

Prahlāda realized that the hermit Nārāyaṇa was none but Viṣṇu. He praised Nārāyaṇa (Vāmana Purāṇa, Chapter 8).

7) *Other information.*

(i) On the occasion of the stripping of Pāñcālī of her clothes at the palace of the Kauravas, Pāñcālī cried, calling Nara and Nārāyaṇa. (M.B. Sabhā Parva, Chapter 68, Stanza 46).

(ii) Arjuna and Śrī Kṛṣṇa were the rebirths of Nara and Nārāyaṇa. (See under Arjuna).

(iii) It is stated in Mahābhārata, Śānti Parva, Chapter 334, Stanza 9, that the hermit Nara was one of the four incarnations taken by Mahāviṣṇu in the Manuṣya yuga (age of man) of the Svāyambhuva Manvantara.

(iv) It is mentioned in Padma Purāṇa, Uttara Khaṇḍa, Chapter 2, that, of the two viz. Nara and Nārāyaṇa, Nara was of fair complexion and Nārāyaṇa of dark complexion.

(v) It was because of the curse of the hermit Bhṛgu that Nara-Nārāyaṇas took birth as Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa in the Dvāparayuga. (Devi Bhāgavata, Skandha 4).

(vi) The meaning of the word 'Nara' is he who is not damaged. The universal soul named Nara has created water and so water got the name 'Nāram'. Because he lives in that water which has the name Nāram, the universal soul got the name Nārāyaṇa. (Manusmṛti, Chapter 1, Stanza 10).

(vii) For the other incarnations of Nara see under Raktaja.

NARA II. A Gandharva (semigod). It is stated in Mahābhārata, Sabhā Parva, Chapter 10, stanza 14 that this Nara stays in the presence of Kubera.

NARA III. A King of Ancient India. He never tasted meat in his life. (M.B. Anuśāsana Parva, Chapter 115, Stanza 64).

NARĀ IV. One of the wives of Uśīnara, a King of the family of the Aṅga Kings. Uśīnara had several wives such as Nṛgā, Narā, Kṛmī, Daśā, Dṛṣadvatī and so on. Nṛgā was born from Nṛgā, Nara from Narā, Kṛmī from Kṛmī, Suvrata from Daśā and Śibi from Dṛṣadvatī. All these sons became Kings. (Agni Purāṇa, Chapter 277).

NARA V. An ancient place in South India. (M.B. Bhīṣma Parva, Chapter 9, Stanza 60).

NĀRĀCA. A particular type of arrow.

NĀRADA I. A very famous sage of the Purāṇas.

1) *Birth.* Nārada was the son of Brahmā, born from his lap. Brahmā mentally created the famous saptarṣis, Marīci, Aṅgiras, Atri, Pulastya, Vasiṣṭha, Pulaha and Kratu. From Brahmā's anger was born Rudra, from his lap Nārada, from his right thumb Dakṣa, from his mind Sanaka and others and from his left thumb a daughter called Viraṇī. Dakṣa wedded Viraṇī. (Devī Bhāgavata, 5th Skandha).

2) *Various births of Nārada.* The Purāṇas refer to more than seven prominent births of Nārada. He was first born as the son of Brahmā, and after that, on account of Brahmā's curse he was born as the Gandharva called Upabarhaṇa. Following that he was born as the son of emperor Drumila and was named Nārada. Again born as the son of Brahmā under the name Nārada, he married Mālatī and ended his life as a monkey. He was again born as the son of Brahmā and was cursed by Dakṣa. Afterwards he was born as the son of Dakṣa and also as a worm. All these births did not occur in one and

the same Manvantara. Nārada may be noticed doing something or other in connection with the various characters in the Purāṇas. There is no other character in the Purāṇas occupying so popular a place in them as Nārada. The important five births of Nārada are described below.

(i) *The Gandharva called Upabarhaṇa.* Nārada born from the lap of Brahmā desired to remain a celibate. But, Brahmā suggested that he should assume responsibility for procreation as his (Brahmā's) other sons like Marīci and Sanaka had already become celibates. Nārada did not accept this suggestion of Brahmā at which the latter got angry and cursed Nārada to lose his knowledge and to marry fifty beautiful women. Brahmā continued:—"You will be born as a Gandharva known as Upabarhaṇa and will become a great musician. You will be unrivalled in the handling of the Viṇā. After your death as the Gandharva you will be born as the son of a servant woman, and as such you will be a great devotee of Viṣṇu. Afterwards you will be born as my son when I will impart knowledge to you."

There was a Gandharva called Citraketu, who performed penance on the banks of the Puṣkara lake to propitiate Śiva for a child. Śiva appeared and blessed Citraketu to the effect that Nārada, the son of Brahmā, would be born as his son. Accordingly the wife of Citraketu delivered a son whom the family priest named Upabarhaṇa. The boy grew up as a devotee of Viṣṇu. Brhaspati taught him the worship of Hari (Viṣṇu). Upabarhaṇa lived on the slopes of the Himālayas performing penance. While Upabarhaṇa was one day engaged in Samādhi fifty daughters of the Gandharva called Citraratha passed that way, and they fell in love with Upabarhaṇa, who was in Samādhi. He awoke from Samādhi on hearing the melodious songs of the fifty damsels who stood there with palms joined in reverence. Upabarhaṇa too fell in love with them, and he married all the fifty girls. He returned with them to the palace and lived there for thousands of years. Once the Gandharvas and the Apsaras were invited to sing the story of Viṣṇu in Brahmāloka. Upabarhaṇa accompanied them. He became lustful towards Rambhā. The Prajāpatis, who noticed it got angry, and Upabarhaṇa well-nigh dead due to their curse returned home. He told his wives all that had happened to him. He spread a darbha grass on the ground and lay on it and died. Mālatī, the eldest of his wives, got ready to curse Brahmā, Yama and Mṛtyu. In great consternation they sought refuge under Viṣṇu, who comforted and sent them back to Mālatī. They saluted her. Then a brahmin, who went there questioned Brahmā about the death of Upabarhaṇa. The brahmin told him that, according to previous decision, life for another thousand years remained for Upabarhaṇa, but he died in the meantime on account of the curse of Prajāpati. Immediately the brahmin assumed the form of Viṣṇu. The brahmin blessed Upabarhaṇa who woke up from death rubbing his eyes. He lived happily at home with his wives. He was blessed with children and grandchildren. Knowing that his end was near Upabarhaṇa and Mālatī spent their time in austerities on the banks of the Gaṅgā. At last Upabarhaṇa expired, and Mālatī ended her life in his funeral pyre. (Bhāgavata, 7th Skandha).