

Why Is Ganesh Worshipped First ?

Traditionally, every religious and auspicious function begins with worship of Lord Ganesh. No other god is equal in significance to Ganesh. The reason for this greater significance is that the word Ganesh is a form of Brahma and hence symbolises Omkar.

The metaphysical knowledge says that Omkar is the basic reason for this whole creation. It is the first manifested appearance of that unmanifested Brahma. According to Upanishads, sky was the first to appear from Brahma. Being the purest form of matter, the sky symbolises Omkar. Sense of sky is nothing but sound. All the other things in universe appeared later from the sound. Shrimad Bhagwat also says that sound emerged from Parmeshwar. From sound emerged the sky, from sky emerged touch, from touch, air emerged. From air form took birth and form produced radiance. Radiance produced fire and fire produced taste. Taste produces water and water produced smell. Ultimately, the earth appeared from the smell. Thus in the beginning of this process, there was nothing but sound. Resonating sound is thus the primitive constituent of universe. This universal form of resonance when meets the ear, it is heard as Omkar. Keeping this form of Omkar in view, it is stated to be equal with God and hence venerable.

AITANNAANAVATARAANAAM NIDHAANAM BIJAMVYAYAM |
YASYAAMSHAAMSHEN SRIJYANTE DEVTIRYANGNARADAYAH || (Srimad Bhagwat)

It is the indestructible seed of different incarnations. From the parts of it, all the gods, birds and animals and human beings have been created.

Shri Ganpatya Atharvasheersh says that Ganapati is the manifested appearance of Omkar. Such as recitation of Omkar is a must in the beginning of all the auspicious occasions and installation of idols. Similarly, worship of Lord Ganesh is essential in the beginning of every auspicious occasion.

TOP

Decapitation Of Ganesh ?

In the Puranas, there is a story of how, Lord Shiva beheaded His own son, Ganesh. According to the tale, once Lord Shiva was away from His abode when Maata Parvati wished to have a bath. Thus she created a son from the grime of her body and appointed him to guard the gate that nobody should come in while she was taking bath. Thereafter she began to bathe but meanwhile Lord Shiva arrived and ignoring the boy at the gate, proceeded to enter the palace. The boy stood in front of Him and prevented His entry. Indignantly, Lord Shiva beheaded the boy. When Maata Parvati came to know about the incident, she wailed in despair. For her pleasure, Lord fixed an elephant's head on the torso of the dead boy and revived him. Thus Lord Ganesh came to assume His present appearance.

This incident had a prefixed reason behind it. Once upon a time, Surya had killed the demons, Mali and Sumaali. This infuriated Lord Shiva because Mali and Sumaali were His devotees. So, Lord Shiva launched His trident on Surya. The blow of the trident was unbearable for Surya and he fell from his chariot unconscious.

Seeing that dire condition of his son, sage Kashyap began to wail in agony. All the gods soon accompanied him and began to cry mournfully. Without the regular motion of Surya, the whole world was plunged in darkness. Sage Kashyap cursed Lord Shiva that as from His trident, his son had been hit, one day His own son will be decapitated by His trident. Shiva's anger subsided soon afterwards. He resurrected Surya but because of Kashyap's curse, He had to cut the head of His own son.

The Four Heads Of Brahma ?

With a desire of creating the universe, Brahma began his penance contemplating on Savitri in his heart. During the penance, his own body divided into two parts- half-masculine and half-feminine. The female part later on became popular as Saraswati Shatrupa. Savitri, Gayatri and Brahmani are other names of Shatrupa. But Brahma got so engrossed in his penance that he did not realise the division of his body and birth of Savitri. Though she was his daughter, yet Brahma fell in love with her enchanting beauty. Now Brahma had nothing else to do except looking at the pretty face of Savitri. Thereafter, bowing her head, Savitri greeted Brahma and began to circumambulate him. Still Brahma kept on looking at her. When Savitri reached Brahma's right hand side, a head appeared on his torso and looked at Savitri's face. When Savitri reached Brahma's backside, one more head appeared that looked backward. When Savitri reached Brahma's left hand side, the fourth head appeared in that direction on Brahma's torso. Thus Brahma got four heads but because he had cultivated lustrous feelings for his daughter hence the results of his penance were destroyed.

