

The Story of Kama



Kama is the God of love and beauty. He is also called as Madana, pancabana. as he had five flowers aravindam. (red lotus) asokam (asoka flower), chyutam (mango), navamallika (jasmine), nilotpalam (blue lotus) as his arrows. The spring was his friend. These tender, soft flowers were used by him as arrows but these were capable of disturbing even the hearts of the great strong disciplined sages. When sage Viswamitra took Rama and Lakshmana with him to Siddhasrama to protect the sacrifice he was performing, he told the stories of the places they came across on the way. When they crossed the anangaashramam, Viswamitra narrated many interesting stories to these two young brothers so that they will not feel the weariness of the journey..

Siva was in total meditation and penance, after the death of his wife Dakshayani during Daksha yaga. Time passed on. Demons like Taraka, simhamukha et.al. became more powerful and they conquered all the three worlds. They conquered even gods. Being very ferocious and violent these demons started harassing everybody. Chaos and violence prevailed everywhere. These demons propitiate Gods by penance and they obtain unbelievable boons in return. In this case, as per the boons obtained, the demon can be killed only by the progeny of Lord Siva and Parvati. But Lord Siva was not inclined to be attached to worldly things and he abandoned even worldly life and was in total meditation. So it was all the more difficult for the Gods to conquer these demons and they were in complete soup.

At that time all the gods assembled at heavens to find out a solution for this problem. As all the gods were invited for that session, Kama the God of Love was also there. They unanimously expressed that Kama has to disturb the penance of Siva and has to be brought to worldly life and in consequence it will fulfill their wish of Siva and Parvati getting a child who will be the destroyer of those demons.

At first, Kama was not ready to accept this request. He was not confident enough to undertake this challenge. But the gods insisted and as it was for the benefit of the world, Kama also at last agreed to this request.

Meanwhile Dakshayani, who left her body in the sacrifice, had her rebirth as Parvati, as the daughter of the mountain Himalayas and Maina. From her childhood she was devoted to Siva, and wanted to marry only Siva. Sage Narada also, in a visit to the Himavan encouraged the wish of Parvati. Accordingly Parvati was sent to Sivas penance grove to serve him in his austerities. Every morning and evening Parvati used to come there to clean up the grove and offer the ingredients like flowers etc. to Lord Siva. Parvati's presence at the penance grove gave Kama a little more confident in his mission.

So Kama, the Cupid, accepting the request of Gods came to the penance grove of Siva. He came along with his wife Rati. As he entered the place he became very nervous. Suddenly spring season was brought in. All the trees and creepers started flowering and the whole atmosphere of the forest changed. Kama was waiting for his mission of distracting Lord Siva's penance. At that time Parvati entered to pay her obeisance to the Lord. Kama thought that was the best suitable time to release his arrows on Siva so that he can be disturbed. But Kama's guess failed. When Lord Siva was about to open his eyes to accept his devotee's Parvati's Offerings, there was a slight disturbance in his mind and he knew the cause for that. He saw Kama standing there ready to release his arrow on him. Immediately he opened his third eye. Sparks of fire came out and in a moment, Kama was burnt to ashes. The place where Kama was burnt to ashes leaving his beautiful form was called kamashramam and he was called as Ananga as he had no more body. Rati was stuck with fear and wonder. She started lamenting. Young Parvati was also confused not able to understand the happenings. She swooned. Her father Himavan came to her help and took her home carrying her in his hands.

Then the Gods not knowing what to do, surrendered at Goddess. Goddess Parvati promised that Kama will be brought back to life during her marriage. During the marriage of Lord Siva and Parvati, as promised, Kama was brought back to life and he got his handsome form once again.

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Source : Ramayanam. & Kumarasambhavam of Kalidasa