
BLINDNESS AS A RELIGIOUS, MYTHOLOGICAL, AND MORAL ASPECT OF THE IMAGE OF KING DHRITARASHTRA IN ANCIENT INDIAN TEXTS

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(Received 2 July 2024, revised 30 November 2024)

Abstract

This article considers the image of the blind King Dhritarashtra, a key character in the Mahabharata and other ancient Indian texts. Through a phenomenological methodology incorporating descriptive and hermeneutic approaches, the study examines how Dhritarashtra's blindness symbolizes wisdom, ignorance, and fate. The analysis highlights traditional Indian views on time, fate, and the duties of Kshatriya as embodied in Dhritarashtra's character, while also drawing parallels with other mythological figures. The research underscores the duality of Dhritarashtra's blindness as both a marker of profound insight and tragic ignorance, reflecting the broader moral and philosophical themes of the Mahabharata. This study contributes to the understanding of ancient Indian societal values and the enduring relevance of the Mahabharata in addressing ethical and existential questions.

Keywords: Mahabharata, Dhritarashtra, blindness, fate, time (kala), dharma

1. Introduction

The study of the Mahabharata remains relevant not only because of its historical value but also because it is an epic covering a wide range of topics. Its main part was formed between 400 BC and 400 AD, although many scholars claim that the text continued to develop after that period [1, p 38]. The earliest manuscripts of the epic date back to the 17th and 18th centuries [2, p 99].

The Mahabharata is a voluminous literary work revolving around the conflict between two related families. Scholars such as Y.V. Vasilkov [3, p. 40], P.A. Grintser [4], and V.S. Sukthankar [5] regard the Mahabharata as a classical heroic epic that was later reworked into the Dharmashastra (a religious-didactic epic). In addition to the main plot, the epic has numerous digressions expressing various religious, philosophical, and moral positions of the highest varnas: mainly the Kshatriyas and Brahmins.

Scientific discussions about the genesis of the Mahabharata continue to this day. There are two main positions. The first one (the synthetic approach) argues

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that the Mahabharata is a relatively coherent and complete work. The second position (the analytical approach) assumes that the text consists of fragmentary and sometimes contradictory parts combined into a single work [6, p 165]. Regarding the creation of the epic, C.Z. Minkowski argues that there is a historical and genetic connection between the frame story of the Mahabharata and the structure of Vedic rituals. Minkowski dwells on the expansion of the Mahabharata through the technique of embedding, which is a traditional approach and takes its source from the Vedic ritual of Srauta [7]. T.C. Reich also concludes that the ritual context is important for understanding the Mahabharata [8, p. 32]. Following Minkowski's concept of expansion as the primary source of the epic's growth, Reich notes, "It does appear that the pattern of embedding, <...> not only technically allows for but also invites the virtually unlimited addition of new narrative units. Once the protagonists enter the forest and begin to listen to the sages strings of stories, for instance, there is in principle no limit to the number of stories that they can be made to listen to" [8, p. 61]. J.L. Brockington believes that this text went through several stages. The last one allowed it to include various new materials in the text [9, p. 21]. According to Brockington, the Mahabharata is less like an epic due to its didactic material [9].

1.1. The Mahabharata as a source of religious, moral, and philosophical knowledge

There are numerous studies on the development of moral and mythological ideas in the Mahabharata. The large volume of this text does not allow individual scientific works to address all issues that arise in the epic's study. Thus, there are still insufficiently studied aspects of the Mahabharata. The ethical aspect of the Mahabharata was studied by J. McKenzie [10], V.S. Sukthakar [11], B.K. Matilal [12], etc. Research by Y.V. Vasilkov [3], S.L. Neveleva [1], E.W. Hopkins, Ch.R. Austin, etc. describes the epic's mythological context.

