

part of the sacrifice. It was after this that Duryodhana challenged Yudhiṣṭhira for a game of dice. Vidura saw beforehand that this move on the part of Duryodhana was dangerous. So he talked forcibly against this, and gave warning to all concerned. As Duryodhana did not agree with Vidura, he was scolded. But Duryodhana was firm and the game was conducted. Pāncālī was harassed by means of stripping and the Pāṇḍavas went to the forest. It is stated in Mahābhārata, Vana Parva, Chapter 3, that Vidura had been witnessing all these scenes with wet eyes.

6) *Separated from the Pāṇḍavas.* When the Pāṇḍavas were driven to the forest, Dhṛtarāṣṭra felt sorry. He became more afraid of the people than he was sorry for the Pāṇḍavas. He understood that his subjects would unite and rise against his sons. He called Vidura and asked him for a remedy. Vidura who was full of impatience, made a speech against the wickedness of the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra and advised him to forsake his own sons and to bring the Pāṇḍavas back and give them the kingdom. Dhṛtarāṣṭra did not like this approach. He said that Vidura was partial to the Pāṇḍavas and asked him to go away from the palace. Vidura became grieved at this. He followed the Pāṇḍavas, and walking a long distance, reached the forest Kāmyaka and met the Pāṇḍavas.

When Vidura had gone Dhṛtarāṣṭra felt miserable. He sent for Vidura and when he returned Dhṛtarāṣṭra begged for pardon. Vidura again became the adviser of Dhṛtarāṣṭra. (M. B. Vana Parva, Chapter 6).

7) *Adviser of Dhṛtarāṣṭra.* The advice of Vidura is famous in Mahābhārata. The main duty of Vidura was to console Dhṛtarāṣṭra by speaking about righteousness when he became troubled in mind because of the constant quarrels between his sons and the Pāṇḍavas. Vidura fulfilled his duty well. Duryodhana was firm on the point that not a dot of land would be given to the Pāṇḍavas. Śrī Kṛṣṇa came to Hastināpura as mediator. Duryodhana showed disrespect to him. Vidura said in strong words that it was wrong on the part of Duryodhana to have done so and compelled Dhṛtarāṣṭra to show due respect and hospitality to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Accordingly Dhṛtarāṣṭra welcomed Śrī Kṛṣṇa and showed respect and hospitality. Knowing this, Duryodhana and his brothers tried to make Śrī Kṛṣṇa a captive. Vidura harshly scolded them for this attempt. Seeing all these impudent actions on the part of his sons, Dhṛtarāṣṭra became distressed. Vidura consoled him by good exhortations. He told Dhṛtarāṣṭra about the transience of life and the importance of the soul. When the battle was fiercely going on in the battleground of Kurukṣetra, Vidura remained with Dhṛtarāṣṭra consoling him and giving him good advice. The death of Bhīṣma was an unbearable grief to Vidura. He took part in the funeral of Bhīṣma. He himself placed the body on the funeral pyre. (M. B. Anuśāsana Parva, Chapter 168, Stanza 11).

8) *Pilgrimage.* When Vidura failed in his attempt to ward off a pitched battle between the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas he felt extremely miserable. Without taking part in the battle, he started on a pilgrimage. Getting the news at Prabhāsakṣetra about the end of the battle, he went to the basin of river Yamunā. On the way he heard the news of the passing away of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, from Uddhava. Before death Śrī Kṛṣṇa had

revealed that Vidura had heard Uddhavaḡītā from Maitreya. This book which is in the form of a conversation between Vidura and Maitreya contains the talk between Kapila and Devahūti. Description of the line of Manus, sacrifice of Dakṣa, story of Dhruva, story of Pṛthu, story of Purañjana etc. were the subjects of the talk. (Bhāgavata, 3--4).

9) *End.* The Bhārata-battle came to an end. The Kauravas were exterminated. Efforts were begun to establish law and order. In all these efforts Vidura was a help to the Pāṇḍavas. Still he spent most of his time with the old Dhṛtarāṣṭra. Yudhiṣṭhira came to Dhṛtarāṣṭra and both embraced each other. Seeing this Vidura cried aloud. Vidura advised Yudhiṣṭhira how to carry on the administration of the new government. After this he decided to go to the forest to spend his last days. Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Gāndhārī, Kuntī, Vidura and Śakuni went to the forest. The Pāṇḍavas tried in vain to prevent them from going. When Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Gāndhārī, Kuntī, Vidura, Sanjaya and others started for the forest, even Bhīmasena cried aloud. Pāṇḍavas and the people of the city went along with them up to the river Ganges. On the bank of the Ganges near the hermitage of Śatayūpa, a hermitage was erected and Vidura and the others lived there.

They lived there for nearly six years. The Pāṇḍavas became unable to bear the separation from their elders. Once Dharmaputra dreamt about his mother. Next day the Pāṇḍavas went to the banks of the Ganges. Pāncālī, Subhadrā, Uttarā and many people of the city followed them. They went to the Śatayūpa-hermitage and saw Dhṛtarāṣṭra and the others. But the great Vidura was not there. When asked about it he got the reply that having become abstemious and having no more desires he was wandering about. Yudhiṣṭhira was greatly troubled.

Next day at dawn when Yudhiṣṭhira went to bathe in the Ganges, on the way he saw Vidura sitting in contemplation with a stone in his mouth. Yudhiṣṭhira stood with joined palms before the lean and weak form of that sage and said "Look, Dharmaputra bows before you." He repeated this several times. But there was no change in Vidura. Yudhiṣṭhira's disappointment did not last long. For, in a short while Dharmaputra saw that a divine radiance emanated from the body of Vidura and passed on to his body and that the body of Vidura fell lifeless on the ground. This union took place because both Vidura and Yudhiṣṭhira were portions of Dharmadeva. After this Dharmaputra made preparations to burn the body of Vidura. Then an ethereal voice said "Vidura is abstemious. His body should not be burned." Dharmaputra went to the hermitage and informed all, about the death of Vidura. (M.B. Āsramavāsika Parva, Chapters 26 to 28).

Mention is made in Mahābhārata, Svargārohaṇa Parva, Chapter 5, Stanza 22, that Vidura entered Svarga (heaven) and stays there in the form of Dharmadeva.

VIDURA II. A Kṣatriya who lived in Pāncāla. The story of this Vidura, who had killed a Brahmin because of his want, is given in Padma Purāṇa, Bhūmikhaṇḍa, Chapter 91. The story is given below:

Long ago there lived a Kṣatriya, named Vidura, in Pāncāla. Because of penury he killed a Brahmin. After that the Kṣatriya discarded his lock of hair and Brahma-