

CHAPTER TWENTY*The Description of the Netherworlds**

Sūta said :

1-2a. Understand the details of the earth, the wind, the ether, the water and the fire which is the fifth one—that are being recounted later on, that had been recounted earlier along with the proofs thereof.

*The Cosmic Egg consists of fourteen worlds arranged vertically as follows:

These elements are proclaimed as constituted of infinite ingredients and they are all-pervading.

2b-4a The earth is the mother of all living beings. It sustains all animals and living beings. It is full of many kinds of rural regions and territories. It consists of many towns and places of shelter. It possesses many rivers, streams and mountains. It is crowded with many species of living beings.

The earth, the divine goddess, is sung about as infinite and extremely extensive.

Continued

I. *The Upper Regions :*

Satya Loka
|
Tapo-loka
|
Jana Loka
|
Mahar Loka
|
Svar Loka
|
Bhuvar Loka

II. *The Middle Region :*

The Earth
|

III. *The Lower
Regions or Nether-worlds:*

Atala
|
Vitala
|
Sutala
|
Talātala
|
Rasātala
|
Mahā-tala
|
Pātāla

All these are supported by Lord Śeṣa, the Serpent-King.

These lower regions are not dark or devoid of sunlight. They are full of light and have the affluence and comforts of the world of gods. Cf. Bh. P.V.24, VP.V.2. Vā. P. 50.1-54.

Baladeva Upādhyāya makes out a plausible case for identifying the Nether-worlds with the continent of America. (vide : *Purāṇa-Vimarśa*, pp. 43-49).

4b. The waters also should be understood as infinite—the waters contained in the rivers, streams, oceans and small receptacles such as ponds and puddles, those situated on the mountains and in the firmament and those within the bowels of the earth.

5. Similarly, the element of fire pervades all the worlds. It is cited as infinite, all-pervasive and originating from everything.

6. Similarly, the Ether is remembered as unscrapable, beautiful, and accommodating all or various objects, endless and infinite.

7. The Vāyu (wind) originated from the Ether. The waters are stationed within and above the earth. The earth is established on the water.

8. The Ether or the sky is that which has nothing else greater than it. Then the earth and then the water. This is the opinion that there is no state of being endless in regard to the *Bhautika* (objects evolved of the elements) *

9-10a. Understand that the earth becomes developed due to the interaction (of the elements), The sequence—the earth, the water and the Ether is well known. In the seventh (Netherworld) Rasātala this is the situation (?)

10b-11a. The nether-world called Rasātala has the land portion extending to ten thousand Yojanas. It has been reckoned by noble-souled persons that each of the netherlands is more extensive than the former.

11b-13a. The first one is Atala by name. Thereafter is Sutala. The next one, one should know, is Talātala. Atala (? or Vitala) is very extensive. Beneath that is the world named Tala (should be *Mahātala*?) and beyond that is Rasātala. Beneath all these, it is remembered, is the seventh world, the Pātāla.

13b-15a. The first portion of the ground is glorified as one with black soil.

The second world has pale white coloured ground. The third one has blue soil. The fourth one has yellow soil and the fifth one has a gravel-covered soil.

* The text is a bit obscure. Vā.P.50.9 (corresponding verse) reads: *evam anto hyanantasya bhautikasya na vidyate*. 'In this way, there is no end to the objects evolved from *bhūtas*—as they are infinite.'

The sixth world should be known as (consisting of) rocky grounds and the seventh one is remembered as one with golden ground.

15b-20a. The well-known palace of the lord of the Asuras—*Namuci*, the enemy of *Indra* is in the first nether-world. The following abodes too are in the first nether world, viz. the abode of *Mahānāda*, the city of *Śaṅkukarṇa*, the palace of *Kabandha*, *Niṣkulāda*'s town fully inhabited by delighted (jolly) people, the abode of the demon *Bhīma*, the abode of *Śūladanta*, the city of *Lohitākṣas* and *Kaliṅgas*, the town of *Śvāpada*, the city of *Dhanañjaya* and of the noble-souled *Nāgendra* (Lord of serpents), the city of *Kāliya* the serpent and that of *Kauśika*. Thus it should be known that there are thousands of cities (and abodes) of the serpents, *Dānavas* and *Rākṣasas* in the first Nether-world with black soil.

