



International Journal of Sanskrit Research

अनन्ता

ISSN: 2394-7519

IJSR 2021; 7(1): 223-225

© 2021 IJSR

www.anantaajournal.com

Received: 26-11-2020

Accepted: 28-12-2020

Dr. Asa Devi G

Associate Professor, Sanskrit
Department, N.S.S. College,
Pandalam, Pathanamthitta
District, Kerala, India

Vidura: The holy man in Mahabharatha

Dr. Asa Devi G

Abstract

Mahabharatha is a great epic heroic poem. It contains one hundred thousand verses, which contains the essence of all scriptures. It is an encyclopaedia of ethics, knowledge, politics, religion, philosophy and dharma. Vidura is held to be a paragon of truth, beautiful impartial judgment and steadfast dharma. He is considered as the embodiment of the inner consciousness of the Mahabharatha.

Keyword: Conglomerate, infatuation, prudent, unbiased, irksom

Introduction

Mahabharata is the fifth Veda' meaning that from the historical point of view the greatness of the Mahabharata is second only to the Vedas. The Vedas, most sections of which are filled with the praise of deities and the description of sacrificial fires, are written in the ancient Sanskrit language of the Aryans. That is why the inferences arising from Vedic literature are vague and unclear. On the contrary the Mahabharata is written in the present day Sanskrit language and hence is generally lucid. It is a compilation of the historical events of the ancient period. The main reason of the eternal popularity of this epic are the inspiring characters in this epic. Regardless their nature, every characters in this great epic are equally important as any another.

The Mahabharata, which in its present form consists of over 100,000 verses is by far the longest poem known to literary history. It is a conglomerate of epic and didactic matter divided into eighteen books called parvas, with a nineteenth, the Harivamsha, as a supplement. The books vary very considerably in length, the twelfth being the longest, with nearly 14,000, the seventeenth the shortest, with only 312 verses. The Mahabharata is packed with stories of passion, politics, war, love, loyalty, hatred. Its episodes, which include the Bhagavad Gita, also explore ethics and ultimate meaning. The characters in the epic move with the vitality of real life. It is difficult to find anywhere such vivid portraiture on so ample a canvas. Traditionally the authorship of Mahabharata is attributed to great sage Vyasa son of Parasara who is one of the major dynastic characters within the epic.

Mahabharata has a great number of legendary characters. Vyasa, the author of the text, took great care in developing these characters. Each of the characters appears to be heroic while also being villainous. Vyasa set an example to follow in developing characters. Most of the characters in the epic gets much attention from the readers for their heroic deeds yet there are some characters who doesn't get the attention they deserve. There is still a dearth of scholarship studying several major characters from the epic, including Vidura.

Vidura: The torch bearer of Dharma

Vidura is an important character throughout Mahabharata. He was the half-brother of the king. He was a man of wisdom and honor. He always spoke truth. He advised King to avoid a war. He was peace loving in nature. He served Dhrtarashtra even after the war and he died with him. He served Hasthinapura since his youth until his end.

Vidura a great soul was the very incarnation of Dharma. Due to the curse of Mandavya he had to take birth as a sudra. He was born to the maid of King Vichitravirya. From the epic Mahabharata, we get a glimpse into the origin and character of Vidura (Literally the wise). When Vichitravirya, the king of lunar race died without any issue, leaving but the two royal widows, Ambika and Ambalika, his mother and his subjects were deeply sunk in grief at the prospect of the extinction of the dynasty.

