

SHANTANU ; THE SELFISH

The moment I began this essay it struck to me that major character of Mahabharata Shantanu has been the more selfish of all the other characters. The story of Mahabharata is more the story of being selfish and promoting selfishness is clearly being explained. To give you a brief introduction to Shantanu.

Shantanu the one man who was at the genesis of Mahabharata. King Shantanu can be regarded as one of the major character of the Mahabharata. He was a great-grandfather of the pandavas and kauravas. Shantanu being the youngest son of king pratipa and his wife Sunanda. Shantanu was a kuru king of Hastinapura . The story of Shantanu in the Mahabharata yields many clues about his family and the society of the prevailing time.

To critically analyse shantanu is a mockery at itself and as there is a myth which states that in his previous birth king name MahaBhisha belonging to Ikshvaku Dynasty. Who possessed many virtuous quality and the funniest part is it is claimed he became a king by performing ashvamedha yagnas and rajasuya yagnas and it is also said that he attained heaven after death.

Now the question is if performing a thousand yagnas would make somebody a king and that to the hardwork shield in the current birth but previous birth. This astonishes me as i am not able to logically relate to the previous birth and the current birth.

The story revolves around the deals of the past and the present with no realization of spiritually or wisdom or mortality .

Next I would like to question, what is ashvamedha yagnas and rajasuya yagnas and how is it that these to yagnas contribute to the success of being an emperor. When the practical practices in the ashvamedha yagna is a sacrifice of a horse which is purely in human. This ashvamedha yagnas doesn't create or signify valour of the king as the soldiers fought on behalf of the king with the opponents when the horse unknowingly walked into the geographical counters. Practically its the horse that decides which country needs to be invaded or captured with no prior intimation.

The definition rajasuya yagna are even more historical as it is called as inaugural sacrifice may be a cattle, a boy or any other being. They have set an example with the story of Raja Satya Harish Chandra of sacrificing his own son for the king to be enthroned for ever and ever. If this is being the history of being a king of great culture and grandeur then it is a disgrace to the king in real sense with no values and valour.

There is another story that links me to the fact that, the story of shantanu, is also a story of a curse that being executed. It is said that b once when he visited lord brahma. The scope was filled with devas and ganga and mischief of wind displaced ganga's clothes revealing her body seeing which everyboby bent their head but the king MahaBhisha could not stop from gazing ganga. Which angered brahma to such an extend the MahaBhisha was cursed to be born as a mortal and ganga would remain his emotional pain. This thought keeps fluctuating in my mind as to why ganga is considered to be an emotional trauma than being the celestial beauty. If such silly stories can create great empires then it can never be story of Mahabharata but it is always a story of disgrace and immortality.

In his mortal birth as king Shantanu, this character did not reclaim qualities of great worth, it instead created s racas as Shantanu being the king never had control on his senses. Hence, Shantanu fell in love with Ganga at first sight. It is thought provoking as it becomes difficult for us to understand the fact how Shantanu can fall in love with Ganga without even knowing her. Another example for Shantanu's selfishness is depicted in the fact that, Shantanu agrees to marry Ganga on all the conditions applied by the celestial beauty. He promises her that he would never question any of his actions and she willingly marries him.

The question that arises in my mind is how is it possible for that celestial being to marry a motal man like shantanu and mock at the institution of family.

The initial days of their wedding was the honeymoon period for Shantanu as he was completely enchanted by the beauty of the lady. The restlessness begins with drowning of the kid's one after the other seven in number and finally like a man before Ganga drowns their eighth child Shantanu walks out of his shell of enchantment and questions Ganga for such a cruel act. The reason behind calling Shantanu as most selfish is the fact that he never had the guilt of the first instance of drowning of their first child.

The second instance very clearly pictures the selfishness of Shantanu when he lets eighth son to be taken away by Ganga and falls in love with other women called Satyavathi, just for the love of his body fragrance and for second time he willingly marries a fisher women who is not a virgin and has demanded that her son's would be ruling the kingdom in forth coming future. Shantanu's inability is reflected when we see he is not in state of mind to object to such unfair demands.

The third instance in which Shantanu proves that he is a man of complete selfishness and no control on his senses is that when he goes into depression after listening to Satyavathi's demand for wedding and agrees to her demands after being proud of his son Bhishma's voth of celibacy and voth of never being a king but a servant of kingdom. Shantanu didn't even realize that with his first son Bhishma for the sake of Satyavathi and he senselessly givestheboon to Bhishma which states that he can die whenever he wishes to which again signifies the fact that Shantanu was bothered only about his sensual pleasures and not about the kingdom.

I would like to conclude Shantanu with the analysis that he was not a good son, nor a good husband, nor a good father , nor a good king but a king filled with lust and selfishness.

REFERNCE:

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