

= Rati =

Rati (Sanskrit : रति , Rati) is the Hindu goddess of love , carnal desire , lust , passion and sexual pleasure . Usually described as the daughter of Prajapati Daksha , Rati is the female counterpart , the chief consort and the assistant of Kama (Kamadeva) , the god of love . A constant companion of Kama , she is often depicted with him in legend and temple sculpture . She also enjoys worship along with Kama . Rati is often associated with the arousal and delight of sexual activity , and many sex techniques and positions derive their Sanskrit names from hers .

The Hindu scriptures stress Rati 's beauty and sensuality . They depict her as a maiden who has the power to enchant the god of love . When the god Shiva burnt her husband to ashes , it was Rati , whose beseeching or penance , leads to the promise of Kama 's resurrection . Often , this resurrection occurs when Kama is reborn as Pradyumna , the son of Krishna . Rati ? under the name of Mayavati ? plays a critical role in the upbringing of Pradyumna , who is separated from his parents at birth . She acts as his nanny , as well as his lover , and tells him the way to return to his parents by slaying the demon @-@ king , who is destined to die at his hands . Later , Kama @-@ Pradyumna accepts Rati @-@ Mayavati as his wife .

= = Etymology = =

The name of the goddess Rati comes from the Sanskrit root ram , meaning " enjoy " or " delight in . " Although the verb root generally refers to any sort of enjoyment , it usually carries connotations of physical and sensual enjoyment . Etymologically , the word rati refers to anything that can be enjoyed ; but , it is almost always used to refer to sexual love .

= = Birth and marriage = =

The Kalika Purana narrates the following tale about Rati 's birth . After the creation of the 10 Prajapatis , Brahma ? the creator @-@ god ? creates Kama (Kamadeva) , the god of love , from his mind . Kama is ordered to spread love in the world by shooting his flower @-@ arrows and Prajapati Daksha is requested to present a wife to Kama . Kama first uses his arrows against Brahma and the Prajapatis , who are all incestuously attracted to Brahma 's daughter Sandhya (" Twilight @-@ dawn / dusk ") . Shiva , who was passing by , watches them and laughs . Embarrassed , Brahma and the Prajapatis tremble and perspire . From the sweat of Daksha rises a beautiful woman named Rati , who Daksha presents to Kama as his wife . At the same time , the agitated Brahma curses Kama to be burnt to ashes by Shiva in the future . However on Kama 's pleading , Brahma assures him that he would be reborn . The Brahma Vaivarta Purana narrates that Sandhya committed suicide , after Brahma lusts for her . God Vishnu resurrects her and names her Rati , and marries her to Kama . The Shiva Purana mentions that after her suicide Sandhya is reborn from the sweat of Daksha as Rati . In some texts , the god Shiva is described as the father of Rati .

The Harivamsa , an appendix to the epic Mahabharata , mentions that Kama and Rati have two children , Harsha (" Joy ") and Yashas (" Grace ") . However , the Vishnu Purana mentions that Rati , as Nandi , only has one son ? Harsha . The epics Mahabharata as well as the Ramayana , also attest to Rati being the consort of Kama .

= = Rebirth as Mayavati : Kama 's death and resurrection = =

The demon Tarakasura had created havoc in the universe , and only the son of god Shiva could slay him , but Shiva had turned to ascetic ways after the death of his first wife , Sati . Kama was thus instructed by the gods to make Shiva fall in love again . Kama went to Mount Kailash with Rati and Madhu or Vasanta (" Spring ") , and shot his love @-@ arrows at Shiva (in another version of the legend , Kama entered Shiva 's mind) and invoked desire . Wounded by Kama 's arrows , Shiva becomes attracted to Parvati , the reincarnation of Sati , but agitated , burns Kama by a glance of

his third eye .

The Bhagavata Purana narrates further that the grief @-@ stricken Rati goes mad by Kama 's death and in the Matsya Purana and the Padma Purana versions , she smears herself with her husband 's ashes . Further in Bhagavata Purana , Rati undergoes severe penance and pleads with Parvati to intercede with Shiva to restore her husband . Parvati reassures her that Kama would be reborn as Pradyumna , the son of Krishna , the Avatar of the god Vishnu on earth , and Rati should wait for him in the demon (asura) Sambara 's house . In other versions of the narrative like the Matsya Purana , the Padma Purana , the Shiva Purana , the Linga Purana and the Kathasaritsagara , it is Shiva who blesses Rati with the boon of Kama 's resurrection . In other variants , she curses the gods who sent Kama for this doomed mission and the gods , as a group or Brahma , seeks relief for the grieving Rati from Shiva or the Supreme Goddess , Parvati being one of her many manifestations . In some legends , like the one in the Brahmanda Purana , the Goddess revives Kama immediately , hearing the pleading of the wailing Rati and the gods . The renowned Sanskrit poet Kalidasa dedicates canto IV discussing the plight of Rati in his Kumarasambhava , which focuses on the story of the wedding of Shiva and Parvati and the birth of their son Skanda , who kills Tarakasura . Canto IV narrates that Rati witnesses the death of her husband and laments his death , and then tries to immolate herself on a funeral pyre . A heavenly voice stops her on time , stating that after the marriage of Shiva , he will revive her husband .

