

the country for 11,000 years. Then it was time to recall Mahāviṣṇu who had incarnated as Śrī Rāma, to Vaiṅkūṭha. Brahmā sent Yama to the earth to bring back Śrī Rāma. Yama who assumed the guise of a young Mahārṣi, went to Ayodhyā and visited Śrī Rāma. He said that he was the disciple of the sage Atibala and had come to tell him a secret. So Lakṣmaṇa was posted at the entrance to prevent anyone from entering the room. It was announced that anyone who tried to enter would be slaughtered. After that, while Śrī Rāma and Yama were having their secret talk, Durvāsas, the sage, who was hungry after a fast of 1,000 years, arrived at the door, asking for food. Lakṣmaṇa told him humbly that he could not be allowed to enter just then. Durvāsas, who became furious, was about to curse the whole race of Kings. So Lakṣmaṇa entered the room and informed Śrī Rāma of the arrival of Durvāsas. At the same time, in fulfilment of the order, he was ready to be slaughtered. Vasiṣṭha suggested that it would be enough if Lakṣmaṇa was banished from the palace. Accordingly he was expelled and he went and drowned himself in the depths of the river Sarayū. Śrī Rāma who was broken-hearted at his separation from Lakṣmaṇa went to the same river and drowned himself there shortly after. Yama then took their souls to Vaiṅkūṭha. (Uttara Rāmāyaṇa).

5) *Yama became crow.* In Uttara Rāmāyaṇa there is a story that at Marutta's Yāga, Yama who was frightened at the sight of Rāvaṇa, escaped in the form of a crow. (For details, see under Crow).

6) *An Age without Yama.* In the Purāṇas there are references to three periods when there was no Yama.

(1) One such period was in Kṛtayuga. At that time there was no death on earth which became overcrowded with living beings. Unable to bear their weight, the earth sank down to a depth of 100 yojanas. The goddess of Earth offered tearful prayers to Mahāviṣṇu, who incarnated as Varāha (pig) and lifted up the earth 100 yojanas. (M.B. Vana Parva, Chapter 142).

(2) When Mārkaṇḍeya reached the age of sixteen, Yama went to him to take away his life. Mārkaṇḍeya hid himself behind the idol of Śiva. Yama threw his noose at him but it fell round Śiva's neck. Śiva opened his third eye and glared at Yama who was burnt to ashes in its fire. (See under Mārkaṇḍeya).

(3) See under Pāñcālī, Para 1, Sub Para 2.

7) *Yama returned Satyav n's Life.* (See under Satyavān).

8) *Yama and King Nṛga.* See under Nṛga.

9) *Yamapurī (the city of Yama).* Yamapurī is thousand yojanas in extent. There is an entrance on each of the four sides. On one side of the city stands Citragupta's mansion. The fort surrounding the city is made of iron. There are a hundred streets in Yamapurī. They are all decorated with banners and festoons. There is a group of people in Citragupta's mansion. They are engaged in calculating the life-span of living beings. They take into account the vices and virtues of human beings. To the south of Citragupta's residence is situated "Jvaramandira" (the abode of diseases). Adjacent to it are the abodes of all kinds of diseases, each disease having its own abode. Yama's home is situated at a distance of twenty yojanas from the abode of Citragupta. It has an area of two hundred yojanas and a height of fifty yojanas. It is supported by one thousand columns. On one side of it there is an extensive assembly hall. It is

here that those who have led virtuous lives in the world, find their abode after death. They lead a life of eternal heavenly bliss there. (Garuda Purāṇa, Chapter 14).

(10) *Naraka (Hell).* There is a world called Pitṛloka in the middle of the three worlds, on their southern side below the earth and above the Atala loka. The Agniṣvāttas and other pitṛs stay there in meditative trance for securing prosperity to those who come to pitṛloka. Yama is the ruler of pitṛloka. Since he is scrupulous in imparting justice, Yama is also called Yamadharmā. He administers justice with an even hand to all living beings brought there by his agents, according to their virtues and vices during their earthly lives. He has power to assess the virtues and vices of people and to assign suitable punishments to them, but not to alter the laws or methods of punishment. Sinners are sent to the different Narakas by Yamadharmā according to the nature and seriousness of their sins. The Purāṇas refer to twentyeight Narakas in all. They are:—

(1) *Tāmisraṃ.* Those who rob others of their wealth, wives, children etc, are bound with ropes by Yama's servants and cast into the Naraka known as Tāmisram. There, they are given sound beating until they faint. After they recover their senses, the beating is repeated and those who try to escape are bound hand and foot and pushed again into this hell. This is repeated as long as Fate has ordained.

(2) *Andhatāmsram.* This hell is intended for the wife who takes food after deceiving the husband or the husband who takes food after deceiving his wife. The punishment there is the same as that of Tāmisram except the beating. But the excruciating pain suffered by the victims on being tied fast with Yama's rope by his servants, makes them fall down senseless.

(3) *Rauravam.* This is the hell into which those who have persecuted other living beings are cast. Those who seize and enjoy another man's property or resources, also come under 'Persecution'. When such people are thrown into this hell, those whom they had persecuted or cheated while on earth, assume the shape of "ruru" and torment them severely. "Ruru" is a kind of dreadful serpent. This hell is known as "Rauravam" because of the abundance of rurus there.

(4) *Mahārauravam.* Here also there are ruru serpents. Only they are of a fiercer type. Those who deny the legitimate heirs, their inheritance and possess and enjoy others' property, are squeezed to death by these terrible serpents coiling round them.

(5) *Kumbhīpākam.* This is the hell for the punishment of those who kill and eat birds and animals. Here, oil is kept boiled in huge vessels. Yama's servants plunge sinners into this oil. The period of their torture extends to as many years as there were hairs on the bodies of the birds or animals which they killed and ate.

(6) *Kālasūtram (Yamasūtra).* This hell is terribly hot. It is here that those who do not respect their father, mother, elders, etc. are cast. They rush about in the unbearable heat of this hell and drop down exhausted, from time to time.

(7) *Asi(ta)patram.* This is the hell in which those sinners who abandon svadharmā (one's own duty) and accept Paradharma (others' duty) are flogged by Yama's servants with whips made of asipatra (sharp-edged sword-shaped leaves). When they run about under the flogging they trip over stones and thorns and fall on