

Vidura's Disapproval: A Prelude to the fall of the Kuru Clan

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Abstract: This article explores Vidura's discomfort with and disapproval of the game of dice in the Mahābhārata, a pivotal episode that foreshadows the destruction of the Kuru dynasty. It delves into the concept of Dharma as the essential foundation of human existence, contrasting it with the inherent destructiveness of Adharma. The narrative examines the inevitability of actions dictated by individual swabhāva (nature) and varṇa (intrinsic disposition), highlighting their interplay in shaping decisions and their consequences. By juxtaposing Vidura's wisdom with the Kuru clan's disregard for his counsel, the article underscores the tragic inevitability of destiny driven by collective failures. It emphasizes Dharma as the harmonizing force of the cosmos, offering profound insights into human consciousness and its evolution toward cosmic awareness. Through the philosophical lens of Bhagavāna Kṛṣṇa's teachings as perpetuated in the texture of the Mahābhārata, the article elucidates the moral complexities of the epic and its enduring message: peace and balance must guide actions, even amid emergent crises. This study serves as a reminder of the timeless wisdom embedded in the epic, urging readers to align their lives with the principles of Dharma.

Keywords: Disapproval, Dharma Restoration, Philosophy, Swabhāva, Consciousness

There is no doubt that it is only because of the angle going to one extreme, the tightened thread comes into its full display. What is seen at the extremist position is not normally visible from the axis that is either on the other extreme or at the middle. And when the destruction is at hand, all and everything starts working in the same direction. And if the destruction was not to take place, something will definitely work for its elimination (Agarwal, 2015). In the battle of the Kurukṣetra, there are many instances which are generally quoted by the readers saying that the Pāṇḍava-s also took recourse to the foul means in order to win the battle (Patel, 2018). But it is not so easy to decipher in such a superficial way the complexities of the timeless narrative. What is visible works differently on invisible planes and what is invisible does not look likewise.

Introduction

In the Mahābhārata, what is of the superlative significance is the restoration of the 'Dharma' (Sharma, 2017). The question is pertinent to ask why 'Dharma' is so essential in the life of the people of the time. In fact, the 'Dharma' is essential, for it is the experience which gives a dignity to the human life (Das, 2019), a dignity which no other species might be able to claim. Without its presence, man is nothing but one of the species of the animal kingdoms, that is, homo-sapience (Verma, 2016). If one is full of love, compassion, and truth, one is 'Dhārmic'. What else can define other than this for being a 'Dhārmic' person? If one is otherwise, one is 'Adhārmic' (Chandra, 2020). Without 'Dharma', living one's own life is not a problem. All the animals, birds, insects, creatures, trees, flowers and plants all are living their own lives without having any sense of 'Dharma' in their lives (Iyer, 2021). But they do have its presence but unconsciously (Sarkar, 2020). They are not just aware about it, nor are they able to experience the same. The harmony and symphony in the universe is what is called 'Dharma' (Yadav, 2018). Expect human

beings, the entire cosmos is in a great balance, that balance is called 'Dharma'. The difference which has been acquiesced by the scriptures is that of the degree of the consciousness that each creature has acquired (Reddy, 2019).

Apart from human beings, rest are the ones who have little consciousness. It is only the entity of the human beings that is greater degree of conscious when compared to all other species (Singh, 2021). Not only this, human beings can also be more and more aware of their own existence (Sharma, 2022). This is why there are questions upon questions in human life endlessly. 'Do they ever end?' is, in fact, the real question (Patel, 2018). Here is the play of the 'Dharma' which gives answers to all the enquiries one may dwell into. The journey of 'Dharma' begins from this axis that human life is a "conscious" entity. If it is conscious, it can be more conscious. If it can be more conscious, it can be supremely conscious. If it can be supremely conscious, it can then be conscious at the level of the cosmos (Sarkar, 2020). This is where the psychological and psychoanalytical dimensions come into function in which they talk of the multiple layers of consciousness and the unconsciousness like, on one hand, individual consciousness, collective consciousness, super consciousness, cosmic consciousness and, on other, unconsciousness, sub-consciousness, collective unconsciousness, cosmic unconsciousness respectively.

This endeavour of trying to know human life from the dimensions of consciousness and the unconsciousness is what is like "being" on the journey of the 'Dharma'. Rest is the digressed ideas about it, coming out only of little understanding about it. It is the realization of the individual entity with full consciousness that results into the blissfulness, joy and ecstasy. Rest can have only its illusions, never the real experiences, for whatever is experienced in life comes as a knowledge when we consciously know about it. Things which do not give the conscious experience are forgotten like having received no knowledge. So, it is

clear what the journey of 'Dharma' would be like. The realization in absolute conscious state of being is what the realization of the 'Dharma' is in its totality (Kumar, 2022).

