

Lord ganesha the
remover of obstacles
theology religion
essay



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Lord Ganesha is a Hindu deity that has a human body and the head of an elephant. He has the power to remove obstacles and ensure success in every human endeavor. This is the reason Hindus worship Ganesha first before beginning any religious, spiritual or worldly activity. According to Hindu mythology, Lord Ganesha is the first son of Lord Shiva and the Divine Mother Parvati. There are several stories of how Lord Ganesha came into existence, one story tells of Mother Parvati going to take a bath. She told Nandi the attendant to stand guard outside her door and not let anyone in under any circumstances until she had finished taking a bath. Just as the goddess began to take her bath, she heard footsteps approaching. Soon, much to her dismay Lord Shiva walked into the room. Mother Parvati turned red with embarrassment having being seen in this state. At the same time she was furious with Nandi the attendant for disobeying her strict orders not to let anyone in the room. Mother Parvati told Lord Shiva that she had instructed Nandi the attendant not to let anyone in the room until she was done taking a bath. Lord Shiva burst out with laughter and explained to his furious wife that Nandi could not have stopped him from coming in because he was the master of the house. That day Mother Parvati decided to create someone that would obey her commands and nobody else. The next day while she was taking a bath, she rubbed of some oils and dirt from her body and created a statue of a little boy. Mother Parvati chanted a mantra and breathe the breath of life into the statue of the boy. The boy was very handsome and was eager to obey her every wish. She gave him the name of Ganesha and called him her son. Having him around while Lord Shiva was off on his long hunting trips made her very happy. Mother Parvati gave Ganesha orders to guard the home and not to let anyone in under any circumstances. One day

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while Mother Parvati was bathing, she gave Ganesha strict orders to guard the front door of the house, and not to let anyone in under any circumstances. Now Lord Shiva had been gone hunting for a long time and had no idea Mother Parvati had created a little boy, their first son. He came home soon after Mother Parvati had given Ganesha the orders to not let anyone in. Ganesha not knowing his father, firmly told Lord Shiva that he could not enter the home under any circumstances. Lord Shiva was perplexed and calmly informed the guardian in front of his home that he was The Mighty Lord Shiva god of gods and the master of the home that he is guarding. Ganesha replied “ with great respect you are mistaken, I have been created and charged with the protection of this house and you will not enter! I must obey the orders given to me by my Mother. Lord Shiva asked the boy “ who is your mother?” Ganesha replied, my mother is the great goddess Mother Parvati. Lord Shiva burst out laughing and said “ I am her husband and master of this house. Step aside! I do not require permission to enter my wife’s room!” Ganesha stood firm and still would not Lord Shiva enter the room. This made Lord Shiva extremely angry, so he ordered Nandi the attendant to remove the boy from the door at once. Nandi tried several times to remove the boy from the door but Ganesha defeated him every time and finally Nandi gave up and told Lord Shiva that the boy was too strong and he could not remove him from the door. This made Lord Shiva even more furious. He ordered 10 of his best guards to remove the boy from the door but Ganesha was a skilled fighter and easily defeated all 10 guards at the same time. Seeing this, Lord Shiva’s anger knew no bounds, he decided to take matters in his own hands. Lord Shiva replied “ young fool you have made a grave mistake for I will no longer ask you to step aside I

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will remove you myself!" And with that Lord Shiva produced his trident, three razor sharp points at the end of a long spear. Ganesha made ready with his gada a huge war mace and the fight began. They were both skilled warriors and highly skilled and neither could get the upper hand. Lord Shiva would swing his spear at Ganesha who would leap nimbly over it and swing his gada down to crush Lord Shiva's skull but Lord Shiva would lean to one side and thrust with his trident but Ganesha would duck low and swing his gada low to crush Lord Shiva's knees. Neither one could best the other until Lord Shiva used his powers of illusion to distract Ganesha for just an instant and in that instant Lord Shiva swung his trident around and cut Ganesha's head clean off and he fell dead. At this moment Mother Parvati emerged from her house and surveyed the battle field, and surmising what had occurred, the goddesses fury spread throughout the universe she said to Lord Shiva " you have killed our only son!" The skies began to tremble the oceans began to boil, huge mountains crumbled into dust and harsh winds engulfed the land. The gods were terrified at the spectacle they begged Lord Shiva to do something to calm Mother Parvati down. Lord Shiva pleaded with Mother Parvati and told her that if she would not calm down she would destroy the whole universe. Lord Shiva promised her that he would bring their son back to life. He reminded Mother Parvati that she was the Mother of the entire universe and all the beings were her children. After listening to Lord Shiva's promise, Mother Parvati began to calm down. But she demanded that her son be brought back to life and be the leader of all Ganas. She insisted that this boy be worshiped first in every prayer before any other gods were worshiped. Lord Shiva agreed to her demands he ordered Nandi the attendant to bring back the head of the first living creature with its head

