Canto Three - Chapter Seven

Further Inquires by Vidura

3.7. Further Inquires by Vidura

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SECTION	TOPIC
	Vidura's requests to clarify misconceptions about Iśvara
SB 3.7.1-7	and the Jīva
	Maitreya dispels all misconceptions about Īśvara and the
SB 3.7.8-14	Jīva
SB 3.7.15-20	Vidura shares his heart felt realizations with Maitreya
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SB 3.7.21-38	Vidura inquires in more detail
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SB 3.7.39-42	Vidura declares his confidence in Maitreya

Part-I

Vidura's requests to clarify misconceptions about iśvara and the jīvas (3.7.1-7)

Section: SB 3.7.1-7:
Vidura's requests to clarify misconceptions about īśvara and the jīvas

|| 3.7.1 ||
śrī-śuka uvāca
evam bruvāṇam maitreyam
dvaipāyana-suto budhaḥ
prīṇayann iva bhāratyā
viduraḥ pratyabhāṣata

Śukadeva said: Then intelligent Vidura (viduraḥ budhaḥ), the son of Vyāsadeva (dvaipāyana-sutah), pleasing Maitreya with sweet words (prīṇayann iva bhāratyā) after he had finished his explanation (evam bruvāṇam), addressed Maitreya (maitreyam pratyabhāṣata).

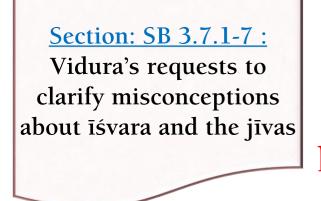
Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī: Vidura pleased Maitreya and inquired from him

Section: SB 3.7.1-7:
Vidura's requests to clarify misconceptions about īśvara and the jīvas

|| 3.7.2 ||
vidura uvāca
brahman katham bhagavataś
cin-mātrasyāvikāriṇaḥ
līlayā vāpi yujyeran
nirguṇasya guṇāḥ kriyāḥ

Vidura said: O brāhmaṇa (brahman)! How is it possible that the Lord (kathaṁ bhagavatah), who is spiritual (cin-mātrasya), without change (avikāriṇaḥ), and beyond the guṇas (nirguṇasya), becomes connected (līlayā vāpi yujyeran) with actions and guṇas (guṇāḥ kriyāḥ)?

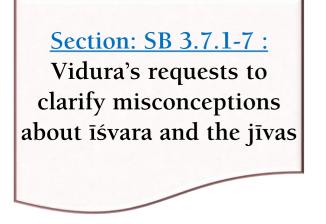
How is the Lord, being spiritual, connected with the gunas and their activities?



|| 3.7.3 || krīḍāyām udyamo 'rbhasya kāmaś cikrīḍiṣānyataḥ svatas-tṛptasya ca kathaṁ nivṛttasya sadānyataḥ

Kāma is the impetus (cikrīḍiṣā kāmah) for playing seen in children (krīḍāyām udyamo arbhasya). The impetus for the Lord's pastimes should be different (anyataḥ). How can the desire for play in the Lord arise from kāma, since the Lord is self-satisfied (svatas-tṛptasya ca kathaṁ)? How can it arise otherwise (kathaṁ), since nothing exists except the Lord (sadā anyataḥ nivṛttasya)?

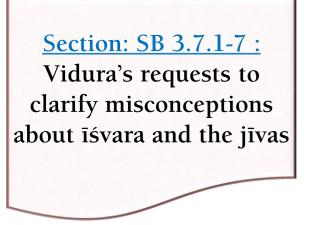
Lord is self-satisfied, so what is the impetus for Him to do pastimes?



| 3.7.4 ||
asrākṣīd bhagavān viśvaṁ
guṇa-mayyātma-māyayā
tayā saṁsthāpayaty etad
bhūyaḥ pratyapidhāsyati

The Lord (bhagavān) creates this universe (asrākṣīd viśvam) by māyā composed of the three guṇas (guṇa-mayi ātma-māyayā), and maintains it by māyā (tayā samsthāpayaty etad) and destroys it by māyā (bhūyaḥ pratyapidhāsyati).

