

## Love, Loss, and Resilience: A Psychological Study of Shakuntala's Emotional Transformation

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Received: 22-May-2023

Revised: 17-June-2023

Accepted: 08-July-2023

### Abstract:

This study analyzes Shakuntala's made-up character from the ancient Indian epic Mahabharata emotional development throughout the story. The story of the drama Shakuntala is about the love affair of Shakuntala and Dushyanta. The emotional change of Shakuntala is a fascinating subject for psychological study since it illustrates themes of love, sorrow, and resilience. This study intends to shed light on the psychological processes involved in dealing with love, sorrow, and hardship by analyzing the emotional development across time. This study makes use of narrative analysis to evaluate Shakuntala's experiences and provide a more nuanced view of her emotional development in light of pertinent psychological theories and concepts.

**Keywords:** shakuntala, Mahabharata, emotional, love, development.

### Introduction:

Shakuntala was the offspring of the sage Vishwamitra and the celestial nymph Menaka. She was brought up by the sage Kanwa and later married to Hastinapur's ruler, Dushyanta. In time, she bore Bharata, the progenitor of the Kuru people. The Mahabharata includes a significant portion of her backstory. Menaka, a nymph from the heavens, abandoned her newborn child close to the hermitage of Sage Kanwa. The wise man took the infant girl in and named her Shakuntala. Because she was discovered in the company of Shakuntala birds, Kanwa gave her the name Shakuntala. Shakuntala was raised by Kanwa and learned to love and care for animals during her youth. Soon enough, she matured into a lovely young lady.

AdiParva of the Mahabharata is the original source for the Shakuntala tale. King Janamejaya inquired of sage Vaishampayana, a son of Krishna Dwaipayana, during the snake sacrifice, seeking background information on the family tree of the Kuru-Pandavas. Vaishampayana then goes into great depth about the Kuru-Pandava dynasty. One of the most notable monarchs of this dynasty was Dushyanta, who produced a son named Bharata with Shakuntala. In his drama "AbhijnanaShakuntala" (Kale, 1980), Mahakavi Kalidasa adapted a portion of the story from this dry retelling of family history and transformed it into one of the finest love romances ever written. In the Shakuntala play, the pure and sweet love with powerful sensations is passionately narrated with vicissitudes. Kalidasa's timeless characters, play's plot development, sequence, expression of Shringara and other Rasas, and final takeaway are all unparalleled. AbhijnanaShakuntala is widely regarded as one of the greatest plays of all time. However, there were some minor changes made to the plot of the Shakuntala story in the AbhijnanaShakuntala compared to the Mahabharata version (Ganguly, 2015). As a poet, Kalidasa could compose the play anyway he liked, catering to the tastes of his contemporary audience. It's not important to know the forefathers of the Kuru-Pandava bloodline, and the story of Shakuntala in the Mahabharata is a dry romantic with few dramatic incidents. However, the Shakuntala of the Mahabharata is more important for comprehending post-Vedic era culture and tradition. Shakuntala is not a typical feminine character in that she lacks tenderness, softness, and submission Maslow, Abraham (1970). She is a strong, sturdy, and very resilient austere character who is committed to doing what is right. She is a champion of justice and honesty Maslow, A. (1971). She is the one who knows her way around the Vedic texts. When compared to Shakuntala, who is

described as "mountain-like," Dushyanta probably seems as insignificant as a mustard seed Snyder, C.R. and Lopez, S.J. (2002).

**Shakuntala:**The Play of Memory by NamitaGokhale is an ambitious piece of Indian English literature. It is possible that literary masterpieces will undergo a process of reinvention and reinterpretation similar to that which occurs in film remakes. NamitaGokhale's masterwork Shakuntala tells the narrative of a woman with the same name as the protagonist of Kalidasa'sAbhijnanaShakuntalam. She is fearless and free-thinking, unlike her famed namesake. Since she was a young girl, she has been aware of the bias towards women. Social norms have made her feel stifled in her marriage to Srijan, a mahasamant. She runs away from home to follow the horse trade of Nearchus, a Greek dealer. They go on an adventure together and give in to every temptation along the way. Shakuntala pretends to be Yaduri, the 'fallen woman.' But she rejects this life as well, hoping that her death at Kashi will bring her salvation.

