
Feeds the guests and eats the rest?” (85)

Serving the guests is an essential task to the human than to fill his stomach. It shows his concern towards the guests. He attempts to sacrifice anything for satisfying them. The one extreme thing that the author points out is that the guests can be served with seeds which are used to sow in the fields. He considers the satisfaction of his guests as primary not his own business.

“Who tends a guest and looks for next  
Is a welcome guest in heaven's feast.” (86)

The person who feels happy in serving his guests and expects more guests becomes a heavenly guest. He receives the heavenly recognition which cannot be attained by any other quality. It resembles the importance of hospitality. Men who treat others like themselves are treated good in return. Empathy has more value than sympathy.

“Worth of the guest of quality  
Is worth of hospitality.” (87)

Hospitality is a worthwhile action. The worth of hospitality is immeasurable but, it lies in the worth of the guest who receives the benefit. It is a practical statement by the author because the guests should be virtuous so that, the virtue of hospitality can be achieved. If it fails, everything goes into vice versa. Cruelty dominates the virtue where vice will be rewarded and virtue dumped.

“Who loathe guest-service one day cry:  
"We toil and store; but life is dry".” (88)

Those who dislike hospitality and remains selfish become helpless when they lose their wealth. They roam as lonely beings with no supporting souls to share their feelings. They toil to earn

the money or wealth but, they should spend a little part of money to serve others whether it is a guest or a needy. Everyone serves their guests which means they induce unity.

“The man of wealth is poor indeed  
Whose folly fails the guest to feed.” (89)

The self-centred wealthy man is considered as an unwise and stupid when he refuses hospitality. The main purpose of wealth is to serve the needy which cannot be expected from the selfish fool. He refuses exercising hospitality and rejoice in gaining the wealth through his hard work which doesn't mean that he should not lend his hand to others. Men are judged not by their coin weight but by their culture weight. Culture stresses the essence of service and not to hold his wealth with him.

“Anicham smelt withers: like that  
A wry-faced look withers the guest.” (90)

Face is the index of the mind. It reflects human feelings as a mirror. The guests should be received with a smiling face. Smile possesses energy which attracts others. If the smile vanishes, entire feast and the heart of the guest dry like a flower without fragrance which is of no use.

## Conclusion

Thirukkural is a fine literary work which provides the moral perspectives to guide people. It shows the norms and the benefits of hospitality which assists the future generation to handle their guests on every occasion. It helps to make strong bonding with each other. Tradition and culture are portrayed through the aspect of hospitality where food occupies the primary position. Serving food is the main ethic of hospitality.

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