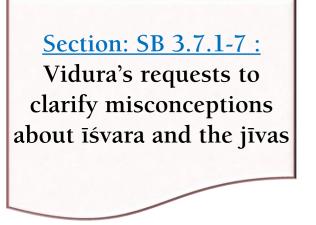
Lord is in contact with gunas: Because He creates & withdraws the universe by māyāśakti.



|| 3.7.5 ||
deśataḥ kālato yo 'sāv
avasthātaḥ svato 'nyataḥ
aviluptāvabodhātmā
sa yujyetājayā katham

How can (katham) the jīva (asāv) whose knowledge cannot be destroyed (avilupta avabodha ātmā) by place, time (deśataḥ kālatah), condition, nature or other cause (avasthātaḥ svatah anyataḥ) become associated with ignorance (ajayā yujyeta)?

How does the pure soul become engaged in nescience?"



|| 3.7.6 || bhagavān eka evaiṣa sarva-kṣetreṣv avasthitaḥ amuṣya durbhagatvaṁ vā kleśo vā karmabhih kutah

The Lord (eṣah eka eva bhagavān) is situated in all bodies (sarva-kṣetreṣv avasthitaḥ). Why does the jīva (kutaḥ amuṣya) then suffer from ignorance (kleśo vā karmabhiḥ) and lose his sense of bliss (durbhagatvaṁ vā)?

The Lord is situated in every living being's heart. Why then do the living entities suffer?

Section: SB 3.7.1-7:
Vidura's requests to clarify misconceptions about īśvara and the jīvas

| 3.7.7 ||
etasmin me mano vidvan
khidyate 'jñāna-saṅkaṭe
tan naḥ parāṇuda vibho
kaśmalaṁ mānasaṁ mahat

O learned one (vidvan)! This mass of ignorance (etasmin ajñānasaṅkaṭe) is afflicting my mind (me manah khidyate). O Supreme Lord (vibho)! Destroy (parāṇuda) the great illusion (mahat kaśmalaṁ) in our minds (naḥ mānasaṁ).

My mind is illusioned, and I request you to clear it up.

Part-II

Maitreya dispels all misconceptions about Īśvara and the jīvas (3.7.8-14)

|| 3.7.8 ||
śrī-śuka uvāca
sa ittham coditaḥ kṣattrā
tattva-jijñāsunā muniḥ
pratyāha bhagavac-cittaḥ
smayann iva gata-smayaḥ

Śukadeva said: When Vidura (kṣattrā), inquisitive about the absolute truth (tattva-jijñāsunā), asked Maitreya these questions (muniḥ ittham coditaḥ), Maitreya, becoming absorbed in the Lord (bhagavac-cittaḥ), answered (pratyāha) as if astonished (smayann iva), though he was actually without astonishment (gata-smayaḥ).

Maitreya seemed to be astonished, but then he replied to Vidura

|| 3.7.9 ||
maitreya uvāca
seyam bhagavato māyā
yan nayena virudhyate
īśvarasya vimuktasya
kārpaṇyam uta bandhanam

Maitreya said: This māyā (iyaṁ māyā) which cannot be understood by logic (yad nayena virudhyate), belonging to the Supreme Lord but not his svarūpa (bhagavatah), is the cause of deprivation and ignorance (kārpaṇyam uta bandhanam) for the jīva who has the possibility of realizing the form, knowledge and bliss of the Lord (īśvarasya vimuktasya).

First two lines of verse, is answer to misconception about Lord:-

The gunas belong to Lord, but Lord in His svarūpa, is without these guṇas.