Six Heads Of Kartikeya ?

Once upon a time, all the three worlds were reeling under the atrocities of the demon Tarkasur. Even the gods were not spared from his wrath. So all the gods approached Brahma and requested him to get them rid of the demon's atrocities. Brahma told them that only the son of Lord Shiva could kill the demon. All the gods then with a purpose of getting Shiva's son arranged for His marriage with Maata Parvati. But even after marriage, thousands of years passed but no son took birth. Then one day all the gods once again approached Lord Shiva to remind Him of His duty. Lord Shiva and Maata Parvati were then enjoying intimacy. The approach of the gods caused a disturbance in their romantic moments. With spread palms, all the gods requested them for a son. Lord Shiva had just ejaculated, so Maata Parvati put His semen on the palm of Agni. Agni drank it without considering the results.

But as a result of drinking Lord's semen, radiance of Agni began to wane. While he was heading towards Brahmaloaka, Agni happened to pass a river Kutila. Agni requested earth to bear the semen and assured her that the semen would produce a fortunate son from her. Hearing these words and with a hope of having a son, Kutila requested Agni to release that semen in her waters. Agni was waiting for this occasion. He at once released Shiva's semen in the waters of Kutila. But Kutila too felt herself unable to bear Lord's semen.

When the radiance of the semen became unbearable for her, she approached Brahma. Brahma asked her to reach Udyachal and release the semen there in the forest of reeds. Thus Kutila reached Udyachal and released the foetus in the forest of reeds.

After ten thousand years, a boy took birth from that foetus. The boy was radiating like the Sun. Lying there amidst the reeds; the baby began to cry emanating thunder-like sound. While the boy was crying six Kritikas happened to pass that way. Seeing a nascent baby in the forest, all six of them descended there. All of them wanted to suckle the baby with her milk. This resulted in a row among them as to who would feed the baby first. Seeing their dispute, the baby acquired six heads and began to suckle their milk simultaneously. That is how Shiva's son Skand came to acquire six heads and known as Shadanan. Since six Kritikas had fed him with their milk he also got the name Karthikeya

WHY SHIVALINGA AND SHALIGRAM DO NOT HAVE LIMBS

The presence of this universe goes to prove the existence of Almighty God because going by the theory of cause and effect, one cannot exist without the another. The creation cannot exist without a creator. It is altogether another matter that our mortal eyes cannot perceive him. The round or oval shape of Shaligram and Shivalinga symbolizes the universe, which is believed to be of the same shape. All the heavenly bodies and planets are in round shape. This is the reason why round shape has been given to the form of Almighty.

TOP

IDOL WORSHIP

The tradition of idol worship has been continuing since time immemorial in our country. Sage Narad had instructed Dhruv to worship the image of Lord Vishnu as a result of which Dhruv was able to realise God. While on his way to Lanka, Lord Rama had established and worshipped a Shivalinga at Rameshwaram.

Although, the Almighty God is both formless and with form, it is difficult to concentrate on his formless appearance unless and until one has mastered the art of concentration by worshipping his 'with form' appearance. So, idol worship works as a stepping stone in the path of God realization. Its importance can be understood by the following example- To attain knowledge, a book is required. Now, knowledge is devoid of any form and shape whereas the book has its shape and size. Similarly, musical instruments that have shapes and size are required to produce musical notes. The taste, which we get from different eatables are the best example of attaining 'formless' with the help of 'with form'.

A map has no importance for an illiterate man and who is not well versed with art of map reading but a man who knows how to read a map can understand all its minutest details. Similarly, for an ignorant man, idol worship appears absurd but for a believer, it is the means by which God can be realized.