20b-25a. In the second nether-world *Sutala*, *O Brāhmaṇas*, are the abodes of the following, viz. the city of the first lord of the *Daityas* and *Rākṣasas* i.e. of *Mahājambha*, the palace of *Hayagrīva*, *Kṛṣṇa* and *Nikumbha*, the city of the *Daitya* named *Śaṅkha* and that of *Gomukha*, the abode of the demons *Nila*, *Megha* and *Kathana*, the abode of *Kukupāda* and that of *Mahoṣṇīṣa*, the city of *Kambala* the serpent and that of *Aśvatarā* and the city of *Takṣaka* the noble-souled son of *Kadru*. Thus there are, *O Brāhmaṇa*, thousands of cities belonging to the serpents, *Dānavas* and the *Rākṣasas* in the second nether-world of pale white coloured soil.

25b-31. In the third nether-world is the well known city of the noble-souled *Prahlāda*, *Anuhrāda* and *Agnimukha*, the city of (the *Daitya*) named *Tāraka*, the city of *Trisīraṣ*, the city of *Śiśumāra* the city of *Tripura*, the demon *Purañjana*'s city full of commotion, due to the gay, well-nourished people, the palace of *Cyavana* the *Rākṣasa*, the city of *Kumbhila* and *Khara* the leading *Rākṣasas*, the city of the ruthless *Virādha* with fire-emitting mouth, the city of *Hemaka* the serpent as well as that of *Pāṇḍuraka*, the city of *Mañināga*, the palace of *Kapila*, the palace of *Nandaka* the lord of the serpents, and that of *Viśālākṣa*. Thus there are thousands of cities of the

serpents, Dānavas and Rākṣasas, O Brāhmaṇas in the third netherworld with blue soil.

32-34. In the fourth netherworld is the city of Kālanemi the lion among Daityas, that of the noble-souled Gajakarṇa, the city of Kuñjara, the vast and extensive city of Sumālī the leading Rākṣasa, the abode of Muñja, Lokanātha and Vṛkavakra and the city of Vainateya, that extends to many Yojanas and that is crowded with many birds. All these are in the fourth netherworld.

35-38. In the fifth netherworld that is covered with sand and full of gravel is the intelligent Virocana, the lion among Daityas, the abodes of Vaidyuta, Agni-Jihva and that of Hiranyākṣa, the city of the intelligent Vidyujjihva, the lord of Rākṣasa, the city of Sahamegha, that of Mālin, the leading Rākṣasa, the city of the serpent Kirmīra and those of Svastika and Jaya. Thus there are thousands of cities of the serpents, Dānavas and the Rākṣasas in the fifth netherworld full of gravel. This should be known (as the situation) for ever.

39-42a. In the sixth netherworld is the excellent city of Kesari, the lord of the Daityas, the cities of Suparvan, Puloman and Mahiṣa, and the city of the noble-souled Sureṣa, the leading Rākṣasa. It is there that Śataśīrṣa the son of Suramā lives joyfully. The king of serpents named Vāsuki, the affluent and glorious friend of Mahendra (stays there). Thus there are thousands of cities of the serpents, Dānavas and the Rākṣasas in the famous sixth netherworld, Rasātala with rocky ground.

42b-46a. It should be known that the city of Bali is in the seventh and the last netherworld Pātāla. It is beyond every world. It is gay and full of men and women. It is full of Asuras, serpents and the happy and joyous enemies of the Devas. There itself is the great city of Mucukunda, the Daitya. It is teeming with innumerable great cities of Daityas full of bustle and commotion, thousands of the brilliant cities of the serpents, the great rising (flourishing) cities of the Daityas and the Dānavas and the many flourishing abodes of the Rākṣasas.

46b-47. O leading Brāhmaṇas, at the extreme end of Pātāla that extends to many Yojanas resides Śeṣa the noble-souled (king of serpents). His eyes are like the red lotus. He is devoid