

= Ila (Hinduism) =

Ila (Sanskrit : ??) or Il? (Sanskrit : ???) is an androgyne in Hindu mythology , known for their sex changes . As a man , he is known as Ila or Sudyumna and as a woman , is called Il? . Il? is considered the chief progenitor of the Lunar dynasty of Indian kings - also known as the Ailas (" descendants of Il? ") .

While many versions of the tale exist , Ila is usually described as a daughter or son of Vaivasvata Manu and thus the sibling of Ikshvaku , the founder of the Solar Dynasty . In versions in which Ila is born female , she changes into a male form by divine grace soon after her birth . After mistakenly entering a sacred grove as an adult , Ila is either cursed to change his / her gender every month or cursed to become a woman . As a woman , Il? married Budha , the god of the planet Mercury and the son of the lunar deity Chandra (Soma) , and bore him a son called Pururavas , the father of the Lunar dynasty . After the birth of Pururavas , Il? is transformed into a man again and fathered three sons .

In the Vedas , Il? is praised as Id? (Sanskrit : ???) , goddess of speech , and described as mother of Pururavas .

The tale of Ila 's transformations is told in the Puranas as well as the Indian epic poems , the Ramayana and the Mahabharata .

= = Birth = =

According to the Linga Purana and the Mahabharata , Il? was born as the eldest daughter of Vaivasvata Manu , the progenitor of mankind , and his wife Shraddha . However , the parents desired a son and so prayed and performed austerities to propitiate the deities Mitra and Varuna , who changed Il? 's sex . The boy was named Sudyumna . The Bhagavata Purana , the Devi @-@ Bhagavata Purana , the Kurma Purana , the Harivamsa , the Markandeya Purana and the Padma Purana (referred to as " Bhagavata Purana et al. texts " further) narrate a variant : Ila 's parents could not have any children for a long time and approached the sage Agastya for a solution . The sage performed a yajna (fire sacrifice) dedicated to Mitra and Varuna to attain a son for the couple . Due to either an error in the ritual , or a failure to offer the appropriate sacrifice , Mitra and Varuna instead sent a daughter to the couple . In one version , the couple supplicated the deities , who transformed Il? 's gender . In another version , this transformation happens after the erroneous hymns are rectified and the son is called Ila . According to a variant , Shraddha wished for a daughter ; Vashistha heeded her wish while performing the sacrifice and thus , a daughter was born . However , Manu desired a son so Vashistha appealed to Vishnu to change the gender of his daughter . Il? was renamed Sudhyumna . The accounts describe Ila as either the eldest or the youngest child of Manu . As the child of Manu , Ila had nine brothers , the most notable was Ikshvaku , the founder of the Solar dynasty . As the son of Manu , Ila is the grandson of Surya . According to another account found in the Vayu Purana and the Brahmanda Purana , Il? was born female and remained female .

In the Ramayana , Ila is born as a son of Kardama , the Prajapati born of the god Brahma 's shadow . Ila 's tale is told in the Uttara Kanda chapter of the Ramayana , while describing the greatness of the Ashvamedha - the horse sacrifice .

= = Curse and marriage to Budha = =

In the Ramayana , the Linga Purana and the Mahabharata , Ila grows to become the king of Bahlika . While hunting in a forest , Ila accidentally trespassed Sharavana (" Forest of Reeds ") , the sacred grove of the goddess Parvati , the consort of the god Shiva . Upon entering Sharavana , all male beings except for Shiva , including trees and animals , are transformed into females . In the Ramayana , even Shiva had assumed the form of a female to please the goddess . One legend tells that a female yakshini disguised herself as a deer and purposefully led Ila to the grove in order to save her husband from the king . The Linga Purana and the Mahabharata emphasize the sex

change of Ila to be a deliberate act of Shiva to start the Lunar dynasty . The Bhagavata Purana et al. texts tell that Ila 's entire entourage as well as his horse also changed their genders .

According to the Ramayana , when Ila approached Shiva for help , Shiva laughed with scorn but the compassionate Parvati reduced the curse and allowed Ila to switch genders every month . However , as a male he would not remember his life as a female and vice versa . While Il? roamed the forest in her new form with her female attendants , Budha , the god of the planet Mercury and the son of the moon @-@ god Chandra , noticed her . Although he had been practising asceticism , Il? 's beauty caused him to fall in love with her at first sight . Budha turned Il? 's attendants into Kimpurushas (hermaphrodite , lit . " is it a man ? ") and ordered them to run away , promising that they would find mates as Il? had .

Il? married Budha and spent an entire month making love to him . However , Il? woke one morning as Ila and remembered nothing about the past month . Budha told Ila that his retinue had been killed in a rain of stones and convinced Ila to stay with him for a year . During each month she spent as a woman , Il? had pleasure with Budha . During each month as a man , Ila turned to pious ways and performed austerities under the guidance of Budha . In the ninth month , Il? gave birth to Pururavas , who grew to become the first king of the Lunar dynasty . Then , as per the advice of Budha and Ila 's father Kardama , Ila pleased Shiva with a horse sacrifice and Shiva restored Ila 's masculinity permanently .