Second two lines of verse, is answer to misconception about Jiva:
Jīva loses knowledge because of māyā

|| 3.7.10 ||
yad arthena vināmuṣya
puṁsa ātma-viparyayaḥ
pratīyata upadraṣṭuḥ
sva-śiraś chedanādikaḥ

Because of māyā (yad amuṣya), the jīva's loss of knowledge and bliss (puṁsah ātma-viparyayaḥ) makes its appearance (pratīyata) without cause or purpose (vinā arthena). The loss is illusory, just the seer of a dream (upadraṣṭuḥ) experiencing his head being cut off is illusory (sva-śiraś chedana ādikaḥ).

Answer to Vidura's question, Why Jiva suffers?: Distress of living entity is due to misidentification

| 3.7.11 ||
yathā jale candramasaḥ
kampādis tat-kṛto guṇaḥ
dṛśyate 'sann api draṣṭur
ātmano 'nātmano guṇaḥ

The qualities belonging to the subtle body (anātmano guṇaḥ) do not belong to the ātmā (ātmano asann) but appear to be so (dṛśyate draṣṭuh), just as the trembling quality in the water imposed on the reflection of the moon is not trembling of the moon (yathā jale kampa ādih tat-kṛto guṇaḥ candramasaḥ), though it appears to be so (dṛśyate api).

Anaology to explain Jiva's misidentification.

|| 3.7.12 || sa vai nivṛtti-dharmeṇa vāsudevānukampayā bhagavad-bhakti-yogena tirodhatte śanair iha

This ignorance (sah) gradually disappears (śanaih tirodhatte) by bhakti-miśra-jñāna arising from destruction of impressions in the subtle body (nivṛtti-dharmeṇa), and by bhakti (bhagavad-bhakti-yogena) arising from the mercy of the Lord, coming through devotees (vāsudeva anukampayā).

Maitreya proposes solution to come out this bodily misidentification

|| 3.7.13 ||
yadendriyoparāmo 'tha
draṣṭrātmani pare harau
vilīyante tadā kleśāḥ
saṃsuptasyeva kṛtsnaśaḥ

When the senses become fixed on the attractive Lord (yadā indriya uparāmah harau), who is beyond material influence (pare) and who glances upon his devotee with mercy (draṣṭr ātmani), the sufferings disappear completely (tadā kleśāḥ vilīyante kṛtsnaśaḥ), like the complete disappearance of suffering in deep sleep (saṃsuptasya iva).

When the senses are satisfied in the Supersoul, all miseries are vanquished.

|| 3.7.14 ||

aśeṣa-saṅkleśa-śamam vidhatte guṇānuvāda-śravaṇam murāreḥ kim vā punas tac-caraṇāravindaparāga-sevā-ratir ātma-labdhā

Hearing and speaking about the qualities of the Lord in sādhana-bhakti (murāreḥ guṇa anuvāda-śravaṇaṁ) produces (vidhatte) destruction of unlimited suffering (aśeṣa-saṅkleśa-śamaṁ). How much more can be attained (kiṁ vā punar) by great attraction (ratih) for serving the pollen of the lotus feet of the Lord (tat-caraṇāravinda-parāga-sevā), appearing by its self-revealing nature (ātma-labdhā), during the state of bhāva-bhakti (implied)!

Devotional service as the ultimate means to mitigate all miseries

Part-III

Vidura shares his heart felt realizations with Maitreya (3.7.15-20)

| 3.7.15 ||
vidura uvāca
sañchinnaḥ saṁśayo mahyaṁ
tava sūktāsinā vibho
ubhayatrāpi bhagavan
mano me sampradhāvati

Vidura said: O Lord (vibho)! All of my doubts have been cut (sañchinnaḥ saṁśayo mahyaṁ) by the sword of your skillful speech (tava su-ukta asinā). My mind completely understands (me manah sampradhāvati) both the independent Lord and the dependent jīva (ubhayatra api).