Intertwining of Swabhāva and Varṇa

It is this experience that has manifested itself in all the scriptures through different narratives, anecdotes, stories, parables, fables, etc. (Singh, 2021). All the people in life have different varṇa-s that they come with and this is what is termed by D. H. Lawrence as 'the religion of the blood'. Who one is, is in one's own blood (Chandra, 2020). This is what is carried by every individual in her/his utter distinctiveness. It is unchangeable. This is why it is said that "swabhāva" (nature) of anyone actually never changes. It is this "swabhāva" that prescribes the path of someone. It is this "swabhāva" which has been called as varṇa in the Indian 'philosia'. It is this "swabhāva" on the basis of which one was called a 'Brāhmaṇa' or a 'Kṣatriya' or a 'Vaishya' or a 'Śūdra'.

As the "swabhāva" does not change, similarly one can't change one's own varṇa as one cannot change one's blood or the blood group. One may be born in any so-called religion, caste, creed, culture, place, but one's varṇa shall always be with what s/he is born. And unless one knows one's own varṇa, one will never know what one's own swabhāva is. So, knowing one's own swabhāva will let one know what varṇa one is of. Both are interchangeable. If one knows one's own varṇa, one will know what one's "swabhāva" is (Reddy, 2019). Or if one comes to know of one's "swabhāva", one will know which varṇa one belongs to. The knowledge of the "swabhāva" or, say varṇa, let one know the path that one has to trek in life. That is why there are many instances in the past (for example, Viśvāmitra) that tell that someone was born among the people of one varṇa but s/he belonged to the other varṇa her/himself. This was the reason why s/he changed the varṇa later on like a born Kṣatriya converting into a Brāhmaṇa or the vice versa or the like.

Vidura's efforts to restore Harmony

It is in this scenario all the temples are consecrated. If one does not know the inner arithmetic, one can only and only misinterpret things, and the misinterpretation shall lead to nothing but a misrepresentation of thousands of things that may not be repaired back. As a result, the new narrative that some readers out of their pseudo knowledge think to narrate or to draw will have farfetched repercussions which can never bring the “harmony” and the “balance” that the Indian philoia has called as ‘Dharma’, the ultimate flowering human life into “knowledge” and “understanding” (Das, 2019). This is perhaps the smallest section among all the units but it offers so many dimensions understanding which enables the readers to acquaint themselves with new vistas of thinking and contemplation. In this section, Vidura who was one of the pivotal characters as the prime minister was bypassed by the King and was ordered to carry the invitation forward to the Pāṇḍava-s even when the former clearly indicated the possible consequence. Some of the questions are very pertinent to be asked here for which answers must be sought (Kumar, 2022). Had the Pāṇḍava-s rejected the proposal of the King for playing the game of dice as they apprehended its outcome already, one thing is sure that there would never have happened what took place later on. But the next question is if they could really deny it. Why was Yudhiṣṭhira not able to deny the proposal which in itself was going to destroy the entire clan?

In this regard, some of the significant points are very necessary to understand. Bhagavāna Kṛṣṇa who has instructed Arjuna to kill the people on the other side of ‘Dharma’ is not at all for war, for which He seems to be siding with. But it is not truth at all, for it was Kṛṣṇa himself who was all for peace. He started philosophising about to go in the battlefield only when He finds that all the doors to peace are closed. The best part of in the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa comes when He is of the opinion that one should accept the situation whole-heartedly when there is

no other alternative. Peace is what is of the prime significance (Kumar, 2022). Peace, according to Kṛṣṇa, cannot be sacrificed for anything. If one microscopically observes, one will find that He does not provoke Arjuna to indulge into war. All He wants him to do is to see the indestructible in the other and the fight has to be taken with the peaceful mind. It can be seen that it was He who tried his level best to bring peace among the bothers, which was outrightly rejected by Duryodhana at every juncture.

