

Birth of Lord Ganesha

In every cycle (kaalpa), the story of the birth of Ganesha is told in different ways. The story of the birth of Ganesha in this cycle, Shveta-varaaha kalpa (Divine Boar Cycle), is narrated thus:

Jayaa and Vijayaa, two friends of Shakti Parvati, once discussed with Her that She should create a son to head all of the ganas of Shiva.



Parvati, pleased with the suggestion, resolved to carry it out. The great goddess thought, "There must be a son of my own who will be expert in his duties.

He must not disobey my orders." Thinking thus, goddess Parvati created a person by Her mere will from the dust or dirt of Her own cosmic body. She, being the primordial energy herself, created a boy from the three gunas or triple modes of nature known as sattva (poise), rajas (passion), and tamas (inertia). The boy was spotless and handsome in every limb of His body. He was huge in size and had the brilliance of a thousand suns. He was strong and full of valor.

Shakti Parvati blessed Him and said, "You are my beloved son. You shall carry out my orders obediently." Saying thus, Parvati presented Him with ornaments and clothes.

Ganesha made obeisance to Her and said, "My dear Mother, give me any duty. I shall accomplish whatever you command," Parvati said, "Ganesha, guard my gates from today onwards. You are my own son. Do not allow anyone into my home without my permission." Accordingly, She gave Him a hard stick, kissed and placed Him, armed with that staff, as the gatekeeper at the entrance to Her palace.

Now Parvati began taking Her bath free from worry, At this very moment, Lord Shiva, Her husband, returned to His home and was about to enter the gate, Ganesha stopped Him and said, "without my Mother's permission, you cannot go in now. She is bathing. Wait until She finishes Her bath so I might obtain Her permission for you."

Shiva flew into a rage and said, "Who are you, O wicked knave? Don't you know that I am Shiva, the Lord of the universe? I am the husband of Parvati. This is my abode. Who are you to forbid me to enter?" Speaking thus, Shiva attempted to go inside. Ganesha got angry and struck Him with his hard stick several times. Lord Shiva, furious, stood outside the home and commanded His ganas (attendants) to inquire into the matter. (While following these worldly conversations, we should not forget that the Lord is playing a wonderful sport or leela.) The Shivaganas came and stood to Ganesha. "Listen," they said, "we are the servants of Shiva. We have come here to inquire about you and throw you out. This is Shiva's abode. You had better go away from here."

Ganesha ignored their speech and stood at the gate fearlessly. At the command of Shiva, His ganas, gnashing their teeth and armed with different kinds of weapons, rushed toward him. Nandi the bull

caught hold of one leg and began pulling it. Bhringi caught hold of His other leg. But before they could topple Him, Ganesha struck a blow at their hands and got His legs free.

Standing at the gate, He held a big iron mace and smashed the attendants of Shiva. With crushed foreheads, broken hands, smashed backs, shattered teeth, fractured knees and blasted shoulders, the ganas of Shiva, thousands in number, fled in different directions to protect themselves! Sage Narada, looking on, urged Lord Vishnu, Brahma and Indra to come there at once with all the devatas. Knowing this to be the leela, or the play of Shiva and Shakti, for a specific purpose, all the gods, headed by Brahma, came to attack Ganesha.

To assist Her son, Mother Parvati created two great shaktis. One shakti, assuming a fierce form, stood at the gate and opened her mouth as wide as the cavern of a mountain. The other shakti assumed a huge form as a terrible goddess ready to punish Ganesha's opponents.

The weapons hurled by the gods and Shivaganas were swallowed by the goddess with the wide-open mouth. Lord Ganesha won the battle single-handed. Gasping frequently for breath, being utterly shaken by His blows, the devas retreated and gathered around Lord Shiva.

Lord Shiva returned with a desire to fight Ganesha to the death. When Shiva lifted His trident, lord Ganesha struck His hand with great power. The trident fell and with great anger, Lord Shiva took up His bow, Pinaka. Ganesha felled Shiva's bow to the ground with His iron club, and struck His five hands also. Shiva took up the trident with the other five hands. The five-faced Shiva with His ten arms could not manage to fight with this boy of great shakti. Securing permission from Lord Shiva, Lord Vishnu created clouds of illusion and split the iron club of Ganesha by means of His discus. Then the son of Parvati took up His staff and struck Vishnu, who dramatizing great pain, fell to the ground. But He got up quickly and resumed the fight. Immediately, Lord Shiva saw His opportunity and cut off Ganesha's head with His trident.

Sage Narada broke the sad news to Parvati of the death of Her son. Parvati came running to Shiva and cried bitterly. "Oh, what shall I do? Where shall I go? Alas! How can this great misery be dispelled now?"