All my doubts have been removed.

|| 3.7.16 || sādhv etad vyāhṛtam vidvann ātma-māyāyanam hareḥābhāty apārtham nirmūlam viśva-mūlam na yad bahiḥ

O learned Maitreya (vidvann)! You have accurately explained (sādhu etad vyāhṛtaṁ) how the external energy (ātma-māyā), whose actions (ayanaṁ) which are without purpose and without cause (apārthaṁ nirmūlaṁ ābhāty), is under the shelter of the Supreme Lord (hareḥ), and you have explained how the jīva's bondage (ātma-māyāyanaṁ), which is without purpose and without cause (apārthaṁ nirmūlaṁ), is under the shelter of the Lord's māyā (hareḥ). Except for that māyā, there is no cause for the universe (yad bahiḥ na viśva-mūlaṁ).

Disturbances of the jivas have no other basis than the external energy of the Lord.

|| 3.7.17 ||
yaś ca mūḍhatamo loke
yaś ca buddheḥ paraṁ gataḥ
tāv ubhau sukham edhete

kliśyaty antarito janah

He who is the most foolish in this world (yah ca mūḍhatamo loke) and he who has attained (yah ca gataḥ) the Lord beyond matter (buddheḥ paraṁ) increases happiness (tāv ubhau sukham edhete), whereas others just suffer (kliśyaty antarito janaḥ).

Both the lowest of fools and the liberated enjoy happiness, all others suffer.

|| 3.7.18 || arthābhāvam viniścitya pratītasyāpi nātmanaḥ tām cāpi yuṣmac-caraṇasevayāham parāṇude

Convinced that the jīva does not actually suffer loss of knowledge (ātmanaḥ artha abhāvaṁ viniścitya), but not yet realizing it directly (na pratītasya api), I will destroy this lack of this realization (ahaṁ tāṁ parāṇude) by service to your lotus feet (yuṣmac-caraṇa-sevayā).

|| 3.7.19 ||
yat-sevayā bhagavataḥ
kūṭa-sthasya madhu-dviṣaḥ
rati-rāso bhavet tīvraḥ
pādayor vyasanārdanaḥ

By service to the devotees (yat-sevayā), intense rasa of bhāva-bhakti (tīvraḥ rati-rāsah) to the Lord (bhagavataḥ) who is fixed in one form (kūṭa-sthasya) and destroys obstacles for the devotee (madhu-dviṣaḥ) appears (bhavet), and destruction of material suffering then takes place (pādayor vyasana ardanaḥ).

|| 3.7.20 || durāpā hy alpa-tapasaḥ sevā vaikuṇṭha-vartmasu yatropagīyate nityaṁ deva-devo janārdanaḥ

Service to the devotees, those on the path to Vaikuntha (sevā vaikuntha-vartmasu), who are constantly singing (yatra upagīyate nityam) about the Supreme Lord (deva-devo janārdanaḥ), is rarely achieved for those who perform little austerity (durāpā hy alpatapasaḥ).

Persons whose austerity is meager can hardly obtain the service of the pure devotees

Part-IV

Vidura inquires in more detail (3.7.21-38)

Section: SB 3.7.21-38:
Vidura inquires in more detail

VIDURA INQUIRES TO KNOW MORE DETAILS ABOUT:

The different Vibhutis of the Lord

'Vibhutis' which populate the whole world

All that Brahma has created- Manus and the descendants of those Manus

Different planets

Species of living beings and their distributions

Gunaavatāras and Pastimes of the SPOG

Varṇāśrama, great Sages and divisions of Vedas

Yoga, jñāna, and sāṅkhya as well as Nāradapañcarātra

Faithless atheists, Cross breeding and different species of life, all based on the effects of three modes

4 puruṣārthas and rules for profession and for punishment

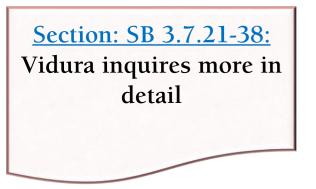
Death rites, Pitras and Constellation arrangement

