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Sanatan Mandir Cultural Centre's
Baalvidyaalay

Symbolism of Saraswati Maataa and Ganesh Bhagwaan

Reference & Guide

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1. Symbolism of Saraswati Maataa

a. Who is Saraswati Maataa?

Saraswati Maataa is the Goddess of learning, knowledge, and wisdom. The Sanskrit word SARA means "essence" and SWA means "self." Thus, Saraswati means "the essence of the self." Saraswati Maataa is represented in Hinduism as the divine Shakti of Brahmaji, the Creator of the universe. Since knowledge is necessary for creation, Saraswati symbolizes the creative power of Brahma. All persons interested in knowledge especially students, teachers, scholars, and scientists, worship Saraswati Maataa.



b. Prayer Extolling Her Virtues

Yaa kundendu Tushaara-haara-dhavalaa Yaa Shubhra-vastraavritaa
Yaa Veena-varadanda manditakara Yaa Shwetaa Padmaasanaa
Yaa Brahmaachyuta Shankara Prabhritibhihi Devaihi Sada Vanditaa
Saa maam paatu Saraswatee Bhagavatee Nih-shesha jaadyaapahaa



Meaning of and Comment on Prayer

Saraswati Maataa is fair as the Kunde Blossom, the moon, snow and the pearl. She is dressed in a white sari and seated on a white lotus. She has 4 arms representing her divinity. She holds a book and a maala in Her rear two hands, while the front two hands are engaged in the playing of a Veena. Brahmaaji, Vishnu, Shivaa and other gods and goddesses worship her. We pray to Saraswati Maataa to give us knowledge, remove obstacles and protect us.

This symbolism illustrates the following spiritual ideas:

- The lotus is a symbol of the Supreme Reality, and a white lotus denotes supreme knowledge. By sitting on a lotus, Saraswati Maataa signifies that She is Herself rooted in the Supreme Reality, and symbolizes supreme knowledge.
- The two front arms indicate Her activity in the physical world and the two back arms signify Her presence in the spiritual world. The four hands represent the intellect (buddhi), the conditioned consciousness (chitta) and the ego (ahankara).
- A book in the rear left hand signifies that knowledge acquired must be used with love and kindness to promote prosperity of humankind.
- The Mala signifies concentration, meditation, and contemplation, leading to Samadhi, or union with God.
- The Goddess is shown playing a musical instrument that is held in Her front hands, which denote mind and intellect. This symbol conveys we too must tune our minds and intellect in order to live in perfect harmony with the world.
- Two swans are depicted on the left side of the Goddess. A swan is said to have a sensitive beak that enables it to separate pure milk from a mixture of milk and water. A swan, therefore, symbolizes the power and ability of selecting between right and wrong or good and bad.
- Saraswati Maataa uses the swan as her carrier. This indicates that one must acquire and apply knowledge with discrimination for the good of humankind. Knowledge that is dominated by ego can destroy the world.
- A peacock is sitting next to Saraswati Maataa and is anxiously waiting to serve as her vehicle. A peacock depicts unpredictable behavior as its moods can be influenced by the changes in the weather. Saraswati Maataa is using a swan as a vehicle and not the peacock. This signifies that one should overcome fear, indecision, and fickleness in order to acquire true knowledge.



c. Prayer Seeking Her Blessings

So let us recite this prayer to Saraswati Maataa and seek her blessings

Saraswati Namastubhyam
Varde Kaamroopini
Vidya Aarambham Karishyaami
Siddhi Bhavatu May Sadaa

Meaning of Prayer

Oh! Goddess Saraswati of bewitching beauty, I bow to you. You are the bestower of all boons. (With Your Grace) I begin my learning. May your blessings be with me always.