The significance of the Mahabharata as an encyclopedic text, which serves as a source of religious, moral, and philosophical knowledge, is not diminished by the conflicting ideas about the time of its creation, structure, and plot. Research on religious and moral issues can be based on the existing ideas about the time frame and role of a particular parva in the text of the epic. The text itself confirms this. On behalf of the sages and the Suta, the Adi Parva indicates the diversity of the Mahabharata's topics and plots as a virtue [5]. We agree with the narrators of the Mahabharata that its significance is difficult to overestimate, which is expressed in the text mythologically. The Mahabharata is told to the gods, ancestors, Gandharvas, Yakshas, and Rakshasas [13]. To understand the general concept of the epic, one should turn to D. Shulman's reflections on the connection between the Mahabharata and 'life reality'. Shulman states, "It presents itself not as a work of art but as reality itself. No boundary marks off this text from the world" [14, p. 26]. Shulman also shows the importance of the first chapter of the Adi Parva for understanding the entire context of the Mahabharata, where the epic reveals the drama of the World and Time through self-presentation [14]. The epic does not give final answers but poses questions to representatives of different

varnas and offers the best solutions, which is best proven by Yudhishtira's Trials in the Svargarohana Parva. In this regard, the conversations and instructions of the Mahabharata seem less fundamental and more unsteady due to the fragility of existence and the infinity of the birth and death of different creatures. The main books for understanding the epic's concept are the first (Adi Parva) and the last (Svargarohana Parva) since they frame the story of the clash between the two families and the accompanying narratives. No matter how significant these two families are and how virtuous and loved by the gods the Pandavas are, there is something more important than even the greatest representatives of people or gods. It is the inexorable course of Time that devalues everything. On the one hand, the Mahabharata exalts man as capable of overcoming difficulties. On the other hand, the Svargarohana Parva reminds us of the smallness of humanity in comparison with the universe. The images of the Pandavas are positive in contrast to their antagonists (the Kauravas). However, King Dhritarashtra cannot be unambiguously characterized as positive or negative.

Our research explores the image of the blind King Dhritarashtra as a complex, ambiguous, and contradictory character. Researchers of the Mahabharata do not actively study King Dhritarashtra. According to E.T. Hudson, few studies are devoted to the image of the blind king [15, p. 20]. Some scholars pay attention to this character in the context of certain research problems. Hudson analyzes the role of time and suffering in understanding the image of King Dhritarashtra. According to Hudson, the main theme of the Mahabharata is suffering from loss, and the epic acts as an instruction for overcoming the despair that grips anyone experiencing the death of a loved one [15]. J.F. Woods in 'The Phenomenon of Boon and Curse in the Mahabharata' considers Dhritarashtra as a symbol of *adharma* and submission to blind fate. Ideas about fate and its role in the epic are addressed in Woods' 'Destiny and Human Initiative in the Mahabharata' [16]. The doctrine of time is explored in the work by L. González-Reimann 'The Mahābhārata and the Yugas' [6], Y.V. Vasilkov's works [17], etc. The role of vision in the ancient Indian culture using materials from the Vedic period is studied in J. Gonda's 'Eye and Gaze in the Veda' [18].

Our research aims at partially filling the gap in understanding the image of King Dhritarashtra, focusing on the mythological and moral ideas of ancient Indian society. This society is reflected in the period of the formation and development of the Mahabharata through the image of the king. The article focuses on various aspects of King Dhritarashtra's blindness which has symbolic meaning on mythological and moral levels.

The main objective is to determine the religious, mythological, and moral aspects of King Dhritarashtra's blindness.

2. Materials and Methods

In the course of the research, we used phenomenological methodology, including a descriptive method for analysing primary sources. The hermeneutic approach ensured a better understanding of the ideological content of the

Mahabharata. In addition, the article comprises historical-philosophical, historical-genetic, and context analysis for a comprehensive study of the material.

The key source for our research is the critical edition of the Mahabharata [5] considered by many modern scholars the archetypal presentation of the epic [19, p. 154]. At the same time, this edition is often criticized. For example, M. Biardo proposes to create a synoptic edition that combines all of the epic's versions and emphasizes its multifaceted nature [1].

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. The image of King Dhritarashtra