According to Kṛṣṇa, peace is the only way to live a life of joy and ecstasy but if all the doors to it are closed, then whatever is done to restore the same will be a 'Dhārmic' act. In the process of the restoration of peace, the central thrust of it has not to be altered. It has always to be remembered that Kṛṣṇa's emphasis is on 'all the doors to peace'. If any door is open, and one has not tried that, and takes recourse to anything other than it, then all the efforts taken by one will be called an adhārmic act (Verma, 2016). So, when Kṛṣṇa is telling Arjuna to kill the people who are falling on the other side of (the restoration of) peace, all He means to say is that the peace cannot be restored if they are not eliminated as they stand for and with all that is destructive force. And this act needs to be executed by Arjuna knowing well that no one essentially dies but the presence of the evil characters come as an impediment on the path of truth and life in the corporeal world (Das, 2019).

So, unless there is a sufficient reason for the rejection or all the options have been exhausted, Yudhiṣṭhira could never have taken the decision. One more idea may strike here and which is also debated about the Pāṇḍava-s that they too engaged themselves into unfair means in order to win in the battle. Kṛṣṇa is alleged to have helped them in His own way (Kumar, 2022). And Yudhiṣṭhira is also said to have committed the act telling lies in the midst of the battle due to which Droṇa got killed. But here it has to be remembered that they were the emergent situations.

What is done in an emergent situation can never be done in a normal situation. That is what 'Āpata Dhārma' is all about (Das, 2019). It has also to be remembered that all that Kṛṣṇa, Yudhiṣṭhira or the other Pāṇḍava-s were doing had the central concern of restoring the "peace" and spreading the same all around.

Compulsion arising out of Kṣatriya Varṇa

So, it is clear that the decision of rejecting the invitation call could not be done especially by the one whose varṇa is of a Kṣatriya type (Verma, 2016). It is not in the very blood of this Varṇa. Once invited, one has to accept, whatsoever the cost. This section thus is a precursor of what is going to happen. And one thing is always sure that if good has to happen, it will happen. If the bad has to happen, it will also happen. If any of the persons had violated her/his pledge, commitment, bondage, swabhāva, things would have been different. For example, if Yudhiṣṭhira had rejected the invitation, there would have been no game of dice. Even if he accepted it, his defeat would not have been there if he had he not accepted Śakunī as proxy for Duryodhana in the game of dice. If Bhīṣma had broken his commitment to the throne, he would have stopped all the nonsense which was taking place (Kumar, 2022). Had Dhṛtarāṣṭra not surrendered before his blindly ambitious son Duryodhana, there would neither have been any Assembly Hall nor any game of dice. Had the King listened to the counsels of Vidura, his minister, there would not have been any consequent proceedings. After all, if taking lessons from the game of dice, Yudhiṣṭhira had rejected the next invitation which was sent to him by the King immediately after they departed from Hastināpura, there would not have been the 'sequel' and thus there would not have been the life of Pāṇḍava-s turned into exile.

Likewise, there are numberless instances which prove that things might have changed, had they happened differently. This would have happened if the fate of

the Kuru clan was to be constructive. But when it is going to be destructive for it, all and every decision will lead towards the same. The only difference and distinction that a text like the Mahābhārata has are the sides of 'Dharma' and 'Adharma'; or the intention of the restoring peace or fighting out of one's jealousy and hatredness (Verma, 2016). The epic Mahābhārata when seen in its entirety is presenting all the aspects of life – good or bad, positive or negative, bright or dark – in one ambit and the best thing is that it has something within its fabric which makes it a text entirely on a different plain. It has the message of 'Dharma' which is absent in all other literary pieces. It is 'Dharma' that makes a person know what he could be even in the midst of a battlefield.

Conclusion

The present text in which the different decisions were taken by different characters has all these possibilities which actually happened from which the message of the 'Dharma' and its presence need always to be extracted, for if the text is seen without its acknowledgement, the very height this epic has achieved will come down (Kumar, 2022). And the text of the Mahābhārata cannot be seen at a level where people are, rather it has to be seen at the level where people have to reach. Then the justice will be done to the text and the same will thus disseminate into the life of all the readers in general by giving them the eternal joy and the perpetual knowledge. So, as the destruction of the Kuru clan was going to happen, all that was taking place was in accordance with that. It has also to be remembered that there are many occasions in which one can take the decision once and then it cannot be undone (Verma, 2016). (For example, if one is asked to take one of one's legs up, one is free to choose any of the legs, left or right, to take up. But once one has taken one of the legs up, one has lost the freedom to select the other leg then. Freedom has its own limitations too. Even freedom is not free absolutely (Das, 2019). So, the intricacies of freedom also need to be understood in order to how

things and how they work in life.) Thus, we see in this section the bypassing of the minister Vidura by the King who sends him to Indraparastha in order to invite the Pāṇḍava-s for the game of dice.

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