#### **Shakuntala and Dushyanta love story:**

The play Shakuntala recounts the passionate romance between the Indian ruler Dushyanta and Shakuntala. Kalidasa originally composed it in Sanskrit, and it was eventually adapted into English. King Dushyanta and his wife Shakuntala are the play's main protagonists. The drama opens with King Dushyanta's instantaneous crush on Shakuntala. After being abandoned by her parents at birth, Shakuntala grows up in a remote hermitage, where she is mentored by the wise sage Kanva. Karline McLain contends that Shakuntala's upbringing "... in this remote environment, surrounded by her animal companions and a couple of girlfriends" conjures a certain mood. The excellence of Kalidasa's poem is attested by King Dhusyanta's lyrical description of Shakuntala, which Kalidasa uses,

She is totally correct. The young beauty of her breasts seems to be hidden under the barken dress, which is fastened at the shoulder. By October, the leaves had been blown Half of its beauty has faded due to the concealment of pale, withered leaves.

The bark outfit, however, does nothing to diminish her attractiveness. It's merely a decorative flourish. For

The worst of vestures shines Inspiring beauty: A more beautiful lotus blooms. Amongst boring aquatic vegetation; the moon shimmers with an extra glow in the night; even more endearing is the slim young lady clad in a bark-cloth gown.

During Kanva's time away in the hermitage, King Dhusyanta develops feelings for Shakuntala and makes a sudden marriage proposal. Shakuntala and the King are in love, and for a short time they live a decent existence. Unfortunately for King Dushyanta, he must return to the capital to fulfill his duties. Before he leaves, he gives Shakuntala a ring as proof of their marriage so that she might come back to the palace in Hastinapura and live a happy life with him. Following King Dushyanta's departure, an elderly sage travels to the hermitage. When Shakuntala refuses to feed the elderly sage and welcome him into her home, the wise man discovers that she has already tied the knot with another man and condemns her for her impure thoughts. As a result of his curse, Dushyanta has amnesia regarding Shakuntala. Kalidasa depicts Priyamvada and Anasuya as Shakuntala's friends, and they are added to the story for reasons other than to tease and play with Shakuntala. However, Kalidasa creates them so that everyone can see Shakuntala and King Dushyanta's true love and marriage.

These people have witnessed Shakuntala's entire life, including the curse that has been placed upon her. It's crucial that Shakuntala doesn't find out about the curse until the end of the drama, because her companions kept it a secret the whole time. Priyamvada asks the ancient sage who cast the curse on Shakuntala to remove its effects. The elderly sage weakened the curse on Shakuntala that if she possesses a significant object indicating their relationship, she can reclaim her friendship with Priyamvada. The conversation between Anasuya and Priyamvada, in which Kalidasa brilliantly demonstrates this problem,

*PRIYAMA-VADA: That's a lot of money to him. Explain to me what went wrong.*

*ANASUYA: The last time he refused to return, I greeted him with, "Your holiness! Think on the love she's shown you in the past, and pardon your daughter for her transgression. You know your daughter is worthy.*

*PRIYAM-VADA: Then what?*

*ANASUYA: Then, I'll say. And with those words "What I have said cannot only come true; my curse can be lifted with the sight of an act of recognition" he departed.*

Shakuntala heads for the palace of King Dushyanta in an effort to repair her strained connection with the monarch. In order to reach the palace, she must first ford a large river. The only proof of her relationship with Dushyanta is a ring, and she loses it when she puts her hand in the river. She was able to meet Dushyanta after she returned to the palace, but he no longer remembered Shakuntala. She's been kicked out of the royal mansion. But her faith in the return of her real love to the monarch is unshakeable. An honest fisherman later returns the king's ring, which he had found in the fish's stomach, to the palace. Seeing the ring again brought back memories of Shakuntala's deep love for Dushyanta.

