

'The Doorway to the development of Hospitality and Tourism- Katástasizoís.'

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Abstract: Somewhere between 'what to do' and 'how to do it' we forget 'why do it at all'. This article will make us go through a little introspection as to how we can, as teeny-tiny individuals contribute to the world at large, how our lives 'do' and 'can' or 'have been' influencing 'Hospitality and Tourism'. We may think 'what can I do' as I am here in the industry to get a decent job and earn a handsome salary. Are we? Though there can be many solutions concerning government policies and programs with regards to the industry and safety measures these days or how covid-19 has affected our industry, I believe the real cause and solution lies with us 'individuals'. What is it that we cannot achieve if we are determined? Training individuals surely helps; however, nothing can work as a permanent solution to our problems, whether an industry is scaling down or up without introspection. At times stories help us understand better because we link better with stories of others. Can't we do that in reality? Who will give the world a solution? The ones whose culture has 'Hospitality' embedded so deeply – 'we' – '*Atithi devo bhava*'.

Key words: 'Hospitality', 'Tourism', 'Development of Tourism', 'Skills', 'All-in-one solution', 'Social skills', 'Conflict Resolution'

'The Doorway –Katástasi zoís'

As for the matter of understanding the 'meaning' of 'Tourism' and 'Hospitality' is there anyone else who can better understand it, than us Indians? Quite sure, not, after all, it has been embedded in our culture for *kalpas*. 'Tourism' I believe is travelling for pleasure, relaxation, recreation, entertainment, and connecting with oneself at the core level. Is not 'Hospitality' (at its core) being generous in welcoming guests or visitors from afar? How did these two get connected? Maybe initially someone travelled for trade or business of some kind, and people of a far-off state welcomed them, whatever was the motive. However, some kind of travelling indeed happened, and it was dealt with utmost grace may be at the end of that complete stranger (host). Maybe this is where 'Cross-Cultural Communication' took place, 'Body Language' as a tool of communication played an important role, 'Interpersonal or Social Skills' developed, people learned 'Change Management', 'Conflict Resolution' and 'Stress Management' and of course 'Ethics' and 'Etiquette'. Before going any further, let me quickly tell you a story which you might have heard or read already, however:

"Man Yells At Water - A thirsty traveler spotted a wooden conduit with water running in it, and drank until he was satiated. After finishing, he held up his hand and announced to the water, "I am done drinking. Stop running." As the water continued to run, the man grew angry and yelled, "I am done drinking, and I just told you to stop! Why are you still running?" A bystander noticed this and remarked, "Why don't you just leave the water instead of yelling for it to stop flowing?" The man's behavior is

similar to when people don't do what is necessary, and instead just verbally demand that something happen; and when it doesn't, they react by getting angry.”

Ever wondered why does it happen? Well, let us explore further. Why is it that despite we all being so wise get into fights over petty things and cannot get over our ego? Despite knowing that all the skills mentioned above are utmost necessary to push 'Tourism and Hospitality' to greater heights, we cannot extricate ourselves from minor issues? Maybe we think and act from our lower worlds of anger, foolishness and hunger instead of the higher ones, compassion, wisdom, courage and humility. I am not trying to make this into a spiritual article; however, if we need to progress appropriately, then this is utmost necessary, it is not a choice, it is a necessity.

Let us thread each necessity that I have mentioned, like due to globalisation people travel across national and international borders, hence cross-cultural communication has become critical. If we cannot communicate appropriately amongst our own countrymen, how will we communicate with people from different countries? Do we only think of business and money when we entertain travellers from afar? Ever wondered what makes a healthy cross-cultural communication possible? Why are some things considered barriers, like language, stereotyping, presumptions, conflicting values, and ethnocentrism? All of them will come down to one thing, a hitch in our mind or heart – ‘what if he doesn't like it...’, ‘if so, I'll ask them to do otherwise...’, ‘if not then I too will not agree...’, always bargaining. A hitch is nothing but a thought that restricts us from thinking beyond a wall. If any of the big shots had this hitch stuck to them for a long time, they would not have been able to become a big shot. Let us go through another story, which again we may have heard:

A lady used to cook her fish by cutting the head and the tail of the fish, and so did her daughter and then her daughter. One fine day the great-granddaughter of the lady asked her mother why we cook the fish by cutting its head and tail? Is it not edible? The mother wondered and said... 'I don't know...this is how my mother did and her mother too...' and we thank god that the great grandmother was still alive. The girl met her great grandmother and asked the same question from her, and yes, she answered that they were not so well off financially, and she had a small pan to cook food. Hence she had to cook the fish by cutting its head and tail to fit it into the small pan.