The complexity of the epic narrative of the Mahabharata is the result of the drama playing out on various levels of the universe. S.L. Neveleva describes the universe in the Mahabharata as organized in vertical (a three-part division of the world into heavenly, earthly, and underground) and horizontal (sacralized places) dimensions [1, p. 38]. It is possible to specify the classification and identify the universal level (universal religious and moral law), the level of existence of divine and semi-divine beings, the level of religious and moral laws in the human world, and the level of existence of people. The social plane of the latter has two main components: social hierarchy (the Varna or caste system) and personal connections. Thus, in the conversations of Dhritarashtra and Vidura, *dharma* and *adharma* meet; the king of the Gandharvas and God of Yama/Dharma; the one who does not follow his dharma and the one who does; the king (kshatriya) and the advisor; two brothers with different social backgrounds. The personal characteristics of each character are of greater importance for understanding their roles in the epic. The significance of King Dhritarashtra in the epic is revealed in the religiously and morally significant conversations of the king with his advisor Vidura and Suta Sanjaya. Two small parvas in the Mahabharata are dedicated to the conversations of Dhritarashtra and Vidura: 'The Tale of the Vigil' in the Udyoga Parva and 'The Tale of Sorrow' in the Stri Parva. This study addresses the chapter 'The Tale of the Vigil', part of the Udyoga Parva. The Udyoga Parva describes the events preceding the main battle of the epic. Its title is translated from Sanskrit as the Book of the Effort. According to J.A.B. van Buitten, *udyoga* (diligence) can be understood in two ways: as striving for peace or as striving for war [20, p. 133]. 'The Tale of the Vigil' and 'The Tale of Sanatsujata' come second and third in the order of small books of the Udyoga Parva and precede Sanjaya's report to Dhritarashtra. Both legends describe Dhritarashtra's sleepless night [21]. They play a special role in the parva since they present, first, Vidura's explanation of the basic religious and moral concepts to Dhritarashtra and, second, the religious and philosophical dialogue between Dhritarashtra and Sanatsujata. Scattered throughout the parva are brief instructions on religious and moral dharma. It can be said that Vidura's instructions to Dhritarashtra are the edifying quintessence of the Udyoga Parva. Since many of Vidura's instructions relate to the principles of royal rule, these passages were called Vidura-nīti in Indian literature [22, p. 24].

In the *Adi Parva*, 'The Tale of the Incarnation of the First Birth' reports that Dhritarashtra is the incarnation of Hansa, the ruler of the Gandharvas [21, p. 24]. The *Ashramavasika Parva* covers the same topic. Along with other secrets, Vyasa reveals to Gandhari, the wife of King Dhritarashtra, that Dhritarashtra is the "wise king of the Gandharvas" [23, p. 1-18]. The name Dhritarashtra translated from Sanskrit means "one whose empire is strong" or "a powerful king" [24, p. 59]. The *Ashramavasika Parva* says that Dhritarashtra is "the wise king of the Gandharvas named Dhritarashtra". In the *Ashramavasika Parva*, Vyasa also informs Gandhari that "all the gods <...> descended in their particles to the earth, along with the Gandharvas and Apsaras, Pishachas, Guhyakas and Rakshasas, holy people, Siddhas and divine sages" [23, p. 39] to perform the "work of the gods", i.e., the battle on the field of Kuru. Following the sage's explanation, each participant in the great battle played the role assigned to them before realizing what was necessary. Thus, Dhritarashtra is the incarnation of the Gandharva king and must embody the main characteristics of the Gandharvas as celestial beings.

Vyasa explains the significance of these events for the entire universe and defines each character's role in the epic in a completely different way. Many characters in the *Mahabharata* are full or partial incarnations of divine and semi-divine powers. This feature of the epic shows not human but rather cosmic history in the unfolding events [16, p. 15]. These events occur simultaneously on several levels: human life, divine beings, and the fundamental level for both these groups, whose laws are obligatory for all beings inhabiting the universe, i.e., the universal law of dharma. Each character ultimately becomes a symbol of a certain form of existence embodied in humans and other creatures. In this case, the form of existence is understood as the life orientation of a being towards a set of religious and moral values (specific life activity). Therefore, the interaction of characters is the interaction of different lifestyles and values. Indeed, such conclusions can be drawn from the concept of time (the main concept in the *Mahabharata*), and Dhritarashtra is the embodiment of choice, leading from order to chaos.