Kalidasa vividly portrays the decisive moment when genuine love is revealed, and he alters the course of events by having a fisherman find Shakuntala in the fish's stomach after she was lost in the Ganges. But Kalidasa also shows a vital scenario in the drama: when the king finally learns the truth about his true love, Shakuntala, he is tragically at war. This potentially fatal circumstance presents her true love with an opportunity to display her strength by depicting Dushyanta's triumph over his opponents in battle. True love, as depicted by Kalidasa, is so powerful that it can overcome any obstacle. In this drama, Kalidasa exploited such circumstances to reveal the overwhelming strength of genuine affection. Dushyanta is extended an invitation to spend a number of years in the Hindu heavenly realms. After returning to the palace, the monarch finally had the opportunity to reconcile with Shakuntala for the sake of their genuine love. She marries him and gives birth to a son.

#### ***Dushyanta meeting Shakuntala:***

After he got tired of hunting, Dushyanta went to the sage Kanwa's refuge on the bank of the Malini River. He goes alone, without any of his stuff. There, he meets Shakuntala, who treated him like any other hermit would. Dushyanta was curious about her past and possibly had feelings of love for her. She was calm and told the story of how she came to be without showing any feelings. As a child, she knew what she wanted. Sage Kanwa, who raised Shakuntala as his own daughter, did not tell her exactly where she was born and who her parents were. She heard about it when Kanwa told her that she was born from divine elements (a Brahmana?) with divine reasons at their roots.

#### ***Shakuntala's marriage with Dushyanta:***

When Dushyanta found out that Shakuntala was a good wife, he asked her right away if he planned to marry her and give her all the comforts of life. He even tells her that she can have his whole country. Dushyanta asks her to marry him right away through the Gandharva way, which is what the Manusmriti says is right for Kshatriya lines. Shakuntala told Dushyanta in her usual calm voice, "My father Kanwa will come right away and give you to me."

For people living in the 21st century, it might be shocking and hard to understand how a girl could agree to marry a man on their first date, especially when the bride's parents weren't even there. Also, the girl tells the man to wait a minute until her father returns. All of this looks like patriarchal control, abuse, or even a marketing plan for a new product.

There, we need to know what went on before and why. The proposer is a king, not just a king. He or she is a king because of a family link or because they are the heir to a dynasty. Again, a king can't just get married to anyone. Manusmriti advises savarna marriage as in the first marriage and other family and personal qualities. Is Shakuntala, an ordinary bride? Is she the one who agrees to go out with any man in that chaste grove who likes her or has a crush on her? Sage Kanwa was a Kulapati, which means he was the head of the college or

university. There, a lot of people go to study. If anyone could suggest anyone, she'd have gotten hundreds of suggestions and might have had trouble picking one.

But we need to know that Shakuntala was not a normal woman who could just be married off. If that's true, Kanwa would have set her up with a husband. She was Vishwamitra and Menaka's daughter. One was a great sage on that day and was trying to become a Brahman from the position of the best warrior, who got all kinds of divine missiles from Lord Shiva. Menaka was the most beautiful Apsara. A normal person couldn't see her for even a second.

Pieces of proof that GandharvaVivaha is a good idea: GandharvaVivaha, or marriage based on love at first sight, has been accepted as one of the eight types of marriage, especially for the Kshatriya line in the Manu Smriti. But the Mahabharata says that many other marriages like this happened before Dushyanta and Shakuntala's. The first events happened with Pururava and Urvashi, Yayati and Sharmistha, Yayati and Ashrubindumathi, and Vishwamitra and Menaka. Shantanu and Ganga got married in the Gandharva type later on. When we look at these cases, we see that in most Gandharva marriages, the man asks the woman to marry him, and the woman usually makes a condition before they get together physically and emotionally. This is called "conjugal summation." This is very important from the point of view of both critical thought and evolutionary psychology. Aside from the emotional need, the woman thinks about the safety and stability of their future children (Barber, 1995). On the other hand, the man wants his emotional needs to be met by a healthy woman. He wants to be able to trust that the child they have together will be his seed (Horne, 2004), which means that the child will carry on his genes. The man thinks he is the father of an offspring, but in reality, the offspring is his seed. The only person who knows this is the honest woman with whom he made love. The marriage is a set of rules that makes sure both people's wants are met.