Another legend from the Vishnu Purana credits Vishnu of restoring Il? 's manhood as Sudyumma . The Bhagavata Purana et al. texts tell that after Pururavas 's birth , the nine brothers of Ila - by horse sacrifice - or the sage Vasistha ? the family priest of Ila ? pleased Shiva to compel him to give the boon of alternate month manhood to Ila , turning him into a Kimpurusha . The Linga Purana and the Mahabharata record the birth of Pururavas , but do not narrate the end of Ila 's alternating gender condition . In fact , the Mahabharata describes Il? to be the mother as well as the father of Pururavas . According to another account found in the Vayu Purana and the Brahmanda Purana , Il? was born female , married Budha , then was transformed into a male called Sudyumna . Sudyumna was then cursed by Parvati and transformed once again into a female , but became a man once again through Shiva 's boon .

In almost all versions of the tale , Ila wants to live as a man , but in the Skanda Purana , Ila desires to be a woman . The king Ela (Ila) entered Parvati 's grove at Sahya mountain and became the woman Il? . Il? wished to remain a woman and serve Parvati (Gauri) and Ganga , the goddess of the Ganges river . However , the goddesses dissuaded him and told him that life as a woman was a curse and full of sorrow . Il? bathed in a sacred pool and returned as Ela , bearded and deep @-@ voiced .

= = Later life and descendents = =

The descendants of Il? through Pururavas are known as Ailas after Il? or as the Lunar Dynasty (Chandravamsa) due to their descent from Budha , the son of the moon @-@ god Chandra . Most versions of tale call Il? the father as well as the mother of the Ailas . The Linga Purana and the Mahabharata , in which Sudyumma 's curse does not end , state that as a male , Sudyumma also bore three sons named Utkala , Gaya and Vinatashva (also known as Haritashva and Vinata) . The three sons ruled the kingdom for their father as Sudyumma was unable to do so himself due his alternating gender . The sons and their principalities are called the Saudyumnas . Utkala , Gaya , and Vinatashva ruled Utkala country , Gaya , and eastern regions including northern Kurus respectively . With the assistance of the family priest Vasistha , Sudyumma regained control of the entire kingdom . He was succeeded by Pururavas .

In the Matsya Purana , Ila was disinherited after becoming a female or kimpurusha . Ila 's father passed his inheritance directly to Pururavas , ignoring the three sons Ila @-@ Sudyumma bore as a male . Pururavas ruled from Pratishtanapura (present @-@ day Allahabad) , where Ila stayed with him . The Ramayana says that having returned to manhood , Ila ruled Pratishtana while his son Shashabindu ruled over Bahlika . The Devi @-@ Bhagavata Purana tells that as a man Sudyumma governed the kingdom and as a woman remained indoors . His subjects were disturbed by his sex

changes and did not respect him as they once had . When Pururavas attained adulthood , Sudyumma left his kingdom to Pururavas and went to the forest for penance . The sage Narada told Sudyumma a nine @-@ syllable mantra , Navakshara , which would please the Supreme Goddess . Pleased with his austerities , the Goddess emerged before Sudyumma , who was in his female form II? . Sudyumma praised the Goddess , who merged the king 's soul with herself and thus , II? gained salvation .

The Bhagavata Purana , the Devi @-@ Bhagavata Purana and the Linga Purana declare that Ila ascended to heaven with both male and female anatomy . Ila is considered the chief progenitor of the Lunar Dynasty through Pururavas and of the Solar Dynasty through his brother Iksavaku and sons Utkala , Gaya , and Vinatashva . The marriage of II? , a descendant of the Sun , and Budha , the son of the Moon , is the first union of the solar and lunar races recorded in the scriptures .

= = In Vedic literature = =

In Vedic literature , II? is also known as Id? . Id? in the Rigveda , signifies food and refreshment , personified as the goddess of speech . II? @-@ Id? is also associated with Sarasvati , the goddess of knowledge . II? @-@ Id? is mentioned a number of times in the Rigveda , mostly in the hymns known as ?pr?s?ktas . She is often mentioned along with Sarasvati and Bharati (or Mahi) and Pururavas is described as her son . Id? is the instructor of Manu , in performing ritual sacrifices . According to Sayana - a commentator on the Vedas , she presides over the Earth .

In the Shatapatha Brahmana , Manu performed a fire @-@ sacrifice in order to have children . Id? emerged from the sacrifice . She was claimed by Mitra @-@ Varuna , but she lived with Manu and together they initiated the race of Manu . In this text , Id? is the goddess of the sacrificial meal . She is described as the M?navi (daughter of Manu) and Gh?tapad? (with the ghee @-@ dripping foot) and she is represented by a cow , also known as Id? during a sacrifice . Pururavas is mentioned as the son of II? in the text .