Charity, austerity and Sacrifice and duties in different situations

Process of Completely satisfying the SPOG

Material dissolution and its effect on Lord and his associates

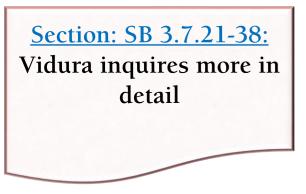
Truths of jīva and īśvara and essential knowledge of Vedas



|| 3.7.21 ||
sṛṣṭvāgre mahad-ādīni
sa-vikārāṇy anukramāt
tebhyo virājam uddhṛtya
tam anu prāviśad vibhuḥ

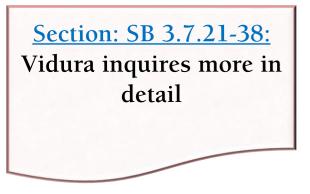
Having first created mahat-tattva (sṛṣṭvā agre mahad-ādīni) and other elements (sa-vikārāṇy) successively (anukramāt) and constructing the universal form from them (tebhyo virājam uddhṛtya), the Lord then entered that form (tam anu prāviśad vibhuh).

The Lord entered into mahat-tattva, with senses and sense organs



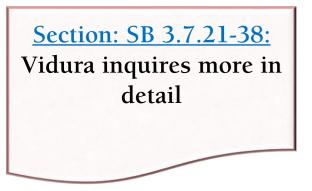
| 3.7.22 ||
yam āhur ādyam puruṣam
sahasrāṅghry-ūru-bāhukam
yatra viśva ime lokāḥ
sa-vikāśam ta āsate

That Lord is called the first puruṣa (yam āhur ādyam puruṣam), with a thousand feet, thighs and arms (sahasra aṅghry-ūru-bāhukam), in which all the planets (yatra viśva ime lokāḥ) exist (āsate) with their extensions (sa-vikāśam).



|| 3.7.23 ||
yasmin daśa-vidhaḥ prāṇaḥ
sendriyārthendriyas tri-vṛt
tvayerito yato varṇās
tad-vibhūtīr vadasva naḥ

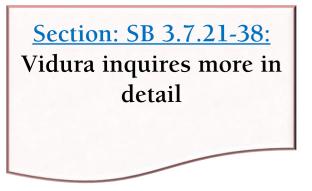
In the universal form (yasmin) you described (tvayā īritah) ten life airs (daśa-vidhaḥ prāṇaḥ), of three kinds (tri-vṛt), along with sense objects and senses (sa indriya artha indriyah), and from that form the four varṇas arose (yato varṇāh). Please speak about the vibhūtis of the Supreme Lord (tad-vibhūtīh vadasva naḥ).



|| 3.7.24 || yatra putraiś ca pautraiś ca naptṛbhiḥ saha gotrajaiḥ

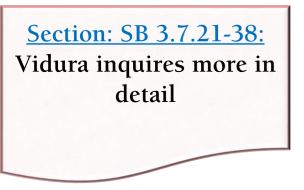
prajā vicitrākṛtaya āsan yābhir idam tatam

Amongst those vibhūtis (yatra) were the offspring (prajā), taking various forms (vicitra ākṛtaya) along with their sons, grandsons (saha putraih ca pautraih ca), grandsons on the daughter's side and families (naptṛbhiḥ gotrajaiḥ), by which the whole universe became populated (yābhir idam tatam).



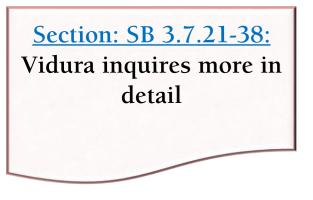
|| 3.7.25 ||
prajāpatīnām sa patiś
cakļpe kān prajāpatīn
sargāmś caivānusargāmś ca
manūn manvantarādhipān

Please describe all that Brahmā created (prajāpatīnām sa patih cakļpe): Prajāpatis (prajāpatīn), the various types of creation and sub-creations (sargāmś ca anusargāmś ca), and the Manus, who are lords of the Manvantara periods (manūn manvantara adhipān).



