

Parvati also got mixed up with *Yogmaya* whom Krishna had given a *Vardan* to be worshipped as goddess in all her manifestations during the end of Dwapar. They are essentially the unmanifest power of the universe, so they are really one in their different manifestations and with Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva who are the functioning deities, goddess became the power that gives them the drive to do so, yet all is one.

Shiva and Parvati had no children as a couple, although *Kartik* and *Ganesh* are accepted as Shiva's and Parvati's sons. Their birth is attributed to strange circumstances, in which only one of them was involved.

Review Questions:

Answer the following questions in your notebook.

1. What is Karva-Chauth ceremony? Why do the women in India do this every year?
2. Why do you think Shiva killed Kamdev when he was just trying to make him fall in love with Uma? Was there a misunderstanding?
3. What did Uma do to make Shiva fall in love with her?
4. How did Sati incarnate into Parvati (Uma)? Can we follow her footsteps and do the same?
5. How can Parvati - so beautiful and motherly goddess become so violent and scary as goddess Kali?

Lesson 10 Parvati or Uma Second Consort of Shiva



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Parvati with her son, Ganesh

When Sati threw herself in the fire she had asked the holy fire to make her Shiva's wife again in her next birth. Sati was then born as a daughter to the great king of the *Himalayas* king *Hinavant* and his wife *Maina*. She was named *Girja*, *Uma* or *Parvati* meaning the *daughter of the mountains*.

Somehow, she was from childhood fascinated with Shiva and often went and placed flowers and incense at his shrine. *Narad Muni* knew the destiny of this little girl and would also often go and praise Shiva to her. He told her parents on seeing her horoscope that she was a divine being and her husband would be immortal. They will be the most devoted couple in the whole universe. But to convince Shiva was a more difficult task as he had become absolutely unapproachable. So *Indra* was sent to the god of love *Kamdev* to do something about it.

Kamdev took the spring season with him to the mountain home of Shiva and soon enough the spring turned the snow-clad peaks into a beautiful garden with trees and shrubs full of flowers and fruits and nature became joyful and romantic. Shiva seeing this change opened his eyes and at that moment Kamdev shot an arrow of love at Shiva – but Shiva woke up and sent a lightning streak from his third eye towards Kamdev. Kamdev's body got immediately burnt, he remained alive in his spirit form. This was terrible for his wife *Rati*. She could do nothing about it, but made Shiva promise that Kamdev will regain his body as *Pradyuman*, the son of Krishna in Dwapar Yug. Shiva went back to his meditation.

Uma fell more and more in love with Shiva as she grew up to be a beautiful young woman. On the advice of sage Narad and others, she decided to do *tapasya* (fast & pray) to obtain him. She started living a life of austerity and worship of Shiva to convince him of her love. Shiva in the meantime had been convinced by the sages and gods that he must marry as without a consort his *shakti* (power) would vanish, and no one was better suited than Uma, the daughter of Himavant. One day he came to test her and on seeing her worshipping him, he in the guise of a mendicant told her horrible tales of Shiva and his way of life and his associates, but Parvati was adamant. Shiva came into his own form then and offered to marry her and live with her forever.

Narad and other sages were sent to Himavant who called Parvati and asked her in front of all of them if she agreed to marry Shiva. She looked down at the lotus in her hand and started counting the petal in her shyness – Himavant consented to the marriage. The *baraat*

(wedding party) came in the style of Shiva on the appointed day. Maina the mother was taken aback when she saw the *baraat* but accepted Shiva along with his snakes and frightful companions. Shiva and Paravati – the eternal couple – then went to *Kailash* in happiness and love.

Parvati soon became the symbol of worship of all unmarried and married women of the world. She was a very benevolent goddess and was particular in bestowing boons to unmarried girls as they prayed to her for husbands of their choice or dreams, also to married women who prayed to her to give long life to their husbands on whom depended everything after their marriage. The women chose Parvati, who was loved very much by her husband and gave her the name of *Gaura*, to whom they prayed to on *Karva-Chauth* with devotion. (Today the festival falls on the fourth day after the full moon, in the Hindu lunar calendar month of *Kartik*.)

Parvati became the custodian of women and was equated to all the goddesses that were to come later. *Shakti* was another name of the goddess as she and Sati or Shakti are the same essentially – but Shakti is usually used as a name for Sati. *Shakti* is power. Therefore, without *Shakti*, all gods are static.

Ambika or *Durga* is supposed to be born of all forms of the mother goddess like *Ishani*, *Aparna*, *Gauri*, *Gaura*, *Durga*, *Tara*, *Kali*, *Vaishnav Devi*, *Ambika*, *Chaumandi*, *Annpurna*, etc., They were attributed with different temperaments and forms. The stories connected to their doings and to their appearance at different times depending on situations – are all absorbed very naturally, by the Hindus.

She is the power of the gods which can manifest itself in any form and at any time. This again is in the genius of the Hindu faith to manifest the unmanifest for the sake of getting it accepted by all which they had somehow already accepted due to fright or love.

Parvati, therefore, is as complex as her spouse Shiva. She can be fearsome being as *Kali* or most benevolent as *Durga* or *Gauri*. The temples of Parvati alone are never there, she is always with Shiva, but in the form of Durga, Kali and others. She stands alone and is worshipped as such all over the country. More people seem to have faith in her than in the male gods.