So, by not questioning the traditions and blindly following them, we form this hitch which gets permanently stuck with us, be it anything, traditions or values or work. It acts as a barrier in communication, informing good ties with people worldwide, in managing changes because changes bring with them a vast shift that is not dogmatic in nature, it takes us out of our comfort zone and pushes us to think critically. If 'accepting' has been, then 'not accepting' too somehow has been like a man since the beginning. We all would not have survived if we had accepted droughts, floods, lightning, hunger, dying since the beginning. However, the point is to apply our brains to when to apply acceptance and when to apply renunciation. Body language too is a reflection of our mind and heart. If I am not interested in someone's conversation no matter how much I get trained ultimately, some of my expressions at some point may differ from my words. Change management or conflict resolution requires us to bring this wall down, which creates a hitch and then we shall finally start using our critical thinking. No resolution can happen without an acceptance that 'other person too is a human just like me' or 'the other person's culture and values too are respect worthy', 'respect other person's struggles in life because there is no one who hasn't faced them at least once in a lifetime' or 'I shall consider even if the other person hasn't done till now, let me take the first step and the next and the next for goodness sake'. Why? Well, firstly it will help 'Us' manage our own stress, eradicate causes or thought process that increase prolonged stress like,

‘I’m all alone, and there is no one I can go out with...’, ‘My spouse and my children don’t care about me...’, ‘he excelled more than me at work...despite that I’m more senior’, ‘her life is easy going and she has everything in a platter...’ or ‘I didn’t meet my target at work...’. Can't there be a win-win situation, does it always have to be 'win-lose' or 'lose-win' or 'lose-lose' situation?

However, why did we spend so much time discussing all this? Maybe because these are some of the reasons which stop us at times from travelling to a beautiful place (apart from the covid-19 situation) or communicate more often and deeply with the people of a particular race, or caste or country or a state and make our experiences of travelling more memorable or lose the opportunity to explore some parts of the world or our own country and hence lose an opportunity to push tourism. Will we ever like to travel to a place where people do not know or want to behave appropriately? Personally, I won't even if it is an official journey I will probably think twice because then there will be no pleasure, no relaxation, no recreation, no entertainment, and no connection and therefore, no real 'Tourism' or 'Hospitality' then I shall better sit at home. 😊

However, after all this speculation, may we think, 'how do I solve it...how do I do it...I'm a tiny individual and maybe I can't influence other people'. Yes, most of the times, we may not be able to change others or influence them. However, I am attempting this article to do the same. When you go ahead and start working in the 'real world', contribute the way you can as much as you can, and the key is never to give up and continue to contribute no matter what. Do 'our' best, and we will see that others change too, by looking at us and our behaviour. Yes, there will be struggles, and it will not be easy, but we will do it for ourselves.

Let us absorb another story: 'Watch Yourself.'

‘There was once a pair of acrobats. The teacher was a poor widower, and the student was a young girl by the name of Meda. These acrobats performed each day on the streets in order to earn enough to eat. Their act consisted of the teacher balancing a tall bamboo pole on his head while the little girl climbed slowly to the top. Once to the top, she remained there while the teacher walked along the ground. Both performers had to maintain complete focus and balance in order to prevent any injury from occurring and to complete the performance. One day, the teacher said to the pupil: 'Listen, Meda, I will watch you, and you watch me so that we can help each other maintain concentration and balance and prevent an accident. Then we will surely earn enough to eat.' But the little girl was wise, she answered, 'Dear master, I think it would be better for each of us to watch ourselves. To look after oneself means to look after both of us. That way, I am sure we will avoid any accidents and earn enough to eat.’

It all boils down to what kind of experiences we have had in life, what have we shaped out of them, have we applied what we have learned from them, are we only focused on problems or are we ready for solutions, and all this makes what we call - 'life condition' (Katástasi zoís). I know its Greek, it may sound like Greek right now, but the point is will we be ready to do it or like any other page will we just turn this page over? 😊

Well, the results will depend on what action do we take now and in the future and rather than just read this article and agree with me, start thinking critically of the actions we take in our daily life, words we speak and interactions we make with others – do they have any impact, are they influencing anyone or someone's actions? Moreover, take actions from what we call, higher life state (Katástasi zoís) of

compassion, wisdom, courage and humility. After all, we 'Reap what we Sow' and I believe we again Sow what we Reap, and this suffering cycle may never end if we do not step out by taking corrective actions. With this 'Cross-Cultural Communication', 'Body Language', 'Interpersonal or Social Skills', 'Change Management', 'Conflict Resolution', 'Stress Management', 'Ethics' and 'Etiquette' will seem like a 'piece of cake' and thus will help us boom 'Hospitality and Tourism' at our individual level. Every drop of water will make the ocean complete. Everything depends on the spirit, energy and the intention behind it – '*Atithi Devo bhava.*'

References:

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