***Shakuntala told GandharvaVivah that she would marry Dushyanta if he met her conditions:***

Shakuntala does not ask to become queen. She wants her children. If you look into these claims, you can't say that the girl is innocent or doesn't stand up for herself. She is very clear about what she wants and why she wants it. Also, keep in mind that she's not asking, she's demanding! If agreeing with him without conditions would have made her scared and submissive. She first wanted to be liked. She will get together with Dushyanta only after she gets the award. The comments also show that she is emotionally mature and can think critically. Another thing to notice is that the transaction between the two adults was healthy because there was no control or hierarchy. Dushyanta gives her even more than she asked for. He even offered to send a guard with her to his capital city.

When Kanwa got home, Shakuntala didn't go to greet him because she was embarrassed, which is normal. Even though a Gandharva marriage is common, she has to tell her father about what happened, which is a strange thing for a girl to do. But Kanwa knew everything because of his psychic power, and he agreed to them getting married. Sage Kanwa adds that if she does this, she will give birth to a boy who will rule the whole world and no one will be able to stop him. Kanwa's kind way of acting makes her feel at ease. She goes out and does what Sage Kanwa needs her to do. Shakuntala sits down next to the elder Kanwa and asks him to bless the king and his ministers, since she is already married to King Dushyanta. Sage Kanwa agrees, and he says that she deserves a gift from him. Shakuntala asked for the wish that would help both King Dushyanta and any future Pururavas who would rule Hastinapura.

Here, Shakuntala shows one of the best qualities of all: she gives up herself. She thinks about her husband and his country and takes care of them. She gives up herself because she wants to, not because someone else needs her to (like in the story of Shibi). She is generous in her request, which shows that she is thinking about the future in a mature way (Kirkpatrick, 1999).

Time goes on, and it didn't wait for anyone to change their mind or choice. Shakuntala gives birth to a boy in the end. In one place, she says she was pregnant for three years, but we may have a different view of this. Sage Kanwa helps the boy do what needs to be done. The boy was very brave and was able to tie the wild animals to poles. Sages called him Sarvadamana because of this. Even after six years, Dushyanta did not show up.

Kanwawanted Shakuntala to go to Dushyanta's house, where she lives with her husband. Kanwa's followers, including Shakuntala and Sarvadamana, make it to the city of Hastinapura. They go to his meeting, tell the king about her, and then go back. Then:

After worshipping the king in the right way, Sakuntala told him, "This is your son, O king!" Let him be set up as your likely heir. O king, you gave me this child who looks like an angel. So, best of all people, keep the promise you made to me. "Remember, you lucky person, the deal you made with me when we got married in Kanwa."

Shakuntala doesn't ask him to let her join his family. It is over and done with. She has to be okay with King Dushyanta. But this time, they have made a new person together, a son who has traits of the heavens. She tells Dushyanta right away to make the son his heir. She wasn't afraid to say it in front of everyone. If we imagine the scene and what she says, we can see that it takes courage and a mentally stable person to say what she says. In the next few words, we could also see how clear her thoughts were. No word is too little or too much to show that she is "self-aware" and socially aware during the exchange.

***Shakuntala: An icon of positivity:***

Shakuntala gets angry and talks to the king. She asks him if he is telling the truth. She asks him spiritual and intellectual questions and tries to help him be honest. When someone is in a lot of pain, it is hard for anyone to keep their feelings in check and talk about philosophy on the spot.