Corresponding Author:

Dr. Asa Devi G

Associate Professor, Sanskrit
Department, N.S.S. College,
Pandalam, Pathanamthitta
District, Kerala, India

As Bhishma, her step-son could not be persuaded to break his eternal vow of celibacy, she invoked the help of her own son, Krishnadwaipayana Vyasa to beget issue on the two widows of Vichitravirya. Though not himself willing, he yielded reluctantly to the wishes of his mother and begot on Ambika the congenitally blind Dhrtharashtra, and on Ambalika, the pale faced Pandu. Not Satisfied with the birth of these two sons with defects, she persuaded Ambika to approach Vyasa to beget a fair issue. As she was too shy, she sent instead one of her fairest maid servants dressed in her guise. The maid servant approached the sage with great reverence who, dividing the cause of Ambika's shyness. She later conceived this noble child Vidura. He in some way was the half brother of Dhrtharashtra and Pandu.

In the epic it is further narrated that Vidura was the incarnation of Yama-the God of Death and righteousness who incarnated as human being due to the curse of a sage called Mandavya. He was very intelligent, virtuous, and a great scholar and devotee. He commanded a great respect among people. He was very frank and fearless and offered good advice to Dhrtharashtra and others always. He served as the minister of Dhrtharashtra.

When Duryodhana was born Vidura advised Dhrtharashtra, that this son would be the cause of the ruin of the family and to abandon him. But out of infatuation for son Dhrtharashtra did not act upon Vidura's advice. As a consequence he had to suffer throughout his life on account of Duryodhana.

When Duryodhana began to torment the Pandavas, naturally Vidura's sympathies went in favour of them; firstly because they were fatherless and secondly because they were righteous persons. Directly and indirectly he offered them protection. A pious soul has natural sympathies to the righteous people and Vidura was righteousness incarnate. He knew that out of all calamities the pandavas will come out victorious in the end. He also knew that Pandavas were blessed with long life and they could not be killed by anyone. So when in a crafty move, Duryodhana made Bhimasena take poisonous food and hurled him into the water of Ganga, Kunti not only become worried but anticipated an untoward happening through Duryodhana. Vidura came to Kunti and advised her thus-" It Would be proper to keep silence at present, suspecting Duryodhana in this matter may entail danger. He will rather get more irritated by this and it may invite troubles to your other sons also. Bhimasena cannot die. He will come back soon." Kunti accepted his prudent advice. His words proved true, for after a few days Bhima did return hale and hearty.

Vidura has saved Pandavas several times. It was him who had told them the device of escaping unharmed from the house made of lac. Besides being versed in ethics he was a linguist too. When the Pandavas were going to Varanavata, he informed them of the impending danger by sending to Yudhisthira a note written in a dialect known to Malechhas and also hinted to them how they could escape. Besides this he had deputed beforehand a man to dig a tunnel for their escape from house of lac. The tunnel lead to the forest and in order to take them across river Ganga, Vidura had already deputed a sailor with a boat. Vidura has saved lives of Pandavas through his wits and tactful device and also took precaution to keep it secret. Physical power and power of weapons alone do not serve our purpose in every situations. Prudence is also necessary for a person. Vidura a great soul, had not only a profound knowledge of Dharma and the scriptures but was the treasure-house of ethics also.

Just as Vidura had sympathy and love for the Pandavas, so also he had affection and tender feelings for his elder brother Dhrtarastra and his sons. He always looked after their interest and would offer them good counsel.

Hitham Manohaari cha dhurlabham vacha - rare are such words as are salutary and as well as pleasant. According to this maxim, in spite of being veracious and wholesome whatever Vidura said seemed to be bitter to Duryodhana and others. Duryodhana and his associates were often dissatisfied with him. But without caring a fig for their displeasure, he always solicited their welfare and made unwearied effort to divert Duryodhana from evil ways. Dhrtharashtra although dominated by his evil-minded son, could not always act upon Vidura's counsel and consequently had to suffer, still he trusted him much. He considered Vidura as his well-wisher, intelligent, far-sighted and generally he would not be undertaking any work without consulting Vidura. In matters concerning the Pandavas especially he did not fail to consult him for he knew that in regard to the Pandavas his opinion will be unbiased.

