



DEMI-GODS

Lord Swaminarayan is the greatest of all (Avtarna avtari), god of gods. Lord Swaminarayan gives powers to the following demi-gods to perform their respectable activities.

Brahma

Brahma is the creator in the sense that he creates the world and its beings to exist. Brahma's consort is Savitri and Sarasvati, the Goddess of learning and music respectively. Brahma rides on Hansa, a swan. In Indian art, Brahma is represented with four faces, one looking to each of the points of the compass. These faces represent the four Vedas or books of sacred hymns.

Notes:

- Talk about the creation of Brahma – He came out from the naval (nabhi) of Purshottum Narayan.
- Talk about the existence of millions of Brahma each assigned to different universes.

Vishnu

Vishnu is the preserver. He behaves as a lawful, devout Hindu, and protects and sustains all that is good in the world. Vishnu's vehicle is Garudji. Vishnu's consort is the beautiful Laxmi who came from the sea and is the Goddess of Wealth. She is often represented sitting on a lotus flower. When evil prevails Lord Vishnu incarnates himself on earth hence the ten avatar's of Vishnu.

- See if your group can name the different avatar's of Vishnu?

Shiva

Shiva is the deity of death and destruction, without which growth and rebirth could not take place. Shiva has a third eye on the centre of his forehead, which opens only when he is extremely angry and has destructive powers. His matted hair carries the Goddess Ganga down to earth. Shiva is often worshipped in the form of lingam, a black stone. Shiva's consort is Parvati, daughter of the Himalaya

Ganesh

Ganesh is the son of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati. When Lord Shiva left home and went to the remote peak of Mount Kailash, he left behind his wife Parvati. He sat for many years in deep meditation and at home Parvati was depressed in the absence of Lord Shiva.



To fill the missing companionship of Shiva, Parvati with the will of Lord Shiva created a son with the qualities of both parents. This child was named Ganesh. However, Lord Shiva was not aware of the existence of Ganesh.

When Lord Shiva at last returned from Mount Kailash, he found himself barred from his own home by an unknown boy claiming to be the son of Parvati. Ganesh had been told by Parvati not to let anyone into the house whilst she was bathing. A quarrel began between Lord Shiva and Ganesh, which eventually ended with Lord Shiva chopping Ganesh's head off, which travelled into distant space.

Lord Shiva told Parvati what he had done and realised that the boy he killed was actually his son. In grief, he ordered his attendants to bring the head of the first living creature they saw. Obeying Lord Shiva's order they returned with the head of an elephant. Taking the head, Lord Shiva placed it on to the body of Ganesh and brought him back to life.

Parvati did not like the appearance of Ganesh, now with the elephant head, and was annoyed with Lord Shiva. In remorse, Lord Shiva gave Ganesh blessings that he will be worshipped first in any ceremony that will be undertaken from now on.

Ganesh has great spiritual significance for Hindus. He is considered to be a remover of obstacles and represents wisdom and perfection. We worship Ganesh before commencing any new chapter in life, bringing good luck and defeating evil.

Notes:

- It is important to stress the fact that we are all under Swaminarayan Bhagwan and everything is in his control. These demi-gods are all working under Lord Swaminarayan's Supervision. As written in the Vachnamrut, Purshottum Narayan himself came down and created the world up to the tiniest blade of grass. He then appointed Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva to see the running of the different universes.
- Hence there is only one god but he can be seen in different forms, do not be mistaken by the fact that he has many forms they are all different gods.