Shakuntala keeps talking. She says that she is a good wife and deserves respect because of this. She even hurts his pride by reminding him that he had promised to send the four-class troops to get her. She can't do anything right. Then, in a subtle way, she tells him that if he doesn't keep his word, his head will explode. Shakuntala brings up another point, which is how the son, Sarvadamana, can keep king Dushyanta's ancestors from going to hell, which is called 'putt' as putra. When that didn't work either, she falls back on her tasks as a wife, thinking about how she can protect him with her qualities and actions. How a wife is a root of the four Purusharthas.

Shakuntala's constant, clear, and fluent speech shows how well she knows the Vedic scriptures and practices, as well as how to explain them to other people. She did this even when she was very upset, which is not only a remarkable trait, but one that has never been seen before in human history. This shows that Shakuntala is a very strong and independent woman, just like Draupadi from the Mahabharata.

Shakuntala asks Dushyanta questions and gets mad at him because he hurt her, but she doesn't make lewd comments about him like he did. Shakuntala's speech on being a good wife showed that she cares about others and doesn't judge them. This shows that she is not just a teacher, but that she was taught to be this way.

People who know a lot have said that everyone is born as their own kid. So, a man whose wife has given birth to a son should treat her as the boy's mother. When a man sees his son's face on his wife, it looks like his own face in a mirror, and he feels as happy as a good man who has reached heaven. Men who are hurting mentally or physically feel as refreshed when they are with their wives as a sweaty person does when he or she gets into a cool bath. Even when angry, a man should never do something that makes his wife unhappy, because happiness, joy, and virtue all rest on the wife. A wife is the holy ground from which a husband is born. Even Rishis can't make things happen without women.

Again, Shakuntala looks at women from a broader point of view. She talks about how a man's life can have more value with a woman by his side. Shakuntala is happy that she is a woman. She doesn't think men are better than women or that women are weak. She thinks men and women are equal and that men need women in their lives. We could see that she was hopeful, that she knew who she was, and that she had a sense of both her personal and her societal identity.

***Shakuntala: An epitome of human effort and destiny:***

Shakuntala had always anticipated that her son, Sarvadamana, would one day rule over the kingdom of the Pururavas. While she was giving birth, a voice from heaven told her. How come then she exerted such an effort to persuade King Dushyanta?

Shakuntala, a dharmik mother, put her faith in her son's fate to the divine voice. She stepped in and preached to King Dushyanta with all the compassion and humility she could muster when the time came to make him aware of the truth and dharma. She exerted all her effort into convincing him to make moral choices. She convinced him by citing numerous Bible verses as proof. She had to give up trying to persuade him when he flat-out refused to take any of her advice. She lays out a decision and declares the finality of human fate. Shakuntala could not see a contradiction between fate and human effort, thus she embraced both. There is no animosity between them. According to Shakuntala, fate and effort are equivalent and mutually supportive.

How did Shakuntala manage to have a personality that was flawless? Some of her attitude is quite challenging to emulate. There was no mention of any comparable characters in either the Mahabharata or the Puranic writings. This is likely the result of her spartan upbringing and lifestyle. There is no other word that adequately captures her state, and Shakuntala stands alone in the annals of humankind as the only person who exemplifies those attributes to such an extraordinary degree. When it comes to being a fully realized human being, Shakuntala represents the pinnacle.

### **Conclusion:**

In this drama, "true love is immortal" is an Indian philosophical tenet that serves as the central motif. Love, as Kalidasa demonstrates, always ends in heartbreak, while kindness always leads to success. Shakuntala is not a docile, lovely character in the Krishna-Dwaipayana consider of the Mahabharata only because her husband Dushyanta has memory loss. Shakuntala's actions set her apart from everyone else, proving that she was among the greatest ancient Indians, if not the greatest person ever. This drama is brought to a close by Kalidasa's proclamation that Shakuntala's existence is an invention of factual love and exterior beauty, which leads to the study that real love is immortal.

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