Lord Muruga was created for a purpose. He was created to destroy a demon, called Soorapathma. Soorapathma prayed to Shiva to have eternal life, so Shiva granted his wish. Using this power, Soorapathma tried to take over Earth and treated people as his slaves. Soorapathma was invincible; Shiva then issued six sparks from his third eye on his forehead, which fell into the lake ‘Saravanappoigai’. These sparks turned into six beautiful babies and were looked after by six heavenly maidens. When Goddess Parvathi desired a son, Lord Shiva pointed out these six babies. Parvathi was delighted by the sight of the six beautiful babies, so she gathered them in her arms, upon which the children came together forming one body with six faces thereby earning the name Arumgum (Aru - six; mugum- face) in Tamil and in Sanskrit Shadanan (Shad - six anan-faces). His other names are Karthikayen, Skanthen, Kumaren, Velaven, Shanmugar, Subramunia and Murugan and so on. When lord Muruga reached his adolescence, he was made the head of the army of the Devas and was instructed by Lord Shiva to defeat Soorapathma and free the Devas. He came down to Thiruchender and set up his camp. From here, he prayed to the Goddess Sakthi to grant him special powers in order to kill Soorapathma. In response, he was given a ‘vel’ (Spear), which embodied him all the divine powers bestowed upon him. First he sent his assistant Veerabahu for mediation. When the mediation failed, the battle commenced. The battle continued for ten days.

During the battle the asuras felled all the Devas (angels) who were also fighting under the leadership of Murugan. This is why Muruga is also known as Deva Senapathi - Deva means angels, senapathi means commander. Lord Shiva and Shiva’s consort Parvathi came as a Doctor and nurse respectively to revive the Devas. The location where this happened now has a temple called “Vaideeshwara” temple. Vaidya means doctor, Ishwara refers to Shiva, and the mother form there is known as Thaiyal nayaki, Thaiyal means stitching in Tamil, while nayaki means the mother or queen. This refers to Parvathi who as a nurse stitched all the gashes and cuts that the Devas received in the battle.

After fighting the asuras, lord Murga finally came face to face with Soorapathma. Soorapathma took various forms in order to confuse him and evade defeat. Finally he took a form as a huge Vanni tree and tried to attack.
Then lord Muruga used the vel (Spear) to hit Soorapathma and split him into two pieces. He turned one half into a peacock and the other half into a Cock fowl. He used the peacock as a vehicle, which is also capable of destroying harmful serpents and the rooster as an emblem on his flag. Muruga fought the battle with Surasura non-stop for six days, to save humanity. This is remembered with gratefulness now as “Skanda Shasti “, meaning six days for Skanda (another name for Murugan). During this period we fast during the day and pray to Murugan for salvation.

We are more familiar with the deity forms of Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, Durga, Lakshmi, Saraswathi etc. and even their functions in the Hindu Pantheon. What is Muruga’s function and what to devotees pray to Muruga. Our Upanishads declare that the greatest prayer is the prayer for Liberation from attachments and hence our birth-death cycles.

The Thirupugzh hymns composed by Saint Arunagirinathar of Tamilnadu says that Muruga “kills” your mind, leads you to Shiva who provides you Gnana - the wisdom to know the ultimate truth , that we are all from GOD and we the Atma-soul.

Muruga’s birth also clearly shows us that God will always answer sincere prayers of his devotees and will protect the Good against evil.

Ganga Narendranathan
Perth, Western Australia

Note to the Readers

O Aum Muruga Society encourages all Hindu children to write short articles on Hinduism related topics.

O If your child wishes to write, please send the articles to Dr. Ravi via email. R.Ravindra@ts.edu.au.

O Selected articles will be considered for the publication on the quarterly Aum Muruga Journal.

O This is a community service project

O Visit the websites


http://www.eng.uts.edu.au/~ravir under Personal