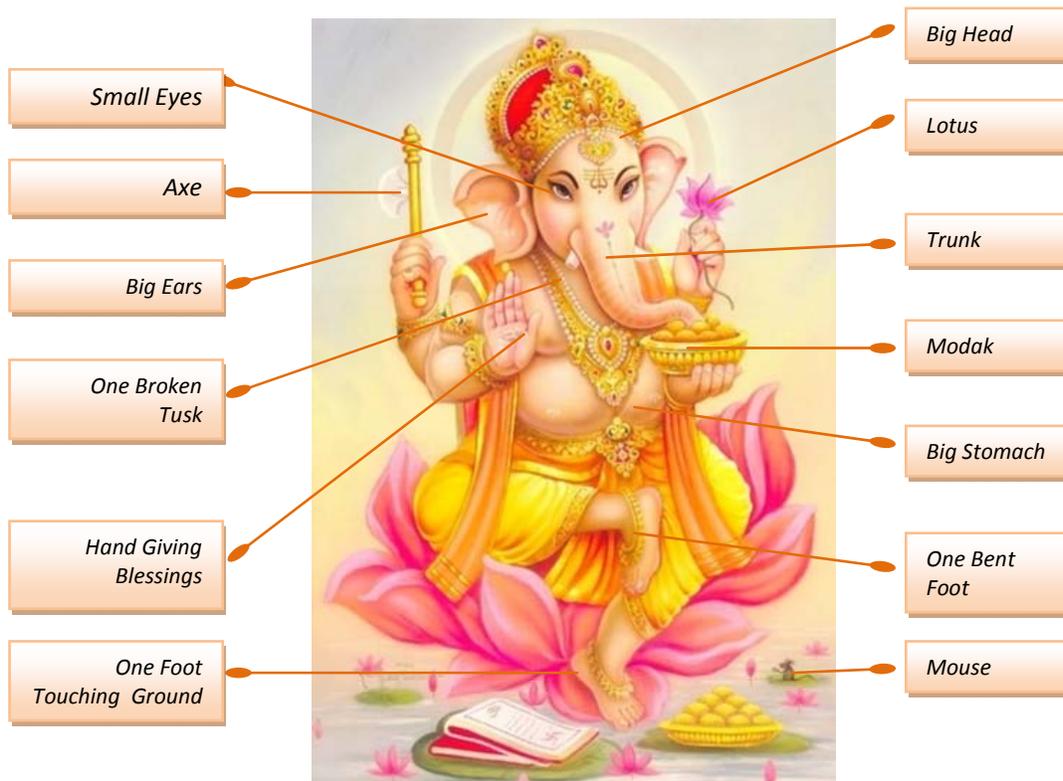


2. Symbolism of Ganesh Bhagwaan

a. Who is Ganesh Bhagwaan?

Ganesh is described as having a human body with and a large elephant's head with large ears, small beady eyes, small mouth and long trunk. One of the tusks is broken. He has a very large stomach. He sits with one leg folded in and one leg rests on the ground. At his feet a variety of food is spread. A rat sits near the food and looks up at him as if it were asking him for some food to eat. He has four arms holding an Axe, a Rope, giving Blessings and one has some Modak. This is the mystical form of Ganesh Bhagwaan

b. The Deeper Meaning



Each part of Ganesh Bhagwaan's image is full of meaning. Here are the key parts.



- Big Head – represents big thinking & supreme wisdom.
- Large ears – represents listening more and gaining wisdom.
- Small Eyes – means he concentrates.
- Small Mouth – means he talks less.
- Long Trunk – represents his intellect.
- One tusk – Means he keeps the good and throws away the bad.
- Large stomach – means he digests all the good and the bad experiences in life.
- Legs – One folded leg up and one leg resting on the ground indicates that he is thinking of the world but at the same time concentrating on God.
- The Plate of Food near his foot – means he is indifferent to wealth, power and prosperity.
- The rat looking up at him – means desire, greed and too much activity is under control.
- Axe – to cut of all the bad things in world.
- Rope – to pull us near to God.
- Blessings – Blesses us and protects us from bad so we can reach God.
- Modak – Prasad for remembering God and being good.

This is the true symbolism behind Ganesh Bhagwaan.