King Dhritarashtra often indulges his son Duryodhana who is mired down in the struggle for power over the kingdom. The *Adi Parva* contains an interesting metaphor: "The wrathful Duryodhana" [25, p. 65] is "the witless King Dhṛtarāṣṭra the root" (*mūlaṃ rājā dhṛtarāṣṭro 'manīṣī* [26, p. 65]). The word "amanīṣīn" is translated as "unreasonable", "unwise", "unpious", "unlearned-brahman" [24]. Perhaps there is a semantic connotation that indicates "non-following of dharma" in the sense that the king is too attached to the worldly goods. This is confirmed in the *Bhishma Parva*, where King Dhritarashtra describes himself to his father Vyasa as a "man of the worldly spirit" [27, p. 11-13]. It can be assumed that King Dhritarashtra is the embodiment of a Kshatriya who is obsessed with the fulfilment of his dharma (i.e., material values), in contrast to King Yudhishtira who, despite strictly following the Kshatriya dharma, does not forget about spiritual asceticism, honours the Brahmins, and fulfils all religious and moral precepts. The *Adi Parva* says that "the law-minded Yudhishtira is the great tree, <...> and Kṛṣṇa, Brahman, and the Brahmins the root" [25, p. 66]. Yudhishtira and Duryodhana are opposed because they represent different ways of living and different value systems. Dhritarashtra as the 'root' of Duryodhana is the opposite

of Krishna and Brahman. This confirms that the Kshatriyas as a ruling class cannot be full-fledged rulers without the support of the Brahman varna and the traditional religious system. Nevertheless, Dhritarashtra and his sons are adherents of the Vedic tradition. Dhritarashtra's role is to indulge his son and thereby contribute to the chain of events leading to the final battle on the field of Kurukshetra [28]. The battlefield of Kurukshetra is the sacred place of Samantapanchaka known for the massacre of several generations of Kshatriyas by Parashurama, the sixth avatar of Vishnu [26]. L. Thomas draws attention to the non-accidental inclusion of the image of Parashurama in the storylines of the Mahabharata and proves that his stories are added in those fragments of the narrative where they comply with the ongoing events of the epic [25, p. 75]. Parashurama is an avatar of Vishnu like Krishna. As a result, both of them participate directly (like Parashurama) or indirectly (like Krishna) in the destruction of most Kshatriyas, which has a symbolic meaning. Thus, Dhritarashtra plays a major role in an eschatological action that became the boundary between the two yugas. The destruction of the Kshatriyas who violate dharma is the last attempt to stop the degradation of dharma. That is why Dhritarashtra is blind not only to his sons' atrocities; he is blind to allow the borderline events. At the same time, as the Mahabharata often reminds us, he 'has the eye of knowledge' (cakṣuṣam). Dhritarashtra often talks about following one's fate; he himself becomes the conductor of fate. He is like an instrument of time (kala) which must act blindly, without the ability to influence events [10]. Dhritarashtra's role is largely determined by his participation in events representing an eternal struggle, "an adaptation of the Vedic confrontation between gods and demons, Devas and Asuras" [10, p. 30]. Thus, Dhritarashtra's blindness is important for understanding his role in destructive events.

3.2. Blindness as a symbol of wisdom and renunciation of values

Following Y.V. Vasilkov's conclusions, we need to emphasize a mythological background in the Mahabharata, which is not introduced, but rather inherent in this text [3, p. 51]. It is important to consider the mythological and moral aspects of the blind King Dhritarashtra.

King Dhritarashtra's blindness has not received due attention in the literature, although this feature is symbolic and can be viewed from different perspectives. First, blindness symbolizes the position of an ordinary (earthly, worldly) person who does not understand the real meaning of current events. In this regard, the connection between blindness and the need to submit to fate (time) is revealed. Second, blindness is a symbol of ignorance and delusion. Third, blindness is presented as "super-vision and super-knowledge" [29, p. 9], i.e., the connection between blindness and wisdom. This is partly confirmed by the fact that several terms in the Mahabharata distinguish between different types of blindness. The word *andha* is used to indicate physical blindness, and the word *moha* denotes moral blindness and can also be translated as 'fainting', 'deception', or 'delusion' [1]. Some studies describe the mythological idea of blindness as a symbol of an otherworldly presence [28].