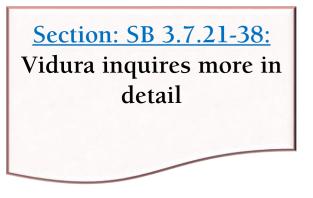
| 3.7.26 || upary adhaś ca ye lokā bhūmer mitrātmajāsate teṣāṁ saṁsthāṁ pramāṇaṁ ca bhūr-lokasya ca varṇaya

O Maitreya (mitra ātmaja)! Please describe (varṇaya) the planets above and below the earth (bhūmeh upary adhaś ca ye lokā), their appearance, dimensions (teṣām samsthām pramāṇam ca), and also describe the earth (bhūr-lokasya ca).



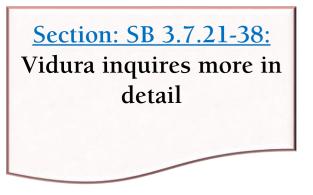
|| 3.7.27 || tiryan-mānuṣa-devānām sarīsṛpa-patattriṇām vada naḥ sarga-samvyūham gārbha-sveda-dvijodbhidām

Please describe (vada naḥ) the devatās, humans, animals (tiryaṅ-mānuṣa-devānāṁ), reptiles, birds (sarīsṛpa-patattriṇām) and creatures born from wombs, perspiration, eggs and seeds (gārbha-sveda-dvija-udbhidām), and the distribution of these creatures (sarga-saṁvyūhaṁ).



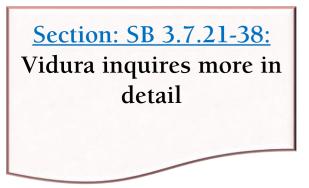
|| 3.7.28 || guṇāvatārair viśvasya sarga-sthity-apyayāśrayam sṛjataḥ śrīnivāsasya vyācakṣvodāra-vikramam

Please describe (vyācakṣva) the exploits of the lord of Lakṣmī (śrīnivāsasya udāra-vikramam), who has created (sṛjataḥ) the authorities for creation, maintenance and destruction of the universe (viśvasya sarga-sthity-apyaya āśrayam) through the guṇāvatāras (guṇa avatāraih).



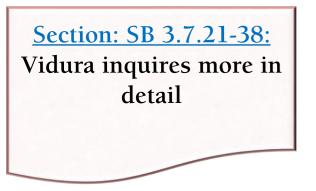
| 3.7.29 | varṇāśrama-vibhāgāmś ca rūpa-śīla-svabhāvataḥ ṛṣīṇām janma-karmāṇi vedasya ca vikarṣaṇam

Please describe the divisions of varṇa and āśrama (varṇāśrama-vibhāgāmś ca) according to features, behavior, and nature (rūpa-śīla-svabhāvataḥ), as well as the birth and activities of the sages (ṛṣīṇām janma-karmāṇi) and the divisions of the Vedas (vedasya ca vikarṣaṇam).



|| 3.7.30 ||
yajñasya ca vitānāni
yogasya ca pathaḥ prabho
naiṣkarmyasya ca sāṅkhyasya
tantraṁ vā bhagavat-smṛtam

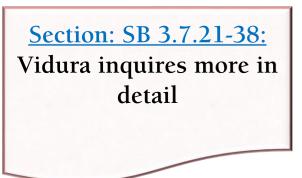
O master (prabho)! Please give a detailed description of sacrifice (yajñasya ca vitānāni), and the path of yoga (yogasya ca pathaḥ), jñāna, and sāṅkhya (naiṣkarmyasya ca sāṅkhyasya) as well as Nārada-pañcarātra (tantraṁ vā bhagavat-smṛtam).



|| 3.7.31 ||
pāṣaṇḍa-patha-vaiṣamyam
pratiloma-niveśanam
jīvasya gatayo yāś ca
yāvatīr guṇa-karmajāḥ

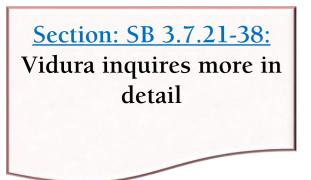
Please describe the trouble caused by the path of the pāṣaṇḍas (pāṣaṇḍa-patha-vaiṣamyam), the situation of pratiloma progeny (pratiloma-niveśanam), and the destinations of the jīvas (jīvasya gatayah yāś ca) according to qualities and actions (yāvatīr guṇa-karmajāḥ).

