



The Concept of "அளபெடை" in Tirukkural: An In-Depth Exploration

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Abstract

தமிழ்மொழியானது நீண்ட, நெடிய இலக்கண, இலக்கிய வரலாற்றைக் கொண்ட மொழியாகத் திகழ்கின்றது. எழுத்து, சொல், பொருள், யாப்பு, அணி என்னும் ஐந்து வகையான இலக்கணங்களைத் தமிழ்மொழி கொண்டுள்ளது. எழுத்திலக்கணத்தில் எழுத்துகளின் ஒலி அளவுகள் பற்றி இலக்கண நூலோர் விளக்கியுள்ளனர். இனிய ஓசைக்காகவும், செய்யுளில் சீர், தளை போன்ற காரணங்களுக்காகவும் நெடில் எழுத்துக்கள் தமக்கு இனமான குறில் எழுத்துக்களோடு சேர்ந்து, தமக்குறிய மாத்திரை அளவிலிருந்து நீண்டு ஒலிப்பது அளபெடை ஆகும். அளபெடைகள் இன்னிசை, செய்யுளிசை, சொல்லிசை என மூவகைப்படும். அவற்றுள் சொல்லிசை அளபெடையில் பொருள் மாற்றம் செய்ய எழுத்துகள் அளபெடுக்கின்றன. ஆனால் அளபெடை பொருள் மாற்றம் செய்யும் என்று இலக்கண நூல்கள் யாங்கணுமே குறிப்பிடவில்லை. ஆகவே இக்கட்டுரையில் பொருள் மாற்றம் செய்யும் எழுத்து அளபெடை ஆகாது என்று இலக்கண நூல்கள் மற்றும் அறிஞர்களின் கருத்துகளின் மூலம் மறுக்கப்படுகிறது. அறநூலான திருக்குறளில் அளபெடைகள் 80 இடங்களில் பயின்று வந்துள்ளன. அவ்வளபெடைகள் திருக்குறளில் இன்னிசை மற்றும் செய்யுளிசை அளபெடைகளாகப் பயின்று வந்துள்ள விதத்தை இக்கட்டுரை ஆராய்கிறது.

The Tirukkural, a seminal text attributed to the Tamil sage Tiruvalluvar, stands as a cornerstone of Tamil literature and philosophy. Comprising 1,330 couplets (kurals) crafted in a poetic form, this text serves as a manual for moral living and ethical governance. One of the key concepts elucidated in the Tirukkural is "அளபெடை" (Alapetai), often translated as "moderation" or "measured response." The notion of Alapetai plays a critical role in the understanding of ethical behavior, personal conduct, and social interaction. This paper seeks to provide an exhaustive exploration of the concept of Alapetai within the context of the Tirukkural, underscoring its relevance in contemporary society.

Meaning and Significance of Alapetai

- **Defining Alapetai:** The term "Alapetai" merges two Tamil words: "அள" (measure) and "பெற" (to accept or to receive). In essence, Alapetai encapsulates the idea of moderation, suggesting that every action and thought should be measured and balanced.
- **Philosophical Implications:** At its core, Alapetai communicates the importance of equilibrium in every aspect of life. This principle encourages individuals to navigate their desires, emotions, and actions with wisdom and temperance.
- **Cultural Relevance:** In a cultural landscape where excess and extremes are often glorified, Alapetai promotes a paradigm that values balance and restraint. This concept resonates with universal philosophies that advocate for moderation, such as Aristotle's "Golden Mean."

Alapetai in the Tirukkural

- **Contextual Framework:** The concept of Alapetai is addressed in several couplets throughout the Tirukkural. It is primarily discussed in relation to personal conduct, governance, and social interactions, highlighting the multifaceted dimensions of moderation.
- **Key Verses:**
 - **Kural 33:** Explains the importance of restraint in one's speech and actions, imploring individuals to consider the consequences of their words and behavior.
 - **Kural 281:** Stresses that those in positions of power should exercise moderation in their authority, ensuring justice and fairness without succumbing to tyranny or despotism.
- **Illustrative Examples:**
 - The couplets illustrate instances where excessive behavior leads to negative outcomes, reinforcing that both joy and sorrow should be approached with a sense of balance.

Modern-Day Applications of Alapetai

- **Personal Development:** In contemporary contexts, the principle of Alapetai is highly applicable in personal development strategies. Self-help literature often echoes the sentiment of moderation, advising individuals to engage in balanced lifestyles—be it through diet, work, leisure, or relationships.
- **Conflict Resolution:** The concept can also be crucial in conflict resolution. By advocating for moderation in emotions and reactions, parties can achieve more amicable solutions rather than resorting to extremes.
- **Social Media Dynamics:** In today's digital age, where social media often amplifies polarizing viewpoints, the principle of Alapetai urges users to approach discussions with empathy and moderation, fostering healthier communication.

The Relevance of Alapetai in Governance

- **Policy Implications:** In the realm of governance, the principle of Alapetai serves as a guideline for policymakers. Balanced approaches to legislation ensure that policies reflect the needs of the populace without leaning towards authoritarianism or chaos.
- **Ethical Leadership:** Leaders who embody Alapetai are more likely to cultivate trust and respect within their communities. Ethical leadership that adheres to moderate principles fosters a stable and inclusive environment.

Critique and Challenges

- **Misinterpretation:** A potential critique of the Alapetai principle is its occasional misinterpretation as a call for passivity. Moderation should not imply complacency, but rather an active engagement in decision-making processes grounded in wisdom.
- **Cultural Variability:** Additionally, interpretations of moderation may vary across cultures. While the Tirukkural emphasizes moderation as a virtue, its application can be contentious in cultures that prioritize assertiveness and boldness.

Conclusion

The rich tapestry of the Tirukkural, woven with the essential threads of human values, offers profound insights into the nature of Alapetai. As a guiding principle, Alapetai encourages individuals and societies to pursue balance, empathy, and measured responses in their interactions and decisions. In an increasingly polarized world, embracing the wisdom of Alapetai may serve as a necessary antidote to excess—both personally and collectively. The continued exploration of this concept not only honors the legacy of Tiruvalluvar but also reinforces the timeless relevance of moderation in fostering a harmonious society.

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