

Manu and Satarūpā who complied with the wishes of the creator and began the work of creation.

After all, the creation of the universe is not a permanent feature, for all creations end in dissolutions which in turn give place to re-creation. The description of this process constitutes one of the five main features of a Mahāpurāṇa. Śivapurāṇa²⁵ takes up this topic but withholds details.

The process of dissolution is complicated, for several dissolutions occur before the universe is completely dissolved. As the purāṇas relate, a creation lasts for a day of Brahmā equal to the age of fourteen Manvantaras. At the end of each Manvantara, there occurs a dissolution. Thus a day of Brahmā contains fourteen dissolutions. But these are partial dissolutions. At the end of fourteen Manvantaras, equal to a day of Brahmā²⁶ that lasts for a kalpa²⁷ there occurs a great dissolution. Thus during the life of the creator several creations and dissolutions take place. There occurs a complete dissolution when the creator has completed his life-time. The elements are dissolved and merged into the body of the creator. The creator takes rest for some time and then starts the process of recreating the Universe. Thus we have a series of dissolutions and re-creations succeeding each other.²⁸

The description of the ages of Manus (Manvantaras) is another characteristic of a Mahāpurāṇa. Śivapurāṇa mentions fourteen Manus by name. They are Svāyambhuva, Svārociṣa, Uttama, Tāmasa, Raivata, Cākṣuṣa, Vaivasvata, Śāvarṇi, Raucya, Brahma-Sāvarṇi, Dharma-Sāvarṇi, Rudra-Sāvarṇi, Deva-Sāvarṇi, Indra-Sāvarṇi. Each Manvantara comprises 4,32,00 human years or 1/14th day of Brahmā. The fourteen Manvantaras make up one whole day of Brahmā. Each of the fourteen Manvantaras is presided over by its own gods, seers and kings. This scheme of Creation and Dissolution repeats itself from one age of Manu to another and is described in all the Mahāpurāṇas. Śivapurāṇa is no exception to the rule,

25. Vāyaviya I. 11.

26. VS I. 16.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid 11. 9.