

Partial Devastation

Q:

I have 3 questions regarding the Partial Devastation.

1. How much of the universe is flooded, during partial annihilation?

* Below are two accounts, which appear to contradict one another. In the former description, the 4 upper planets are -NOT- covered in water during the Partial Devastation. In the latter description, all the 3 worlds are covered.

2. Where does Brahma reside during the Partial Annihilation? How much of the universe does he have to reconstruct at the end of each night?

3. Where do the living entities reside, during the devastation?

SB 4.7.42 – The demigods said: Dear Lord, formerly, when there was a devastation, You conserved all the different energies of material manifestation. At that time, all the inhabitants of the higher planets, represented by such liberated souls as Sanaka, were meditating on You by philosophical speculation. You are therefore the original person, and You rest in the water of devastation on the bed of the Śeṣa snake. Now, today, You are visible to us, who are all Your servants. Please give us protection.

PURPORT – The devastation indicated in this verse is the partial devastation of the lower planets within the universe when Lord Brahmā goes to sleep. The higher planetary systems, beginning with Maharloka, Janaloka and Tapoloka, are not inundated at the time of this devastation.

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SB3.11.30-31 – The devastation takes place due to the fire emanating from the mouth of Saṅkarṣaṇa, and thus great sages like Bhṛḡu and other inhabitants of Maharloka transport themselves to Janaloka, being distressed by the warmth of the blazing fire which rages through the three worlds below. At the beginning of the devastation all the seas overflow, and hurricane winds blow very violently. Thus the waves of the seas become ferocious, and in no time at all the three worlds are full of water.

PURPORT—It is said that the blazing fire from the mouth of Saṅkarṣaṇa rages for one hundred years of the demigods, or 36,000 human years. Then for another 36,000 years there are torrents of rain, accompanied by violent winds and waves, and the seas and oceans overflow. These reactions of 72,000 years are the beginning of the partial devastation of the three worlds.

Answer:

1.

During the partial devastation, Bhur, Bhuvar and Svar are flooded. That is what is commonly referred to as the three worlds. Of course, the subterranean planets below Bhumandala are also flooded. So only the top four lokas are above the universal ocean, which is known as ekarnava (one ocean).

Regarding the two descriptions you provided, I don't see any contradiction between them. In the first, Mahar, Jana, Tapo and Brahmaloaka remain, and those lower are devastated. Similarly, in the second, the three worlds are devastated; these three are Bhur, Bhuvah and Svarga, as mentioned above. The second description also points out that the residents of Mahar move up to Janaloka, not because it is destroyed, but because it got too hot there. As such, in both descriptions, Maharloaka, Janaloka, Tapoloka and Brahmaloaka remain; though Maharloaka becomes unfit for habitation.

2.

During the partial annihilation, Lord Brahma remains in Brahmaloaka. He also has a residence on top of Mount Meru, but that is part of Svarga and is thus inundated at the time. His abode on Brahmaloaka is however, undisturbed. During each of the subsequent days of Brahma, he has to re-create all 10 of the planetary systems which were devastated during his night.

3.

There is a conversation wherein Bhaktisvarupa Damodara Maharaja asked Srila Prabhupada about how the bodies of the living entities become manifest after the partial devastation. Srila Prabhupada answered, " There is no body. They are reserved in the Visnu's body. And again, when there is creation, they come out."

The jiva's who were residing in the devastated lokas enter within the body of Garbhodakasayi Visnu, who is the Supersoul of the universe.