Faithless atheists, Cross breeding and different species of life?



|| 3.7.32 ||
dharmārtha-kāma-mokṣāṇām
nimittāny avirodhataḥ
vārtāyā daṇḍa-nīteś ca
śrutasya ca vidhim pṛthak

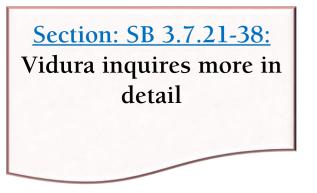
Please describe the methods of dharma, artha, kāma and mokṣa (dharmārtha-kāma-mokṣāṇām nimittāny) which do not conflict with each other (avirodhataḥ), and the rules in the scriptures for professions (vārtāyā vidhim pṛthak), in artha-śāstra and in the Vedas (daṇḍa-nīteś ca śrutasya ca).



|| 3.7.33 || śrāddhasya ca vidhim brahman pitṛṇām sargam eva ca graha-nakṣatra-tārāṇām kālāvayava-samsthitim

O brāhmaṇa (brahman)! Describe the rules for death rites (śrāddhasya ca vidhim), the creation of the Pitṛs (pitṛṇām sargam eva ca), and the positions of the planets, constellations and stars in divisions of time (graha-nakṣatra-tārāṇām kāla avayava-samsthitim).

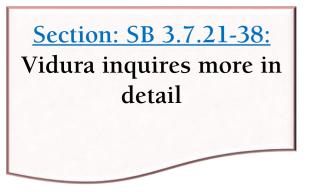
Death rites, Pitras and Constellation arrangement?



|| 3.7.34 ||
dānasya tapaso vāpi
yac ceṣṭā-pūrtayoḥ phalam
pravāsa-sthasya yo dharmo
yaś ca puṁsa utāpadi

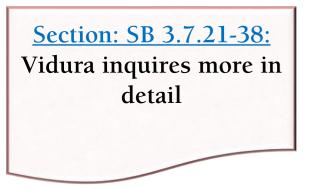
Please describe the results (phalam) of charity, austerity (dānasya tapaso vāpi), agniṣṭoma sacrifice, community services (yat ca iṣṭā-pūrtayoḥ), and the authorized actions (yah dharmah) prescribed for a man in distress (puṁsah uta āpadi) while traveling (pravāsa-sthasya).

Charity, austerity and Sacrifice and duties in different situations?



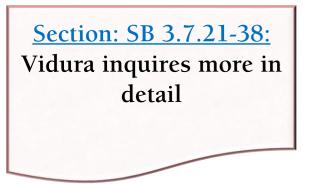
| 3.7.35 ||
yena vā bhagavāms tuṣyed
dharma-yonir janārdanaḥ
samprasīdati vā yeṣām
etad ākhyāhi me 'nagha

O sinless one (anagha)! Please tell (ākhyāhi me) by what acts the Lord (yena bhagavān), the cause of dharma (dharma-yonih), who gives to his sakāma devotees what they want (janārdanaḥ), is satisfied (tuṣyed), and please describe the sādhana for pleasing the Lord who gives prema (samprasīdati vā yeṣām)?