When Duryodhana instigated by his maternal uncle Sakuni, approached his father with the proposal for gambling with the Pandavas, he called Vidura as usual for taking his advice in the matter. When his father did not accede his request, he tried to intimidate him on the pretext of giving hup his life. But Dhrtharashtra seeked advice of Vidura. Hearing the sinful proposal from Duryodhana, Vidura felt that Kaliyuga was fast approaching. He bluntly opposed the proposal and explained his brother the consequences. Admiring Vidura and his opinion Dhrtharashtra tried his best to induce Duryodhana but he was not going to yield any way. He consented to his proposal and sent none else than Vidura to call for the Pandavas from Indraprastha. Though he took ill of it, he did not deem it proper to disobey his brother, his king.

Yudhishtira accepted the proposal of Duryodhana. Even while the gambling was on enumerating Vidura Said to Dhrtharashtra - "Be cautious even now. Avoid saying ditto to whatever Duryodhana says and save your race from destruction. Do not make Pandavas turn hostile be being malicious to them". When Pandavas had gone to forest Dhrtharashtra became anxious and felt a burning sensation in his heart. He called Vidura and poured out to him the feelings at his heart and desired to know from him as to how he should conduct himself to ensure the contentment of his subjects and the pandavass may not get angry thus cause no harm to us. Vidura counseled him and this counsel was sound wholesome and was full of righteousness and intrepidity. But just as a man on verge of death finds it irksome to take medicines so also the king did not approve of the counsel of Vidura. He accused him of being partial and told him that he does not need his counsel any more and asked him to leave.

Vidura now felt that the destruction kuru dynasty was inevitable, so without any demur he left the palace and went to the Pandavas in forest. On reaching there he told them the reason for leaving Hasthinapura. By the time Dhrtharashtra felt repentant when he came to know that Vidura has gone to Pandavas. He thought himself that by Vidura's sound advice Pandavas would grow more powerful. So he lost no time in sending Sanjaya for Vidura. Vidura was completely free from attachment and malice. He was not the least displeased with his brother and so he returned to Hasthinapura.

On reaching there Vidura said to his brother" In my eyes your sons and Pandavas are alike but finding them helpless, sympathy and desire for helping them arises in my heart as a matter of course. I bear no malice against you sons"

Dhrtharashtra also expressed his regret for indecent behaviour. Vidura began to serve him as usual. Whatever efforts made by Vidura for Dhrtharashtra and his sons all were directed towards their well-being. The very life of great souls is dedicated to the welfare of others. Though Vidura possessed the essence of all true knowledge, having born a Sudra he refrained from extorting it to Dhrtharashtra himself and in this way he maintained the eternal tradition of Dharma and by his own precedent he set before the world an example that however learned a person may be, he must uphold the great traditions of the scriptures.

Conclusion

The study of the Mahabharatha can have a potent and sobering influence on the young minds information of their character and their behaviour in domestic, social, political and religious fields. The Mahabharatha has a secular, popular and human approach. In Mahabharatha we find characters like Vidura, who more than anyone else, seems to be the very embodiment of righteousness and moral wisdom. Among the numerous stories of deceit and betrayal, greed and passion, cruelty and vengeance, his words to Dhrtharashtra seem to serve as a beacon light of morality when he says that one should give up dharma in the face of lust, fear, avarice, or the desire for living, because dharma is eternal, while pleasure and pain are ephemeral.

References

1. A History of Sanskrit Literature, A.A. MacDonell Published by D. Appleton & Company, Boston, USA; c1900.
2. A Short History of Sanskrit Literature, T.K. Ramachandra Aiyar Published by R.S. Vadhyar & Sons, Kalpathi, Palakkad, Kerala; c2018.
3. VIDURA-NITI (A Sanskrit-English edition), Dr.Sir C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyar edited by Vidyaratnam P.N.Menon from the series Indian Classics printed at The Scholar Press, Palghat, Malabar; c1995.
4. Some Exemplary Characters of The Mahabharata, Jayadaya Goyandka published by Gita Press, Gorakhpur; c2006