The Kedara Khanda chapter of the Skanda Purana presents a very different version . In this version , after the burning of Kama , Parvati is worried that she could not achieve Shiva in absence of Kama . Parvati is consoled by Rati , who asserts that she will revive Kama and starts severe austerities to achieve her goal . Once , the divine sage Narada asks her " whose she was " . Agitated , Rati insults Narada . The spiteful Narada provokes the demon Sambara to kidnap Rati . Sambara takes her to his house , but is unable to touch her as the goddess decreed that he would be reduced to ashes if he touches her . There , Rati becomes the " kitchen in @-@ charge " and is known as Mayavati (" mistress of illusion ? Maya ") .

The Bhagavata Purana and the Kathasaritsagara continue , that on advice of Shiva , Rati assumes the form of Sambara 's kitchen @-@ maid Mayavati and awaits her husband 's arrival in Sambara 's house . Sambara is foretold that the reborn Kama would be his destroyer . Sambara finds out that Kama was born as Pradyumna , the son of Krishna and his wife Rukmini . He steals the child and throws him in the ocean , where the child is swallowed by a fish . This fish is caught by fishermen and sent to Sambara 's kitchen . When the fish is cut , the child is found by Mayavati , who decides to nurture him . The divine sage Narada reveals to Mayavati that she was Rati and the child was Kama and she was to rear him . As the child grew up , the motherly love of Mayavati changes to the passionate love of a wife . The reborn Kama resents her advances , as he considers her his mother . Mayavati tells him the secret of their previous births as narrated by Narada and that he was not her son , but that of Krishna and Rukmini . Mayavati trains Pradyumna in magic and war and advises him to kill Sambara . Pradyumna defeats Sambara and slays him . He returns to Dv?rak? , Krishna 's capital with Mayavati as his wife , where they are welcomed .

The Vishnu Purana and the Harivamsa also have a similar account , though the reincarnation of Rati is called Mayadevi and described as Sambara 's wife , rather than his maid . Both these scriptures safeguard her chastity saying that Rati donned an illusionary form to enchant Sambara . The Brahma Vaivarta Purana explicitly states that Rati does not sleep with Sambara , but gave him the illusionary form of Mayavati . Rati @-@ Mayavati takes a critical role in all narratives of this story where she seduces ? by her Maya ? both Sambara and Kama @-@ Pradyumna , her " son " who she convinces to be her lover . All texts at the end stress on her purity , untouched by another man .

The Harivamsa describes Aniruddha , the son of Pradyumna , " the son of Rati " .

= = Associations and iconography = =

The name Rati in Sanskrit means " the pleasure of love , sexual passion or union , amorous enjoyment " , all of which Rati personifies . Rati also indicates the female @-@ seed . The word Rati

also gives rise to other love @-@ related Sanskrit words like Kama @-@ rati (" a man stupefied by desire ") , rati @-@ karman (" sexual intercourse ") , rati @-@ laksha (" sexual intercourse ") , rati @-@ bhoga (" sexual enjoyment ") , rati @-@ shakti (" virile power ") , rati @-@ jna (" skilled in the art of love ") , and rati @-@ yuddha (" a sex @-@ battle ") . The word Rati also appears in title of the Sanskrit erotic work Rati @-@ Rahasya (" secrets of Rati ") ? which is said to contain the sexual secrets of the goddess ? as well as in the Sanskrit names of many sex techniques and positions like Rati @-@ pasha (" the noose of Rati ") , a sex position in which the woman locks her legs behind her lover 's back .

Rati stands for sexual pleasure , carnal desire and sexuality . Rati represents only the pleasure aspect of sexual activity and does not relate to child @-@ birth or motherhood . Professor Catherine Benton of the Lake Forest College (Department of Religion) relates her birth from the " desire @-@ ridden " sweat to bodily fluids produced during sexual intercourse , which are considered impure in Hinduism . Benton thus , relates her to pollution too , but her association with Kama ? the auspicious god of love ? grants her the status of an auspicious goddess . Rati and Kama are often pictured on temple walls as " welcome sculptures " , symbols of good fortune and prosperity . Not only is Rati Kama 's consort , but she is also his assistant and constant companion , who arouses sexual feelings . Kama is usually depicted with Rati along his side . Rati is also included as a minor character in any drama involving Kama . Rati also enjoys worship with Kama in some festival rites dedicated to him .

The Shiva Purana mentions that Kama himself was pierced by his love @-@ arrows when he saw his " auspicious wife " , Rati . A detailed description of her body , filled with similes praising her fair complexion , her eyes , her face , her " plump " breasts , her hair , her arms , her legs , her thighs and her glowing skin . The textual descriptions of Rati present her as an enchantress ; voluptuous and seductive . Rati , as well as her husband Kama , ride a parrot as their vahana (vehicle) . Rati is often depicted with a sword .

In Tantra , the Mahavidya goddess Chhinnamasta is depicted severing her own head and standing on the copulating couple of Kama and Rati , with the latter on top , (viparita @-@ rati sex position) . The woman @-@ on @-@ top position suggests female dominance over male . Chhinnamasta standing on a copulating couple of Kama and Rati is interpreted by some as a symbol of self @-@ control of sexual desire , while others interpret it as the goddess , being an embodiment of sexual energy . Images of Chhinnamasta depicted sitting on Kamadeva @-@ Rati in a non @-@ suppressive fashion are associated with the latter interpretation . The love @-@ deity couple also symbolize maithuna , ritual sexual union .