V.Y. Propp makes an interesting point about the connection between blindness and invisibility, i.e. someone is blind to something and remains unnoticed [24, p. 59]. If this conclusion is applied to King Dhritarashtra, we can assume that he is invisible to his inner circle as his advice is ignored because he is blind and, according to traditions, should not be a king [30]. The king's blindness places him in a borderline state between the world of the dead (those who ceased to be active participants in life) and the world of the living (those who are active participants in life). King Dhritarashtra has a borderline personality; for example, he is a Gandharva, i.e., a semi-divine being. He is not a role model like the Pandava heroes but his thoughts and conversations with his assistants (Vidura, Sanjaya) do not let the reader fully condemn the king as he and his sons deserve. It is worth paying attention to the aspect of blindness that reflects the connection between ideas about blindness and the power of time (fate). A mythological source of such views is the god Bhaga. G. Dumézil draws attention to the blindness of this deity of the Adityas [12, p. 80]. Bhaga's blindness is mentioned in the Atharva Veda. According to the Vedic tradition, Bhaga is presented as a minor solar deity among other gods of a similar level [5, p. 215]. S. Bhattacharji assumes that Bhaga had greater importance in the pantheon in the pre-Vedic period [5, p. 215]. Bhaga's functions are to bestow good luck [31, p. 130], increase women's fertility, and grant men success in dice and hunting [5, p. 216]. Since Bhaga can bestow good luck and is blind, Dumézil, M. Bloomfield, and L. Renou compare the god to the ancient Roman goddess Fortuna. In the Vedic period, the word *bhaga* meant 'share', mainly 'fair share' [12, p. 109]. Dumézil notes that *bhaga* (share) and *rayi* (wealth) are combined in Vedic texts [12, p. 108]. Renou explains the role of the deity through the endowment of happiness [32, p. 99]. This gives grounds to assume a certain connection between the phenomenon of blindness and the achievement of earthly wealth (material values). Nevertheless, Dumézil connects Bhaga's blindness in the Atharva Veda [33, p. 129] with the life experience of man and human society [12, p. 80]. Echoes of these ideas are observed in the image of the blind King Dhritarashtra who was lucky to ascend to the royal throne which should have been unattainable for him. There are several explanations in ancient Indian texts. Thus, the Shatapatha Brahmana describes the sacrifice of a part of Prajapati (after being hit by Rudra's arrow), after which Bhaga becomes blind [7, p. 297].

P.A. Grintser notes that Dhritarashtra constantly recalls fate as the main decisive force in human life [10, p. 165]. J. Campbell describes the character through his ability to accept fate and come to terms with it, unlike his opponents [34, p. 22]. Dhritarashtra is in the middle, i.e., neither a hero nor an opponent of the Pandavas. Does this position mean anything? Campbell also draws attention to the fact that the hero reaches the level of general values to the detriment of his own beliefs [34, p. 24]. Dhritarashtra's vigil affirms the blind king as a borderline character, ready to perceive the highest spiritual values but unable to realize them. This is the path of an ordinary person. Dhritarashtra is a Kshatriya who declares himself a "man of the worldly spirit" [35, p. 11-13] and cares most about his own benefit. V.P. Adluri draws attention to the passage in the Adi Parva [19, p. 67-94], where King Dhritarashtra laments the events that led to such a destructive battle

and the death of almost all his relatives. Answering him, Sanjaya speaks of fate and time which destroy all beings and create them again and of Krishna-Vasudeva, the eternal Brahma, on whom the formation of the world depends. According to Adluri, this dialogue reflects the epic's main problem: the opposition between time (*kala*) and eternity. The further interpretation of the epic as *mokṣaśāstra* makes it part of the general soteriological tradition dating back to the Upanishads [19, p. 161]. The Mahabharata is a constant reminder of the sacredness of this legend and its soteriological function. Thus, any passage of the epic can be viewed through the prism of the ancient Indian tradition, understanding human life as an opportunity to embark on the path of improvement through familiarization with mystical traditions, where a person is the conjugation of temporality (transitivity) and eternity. The epic traces the events marking the transition from one *yuga* (*Dvāpara*) to another (*Kali*), completing the world cycle. The epic's storylines happen in two main dimensions: human (temporal) and absolute (eternal). King Dhritarashtra is a complex image that combines the earthly (perishable) aspirations of man and the questioning of *dharma*. V.S. Sukthankar emphasizes that the Mahabharata's creators took very seriously the fact that the drama in the epic is a historical act of cosmic drama [36, p. 66].