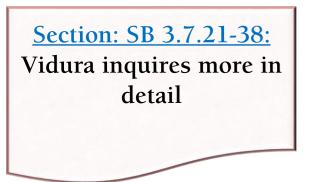
| 3.7.36 | anuvratānām śiṣyāṇām putrāṇām ca dvijottama anāpṛṣṭam api brūyur guravo dīna-vatsalāḥ

O best of the brāhmaṇas (dvijottama)! Though not asked (anāpṛṣṭam api), the gurus who are concerned for the suffering (guravo dīna-vatsalāḥ) teach what is necessary (brūyuh) to their obedient students (anuvratānām śiṣyāṇām) and sons (putrāṇām).



| 3.7.37 ||
tattvānām bhagavams teṣām
katidhā pratisankramaḥ
tatremam ka upāsīran
ka u svid anuśerate

How many types of destruction are there for the various elements (tattvānām teṣām katidhā pratisankramaḥ)? Who remains serving the Lord during destruction (ka u svid anuśerate), and who goes to sleep (tatra imam ka upāsīran)?



| 3.7.38 | puruṣasya ca saṁsthānaṁ svarūpaṁ vā parasya ca jñānaṁ ca naigamaṁ yat tad guru-śiṣya-prayojanam

Please describe knowledge concerning the Lord's form (svarūpam vā parasya ca) and jīva's position (puruṣasya ca samsthānam), and the knowledge of the Upaniṣads (jñānam ca naigamam) which is necessary for the student to learn from the guru (yat tad guru-śiṣya-prayojanam).

Truths of jīvaand īśvara and essential knowledge of Vedas

Part-V

Vidura declares his confidence in Maaitreya (3.7.39-42)

Section: SB 3.7.39-42:
Vidura declares his confidence in Maaitreya

|| 3.7.39 || nimittāni ca tasyeha proktāny anagha sūribhiḥ svato jñānam kutaḥ pumsām bhaktir vairāgyam eva vā

O sinless Maitreya (anagha)! Tell me about the causes of this knowledge (tasya nimittāni) as described by the devotees (sūribhiḥ proktāny). Can a person (kutaḥ puṁsāṁ) attain knowledge, bhakti or renunciation (jñānaṁ bhaktir vairāgyam eva vā) on his own (svatah)?

The cause for knowledge is the association of the devotees.

Section: SB 3.7.39-42:
Vidura declares his confidence in Maitreya

|| 3.7.40 || etān me pṛcchataḥ praśnān hareḥ karma-vivitsayā brūhi me 'jñasya mitratvād ajayā naṣṭa-cakṣuṣaḥ

Since I am ignorant (ajñasya), having lost my sight because of māyā (ajayā naṣṭa-cakṣuṣaḥ), I have asked these questions (etān me pṛcchataḥ praśnān) with a desire to know about the pastimes of the Lord (hareḥ karma-vivitsayā). Please reply to these questions (brūhi me) since you are a friend (mitratvād).

Reason behind the inquiries

Section: SB 3.7.39-42:
Vidura declares his confidence in Maitreya

| 3.7.41 | sarve vedāś ca yajñāś ca tapo dānāni cānagha jīvābhaya-pradānasya na kurvīran kalām api

O sinless Maitreya (anagha)! All the Vedas, sacrifices (sarve vedāś ca yajñāś ca), charity and austerity (tapo dānāni ca) cannot compare (na kurvīran) with a small particle (kalām api) of helping the jīva attain a solution to material existence (jīva abhaya-pradānasya).

Your answers to all these questions will grant immunity from all material miseries.

Section: SB 3.7.39-42:
Vidura declares his confidence in Maitreya

|| 3.7.42 || śrī-śuka uvāca sa ittham āpṛṣṭa-purāṇa-kalpaḥ

kuru-pradhānena muni-pradhānaḥ pravṛddha-harṣo bhagavat-kathāyām sañcoditas tam prahasann ivāha

Śukadeva said: When the best of the Kurus, Vidura (sah kuru-pradhānena), asked Maitreya in this way (ittham āpṛṣṭa), the chief among sages (muni-pradhānaḥ), capable of explaining the Purāṇas (purāṇa-kalpaḥ), inspired to speak about the Lord (bhagavat-kathāyām sañcoditah), smiled at Vidura (tam prahasann iva) and spoke with great joy (pravṛddha-harṣo āha).

Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī: Maitreya began to speak to answer Vidura's questions