

in states of contraction and expansion. It is Viṣṇu, the god of the gods, who exists in forms of Sūkṣma and Sthūla, and as the great tattva and as the devas like Brahmā.

The Mahattattva originated from Prakṛti, which was existing as emotionless due to the equalisation of the three guṇas, when at the time of creation Viṣṇu, Truth in the form of Kṣetrajña (knower), merged with Prakṛti. The Mahattattva in its three forms, Sattva, Rajas and Tamas lay enveloped by Prakṛti just as a seed is covered by its husk. From this Mahattattva originated the three egos, Vaikārika, Taijasa and Tāmasa, the cause of the Pañcabhūtas. Because that ego contained the three guṇas it became the cause of the origin of the bhūtas (elements) and indriyas (senses). Ego pervaded the Mahattattva just as the Mahattattva pervaded (Aṁśa 1, Chapter 2, Viṣṇu Purāṇa).

3) In the beginning during the Deluge the world was all water. Then Śiva tore open his thigh and dropped a drop of blood in the waters. It became a huge egg. He broke it and from it came out Puruṣa and from Puruṣa he made Prakṛti for the creation of the Prapañca. These two, Prakṛti and Puruṣa, created the Prajāpatis and they in turn created the prajāṣ. Puruṣa seeing the vast creation going on due to him became arrogant and Śiva chopped off his head. Śiva became repentant of his hasty deed later. To atone for his sin he took the skull in his hand and vowed that he would ever carry a skull in his hand and that he would live in cremation grounds. The two halves of the great egg became ākāśa and bhūmi (earth and sky). (Taraṅga 2, Kathāpīṭhalambaka, Kathāsaritsāgara).

PRALAMBA I. A notorious dānava born to Kaśyapa-prajāpati of his wife Danu. (Śloka 29, Chapter 65, Ādi Parva).

PRALAMBA II. An asura (demon). He attacked Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma and was killed by Balarāma. (10th Skandha, Bhāgavata).

PRALAYA (Destruction). Pralaya is of four kinds. The first is nityapralaya. This is the destruction going on daily for all animate and inanimate objects born on earth. The second is Brāhmapralaya or naimittikapralaya. The third is Prākṛtapralaya. This is the great deluge made by prakṛti (nature) at the end of a thousand Caturyugas (four yugas). The fourth is āyantikapralaya. This is the union of the soul with the Supreme Being due to Jñāna. Of the above the Brāhmapralaya, or naimittikapralaya happens at the end of a Kalpa or a day of Brahmā or a thousand yugas. The nature of this pralaya is as follows : At the end of a thousand yugas the world will look famished. Then there will be excessive drought for a hundred years together and everything in this world would be destroyed then. Then Mahāviṣṇu, lord of everything in this universe, would present himself in the seven big rays of the Sun and drink to emptiness all the waters of all the three worlds, earth, ocean and pātāla. Then by the divine power of Mahāviṣṇu the seven rays of the Sun which had grown fat by drinking this water would become seven separate Suns. These Suns would burn all the three worlds including Pātāla. Then the earth would look like the back of a tortoise (Kūrmaprṣṭha). At that time Rudra, equal in brilliance to Kālāgni, would from beneath burn the pātāla sending breaths from Ādiśeṣa. After pātāla Kālāgnirudra would burn the

earth and then the heavens. Because of this all the worlds would look like globes of fire. Then the inhabitants of these worlds would go to Maharloka unable to bear the heat and from there to Janaloka. Thus Viṣṇu in the form of Rudra would destroy everything.

Then from the face of Viṣṇu would originate clouds and lightning in different forms. Those clouds would rain incessantly for a hundred years and destroy the fire prevailing everywhere. When the rains become unbearable Vāyu would encroach upon the seats of the Saptarṣis in the ocean and by the breath of Viṣṇu destroy all the clouds. At that time Viṣṇu, lord of all, would lie on the back of Ādiśeṣa in that one big ocean drinking vāyu (air). Viṣṇu will lie thus for a period of a Kalpa in yogic slumber meditating on Vāsudeva taking the name Madhusūdana and form of Brahmā praised by the siddhamunis inside the ocean. After that he would take the form of Brahmā and start creation.

In Prākṛtapralaya this whole universe would lie in extinction for a period of two parārdhas. One parārdha is 10000000000000000 years (one followed by seventeen zeroes) and so the period of a prākṛtapralaya is double the above number of years. The world would then come into the grip of a great drought; fire would break out and burn away everything in this world from Mahattattva to Viśeṣa. Then prompted by the desire of Viṣṇu, pratisaṅcarāṇa (back into nature) would occur. Then Jala (water) would absorb the guṇas of bhūmi like gandha (smell) and when the qualities of the earth are thus absorbed the earth would merge with pralaya. Jala is rasātmaka. Agni will absorb the rasa of Jala and Jala would be kindled. The guṇa of Agni is form and is in the form of Sun. Vāyu would absorb it and Agni would be destroyed. Vāyu would then become powerful and shake the world. The quality of Vāyu is touch and the ether would absorb that guṇa of Vāyu and Vāyu would be destroyed. The quality of ether is sound and it would be absorbed by the elements. If the elements are absorbed one by one the earth would merge into water (Jala) and Jala in Agni, and Agni in Vāyu and Vāyu in ether and ether in Ahaṅkāra (ego). Ahaṅkāra would merge in Mahattattva. This Mahattattva would be absorbed by Prakṛti. Prakṛti has got two forms:—Vyakta and Avyakta (Manifest and Un-manifest). The Vyakta would merge with Avyakta. Puruṣa is single, pure and without decay. But he is also part of Paramātmā (the Supreme Being). So Prakṛti and Puruṣa would both merge into the Supreme Being. There are no distinctions, fabrications in Paramātmā, the lord of all. It is only an existence. It is such a Paramātmā that should be known and which itself is knowledge. The Paramātmā is beyond the Ātmā (soul). It is in such an indescribable Paramātmā that all are dissolved during a Prākṛtapralaya. (Chapter 368, Agni Purāṇa).

PRAMADA. A son of Vasiṣṭha. He was one of the Saptarṣis of Uttama Manvantara. (6th Skandha, Bhāgavata).

PRAMADVARĀ. Wife of Ruru.

1) *Birth.* Pramadvarā was the daughter of the nymph Menakā born of the Gandharva Viśvāvasu. As soon as the child was born, Menakā threw the child into the forest and left for Devaloka.