The aspect of blindness that expresses the relationship between blindness and wisdom is represented in the myths and legends of blind sages. The Rig Veda [37, p. 147] mentions Dirghatamas, a rishi (sage) from the Angiras family who compiled hymns [38, p. 88]. A more detailed version of the legend of Dirghatamas is available in the *Adi Parva* [21, p. 6-33]. Dirghatamas is a sage born blind due to the curse of his relative and sage Brihaspati. The motif of blindness is repeated in ancient Indian texts. Dirghatamas, like Dhritarashtra, is represented as a father who has a complex relationship with his sons. The curse of blindness happens again since the legend of Dirghatamas is partially mentioned in the Rig Veda [37, p. 158]. Dirghatamas is a mythological image that combines seemingly opposite things: blindness and the ability to see the true reality associated with divine presence and wisdom. Blindness to the world of earthly pleasures, which is confirmed by the reason why Dirghatamas was cursed still in the womb of his mother [21, p. 6-33], presupposes wisdom. According to the Mahabharata, Dhritarashtra was born blind due to his mother's hostility to the hermit and the resulting punishment. A legendary Vedic hermit, the rishi Kanva, was once blinded by the asuras to test his gift of clairvoyance [39, p. 72]. This proved the independence of this ability from the presence or absence of vision. In the Mahabharata, Kanva is represented as having the 'divine eye' (*divyenacakṣuṣā*), i.e., the ability to see everything. Blindness as one of the main characteristics of Dhritarashtra is contrasted and complemented by his other ability: 'the eyesight of wisdom' (*prajñā cakṣur*) [23].

The aspect of blindness as a symbol of ignorance can be traced back to the Rig Veda.

In the Rig Veda, the sages are contrasted with the 'blind and deaf' (*anakṣa* (blind) and 'those who do evil'). In the Vedic period, there were ideas about blindness not only in the physical sense but also in the spiritual sense, i.e., blindness to the law ('cosmic law' – *ṛta*) [1]. In the Upanishads, which form part

of the Vedic corpus (the Shruti tradition) and are considered the most ancient monuments containing religious and philosophical ideas developed in subsequent literature, the word 'blindness' is used with a symbolic meaning. In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, ignorance of Atman leads to 'blind darkness' (andhamāṁ), and those 'devoid of knowledge' (avidvāṁsas) follow to 'the worlds covered with blind darkness' (lokāḥ andhena tamasāvṛtāḥ) [9, p. 10-11]. The Īśā Upaniṣad says, "Those who honor ignorance enter into blind darkness" (andhamāṁ tamāḥ pravīśanti yo'vidyām upāsate) [40]. 'Blind darkness' marks the transition to the rebirth [37, p. 206]. Commenting on these lines, S. Radhakrishnan relies on Shankara's commentary, according to which avidyā also refers to the ignorance of people who strive for worldly goods [25, p. 574]. In the Upanishads, the word 'blindness' symbolizes primarily man's ignorance of the sacred knowledge of Atman.

4. Conclusions

The study of King Dhritarashtra in the Mahabharata reveals the multifaceted and symbolic nature of blindness in ancient Indian texts. Dhritarashtra's blindness serves as a powerful metaphor for wisdom, ignorance, fate, and moral ambiguity. His character embodies the complex interplay between adherence to dharma and the inevitability of fate, highlighting the moral and philosophical dilemmas faced by individuals in ancient Indian society.

Blindness in Dhritarashtra's case is not merely a physical condition but a symbol of deeper moral and philosophical meanings. It reflects the duality of wisdom and delusion, illustrating how the same trait can signify both profound insight and tragic ignorance. This duality is a recurring theme in mythological and religious contexts, where blindness often represents a higher state of spiritual awareness or, conversely, a profound disconnect from the material world.

The Mahabharata, through Dhritarashtra's portrayal, underscores the timeless struggle between human initiative and the inexorable flow of time (kala). Dhritarashtra's actions and inactions are pivotal in the narrative, contributing to the epic's exploration of destiny, duty, and the cosmic order. His interactions with other characters, particularly his advisors Vidura and Sanjaya, further emphasize the tension between personal desire and moral duty, revealing the complexities of leadership and governance in the epic.

Moreover, Dhritarashtra's blindness symbolizes the moral blindness of those who are overly attached to worldly possessions and power. His inability to see the broader consequences of his actions parallels the struggles of individuals who fail to transcend their immediate desires to embrace higher spiritual truths.

In conclusion, the Mahabharata's treatment of blindness through the character of Dhritarashtra enriches our understanding of the epic's moral and philosophical dimensions. It provides a nuanced perspective on the human condition, emphasizing the importance of wisdom, the limitations of human perception, and the enduring relevance of ethical and spiritual introspection. Through this lens, Dhritarashtra's story becomes a timeless reflection on the

challenges of leadership, the weight of moral responsibility, and the intricate dance between fate and free will.

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