Lamenting, goddess Parvati became furious and angrily created hundreds of thousands of shaktis out of Her body instantaneously. Speaking with great fury, she cried, "O shaktis, devour forcibly all these devatas, yabhas and other ganas who have assisted Shiva in killing my son!" ,

At once, the different kinds of shaktis, like Karalis (the terrific), Kubjakas (the hump-backed), Khanjas (the lame), Lambashirshas (the tall-headed) and the other multitudinous powers of goddess Parvati took up the gods with their hands and threw them into their mouths.

Seeing this, Shiva, Brahma, Vishnu, Indra, the ganas and sages headed by Sage Narada, appealed to goddess Parvati. They bowed to Her again and again and propitiated Her with many hymns. They said this prayer, "O Universal Mother, be pleased. Obeisance to You. You are the primordial shakti, and the source of creation. By Your anger, the three worlds are scorched. Shower Your grace and bless the world with peace."

The Divine Mother was pleased with their prayer and said, "If my son Ganesha regains life, is given first place among the devas and is first to be worshipped, then there will be no more destruction. There will

be universal peace. Give him the power that before any action, any endeavor, anywhere, if they remember Ganesha, and offer the prayers to him, their works will be successful, and they will have no trouble or problems."

The gods agreed and intimated to Lord Shiva the wish of Parvati. Lord Shiva said, "It shall be done according to Her wish for the peace of all. Now you devas wash the headless body of Ganesha and I will go in the southern direction. Whatever person or creature I meet first, I shall cut off his head and fit it to this body."

Lord Shiva rushed with His trident towards the southern direction. The great god knew there was a demon of darkness called Gajasura sleeping in the southern direction who had destroyed many sages and fire sacrifices. He cut off the head of the sleeping elephant demon (gajasura) and carried it back.

The devas retrieved the body of Ganesha and after washing it well, took the head of the elephant that Lord Shiva brought and fitted it to the body. After joining it, the gods made obeisance to Shiva. Lord Brahma and Lord Vishnu, on the advice of Lord Shiva, sprinkled holy water upon the body of Ganesha. Immediately, the boy Ganesha woke up as if from a sleep.

Ganesha, with the face of an elephant, the trunk of a human and red complexion, gave joy to everyone. Goddess Parvati was delighted about Her son coming back to life and blessed the world with peace. Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, the holy Trinity, and all the gods (devatas) crowned Ganesha as the supreme leader of the ganas, the angels, archangels, siddhas, devas, planets, divine and human species.

Goddess Parvati bestowed on Him all the siddhis (supernatural powers) and blessed Him lovingly. She said, "My dear son, Ganesha, you will receive worship first before all the gods and even before the Trinity. Vermilion will be your color and you will be worshipped with vermilion (sindhwa) by all devotees everywhere. All wishes of human beings shall be fulfilled by worshipping you with the sixteen modes of worship. All obstacles of theirs shall come to an end."

Thus, Mother Parvati blessed Her son. Then, to show the way of worship of Ganesha, She herself offered worship to Him. By this worship, all obstacles of the devas came to an end. Peace reigned in all the lokas.

Then Mother Parvati placed Ganesha on her lap. Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva blessed Ganesha and worshipped Him. They jointly declared to the devas, "Ganesha is the remover of all obstacles. He is the giver of all fruits from all rites---vidya (wisdom), riddhi (intelligence), and siddhis (the attainments or fulfillment). He shall be worshipped first and we shall be worshipped next or the fruit of all fire sacrifices and rites will be lost. This is the Truth."

Saying thus, Shiva, Vishnu and Brahma worshipped Ganesha respectfully with flowers, rice, sandalwood paste, fruits, food, etc. Thereafter, all the devatas and ganas also worshipped Him with devotion. So it was that the entire kingdom of heaven, the Trinity and their wives and j I all the denizens of heaven, proclaimed Ganesha as the presiding deity over all beings.

Lord Shiva himself conferred very special boons on Lord Ganesha. "O Ganesha, whoever worships you devoutly with songs and acts of service will achieve success in all their endeavors. Their obstacles will be shattered. Your worship vow (vrita) could be observed by and people of all castes and especially by

women for the welfare of their family and children. They a lot will all be blessed with prosperity and good fortune."

Thus Lord Shiva blessed Ganesha. Celestial musicians sang. Celestial nymphs danced and there were flowers showered upon Ganesha. With the installation of Ganesha as the foremost sun deity to be worshipped, the whole universe attained peace. Brahma, Vishnu and all the gods, after paying homage to Shiva and Parvati returned to their abodes.

Whoever listens to or reads this story of Ganesha shall have their wishes fulfilled. The sick will be healed, the poor will become rich, the childless will beget children. Those who want enlightenment and peace will obtain the same by the blessings of Lord Ganesha.

We are all like the image made by the Mother in this body. We are all given a job and a duty and as per the law, we do it. Then when the ego manifests, Shiva consciousness comes and cuts off our ego and darkness. A demon is sleeping in everyone of us, the demon of darkness and ignorance, and when that head is chopped off, the Light alone is brought and thereby kept so our head is filled with the light.