

Goddess Maya(illusion)

Retold by
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Maya (illusion) Devi was one of the wives of Lord Vishnu. She has been given a very great role in the Hindu philosophy.

Genealogy as given in Agni Purana

Himsa(violence) married Adharma(foul deeds) .They had two children Anrutham(lack of action) and Nikruthi.(dishonesty).These two children in turn produced four children viz. Bhayam(fear), Narakam(hell) , Maya(illusion) and Vedana(pain). Maya begot Mruthyu(death) and Vedana begot Dukha(sorrow)..Mruthyu produced four children Vyadhi(disease), Jara(old age), Soka(sorrow), Trushna(attraction) and Krodha(anger). There are two stories about Maya in Puranas. They are:-

The story of Gaadhi the Brahmin

In the Kosala country there was a Brahmin called Gaadhi. He went to the forest and standing in neck deep water started tapas towards Vishnu. After eight months Lord Vishnu appeared before him. Lord Vishnu asked him about the boon that he wanted. Gaadhi replied that the only thing he wanted was to see Goddess Maya Devi. Lord agreed and told him that he would see her eventually and went back to Vaikunta.

Years passed but nothing happened to Gaadhi. Once he entered a lake to take bath. Suddenly he forgot everything. There was a sudden change in his mind. He saw himself lying as a corpse in his own house He saw that his relatives were sad and his wife was crying holding his leg. He saw that he was taken to the fearful cremation ground and also saw himself cremated. Then he saw that his soul going away and enter the womb of a Chandala woman. He saw then that he was born as an extremely black boy. He saw that boy(himself) grew up in to a young man. He saw that he married a very pretty lady. He saw that he entered in to love play with his wife in various places like garden, bed room, in a hut and so on. He also saw that he begot some bad sons. He saw his grand sons growing up and he himself becoming extremely old. He saw that suddenly his wife and all his sons dying before his own eyes. Then he saw himself leaving his native place and wandering without any aim. Then he saw himself reaching a great town where an elephant was waiting with a garland. He saw the elephant putting the garland around his neck. He saw the people of the town making him , the king of the country. He saw that all the wives of the previous king becoming his wives. He saw him ruling the country well and taking the name “Galava”. He saw himself ruling that country for eight years. He saw that one day he went out of his palace in ordinary cloths. He saw him going to a slum, where all people recognized him as Pulkasa – a lowly slave. He then saw that because of this the queens and ministers of the country, insulting him and driving him away from the palace.

He was weeping and crying over his fate. He then created a big fire and jumped in to it.

Suddenly at this time , he woke up from his reverie and saw himself standing in the lake. He went back to his home. A few days later a very lean Brahmin , who had burns all over his body visited him. When Gaadhi asked him , about the burns, his guest repeated the story that happened to him in his reverie. Surprised at his narration, Gaadhi realized that all that happened to him was due to his contact with Maya Devi. He left his home, went to the forest and again did Tapas to Lord Vishnu. This time he requested for his salvation.

Sage Narada and Maya Devi.

Once Lord Vishnu told Sage Narada that , there is nothing real in this world and what all we see is due to the playful acts of Maya Devi. Narada did not understand it and requested Lord Vishnu to make him experience the powers of Maya Devi. Vishnu took sage Narada along with him and they reached a very deep forest in which there was a very big lake. Lord Vishnu requested Sage Narada to take bath in that lake. Narada kept his Veena called Mahathi and the deer skin on which he used to meditate on the shore and entered the lake to take bath .Suddenly Sage Narada was transformed in to a very pretty lady. She came out of the lake and was enjoying the beauty of nature around her. At that time a king called Thaladwaja reached near the shore. Attracted by her divine beauty he requested the lady to marry him. She also agreed and married him. Times rolled by. After 12 years of very happy married life they got a son called Veravarma. Then onwards , every two years she produced a child. And within another 24 years , she became mother of 12 children. Later she became mother for another eight children. All her children reached adulthood and married. And she got several grand children. At this time an enemy king invaded the country of Thaladwaja. In the battle most of his children and grand children were killed. Thaladwaja ran for his life. Then he left his country along with his wife and reached the same lake where he found her. Lord Vishnu in the form of a Brahmin was waiting there. He asked them to take bath in the lake. Narada regained his original form. He then could realize what all happened to him. Lord Vishnu then told him that all that happened was an illusion, which appeared real and was due to Maya Devi.