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facing the North. Nandi soon after he went out found an elephant sleeping with his head facing the North. He cut off his head and took it to Lord Shiva. Lord Shiva put the head on the lifeless body of the boy, chanted a mantra and soon the boy came back to life. The gods sang his praises and his parents blessed him and Ganesha became beloved by everyone.

1 Lord Ganesha as the blend of human and animal parts symbolizes the ideals of perfection as conceived by Hindu sages and illustrates some philosophical concepts of profound spiritual significance.

Elephant head, wide mouth, and large ears: the large head of an elephant symbolizes wisdom, understanding, and a discriminating intellect that one must possess to attain perfection in life. The wide mouth represents the natural human desire to enjoy life in the world. The large ears signify that a perfect person is the one who possesses a great capacity to listen to others and assimilate ideas.

The trunk and two tusks with the left tusk broken: there is no known human instrument that has an operating range as wide as that of an elephant's trunk. It can uproot a tree and yet lift a needle off the ground. Likewise, the human mind must be strong enough to face the ups and downs of the external world and yet delicate enough to explore the subtle realms of the inner world. The two tusks denote the two aspects of the human personality, wisdom and emotion. The right tusk represents wisdom and the left tusk represents emotion. The broken left tusk conveys the idea that one must conquer emotions with wisdom to attain perfection.

Elephant eyes: the elephant eyes are said to possess natural deceptiveness that allows them to perceive objects to be bigger than what they really are. Thus the elephant eyes symbolize the idea that even if an individual gets “bigger and bigger” in wealth and wisdom, he should perceive others to be bigger than himself; that is, surrender one’s pride and attain humility.

The four arms and various objects in the four hands: the four arms indicate that the Lord is omnipresent and omnipotent. The left side of the body symbolizes emotion and the right side symbolizes reason. An axe in the upper left hand and a lotus in the upper right hand signify that in order to attain spiritual perfection, one should cut worldly attachments and conquer emotions. This enables one to live in the world without being affected by earthly temptations, just as a lotus remains in water but is not affected by it. A tray of Laddus (a popular snack) near the Lord denotes that He bestows wealth and prosperity upon His devotees. The lower right hand is shown in a blessing pose, which signifies that Ganesha always blesses His devotees.

A human body with a big belly: the human body possesses a human heart, which is a symbol of kindness and compassion toward all. Ganesha’s body is usually portrayed wearing red and yellow clothes. Yellow symbolizes purity, peace and truthfulness. Red symbolizes the activity in the world. These are the qualities of a perfect person who performs all duties in the world, with purity, peace, and truthfulness. The big belly signifies that a perfect individual must have a large capacity to face all pleasant and unpleasant experiences of the world.

A mouse sitting near the feet of Ganesha and gazing at the tray of Laddus: a mouse symbolizes the ego that can nibble all that is good and noble in a person. A mouse sitting near the feet of Ganesha indicates that a perfect person is one who has conquered his (or her) ego. A mouse gazing at the Laddus, but not consuming them, denotes that a purified or controlled ego can live in the world without being affected by the worldly temptations. The mouse is also the vehicle of Ganesha, signifying that one must control ego in order for wisdom to shine forth.

Right foot dangling over the left foot: as stated above, the left side of the body symbolizes emotion and the right side symbolizes reason and knowledge. The right foot dangling over the left foot illustrates that in order to live a successful life one should utilize knowledge and reason to overcome emotions.

Ganesha Chaturthi is a festival where Hindu's celebrate the birth of Lord Ganesha. It is observed during the Hindu month of Bhadra (mid-August to mid-September). The celebration can last up to 10 days. 2-3 months before the celebration, life like clay idols ranging from 3/4th of an inch to 25 feet tall are created for the festival. On the day of the festival, idols are placed on raised platforms in homes or tents for people to view and pay their respect to the Hindu deity. For 10 days, from Bhadrapad Shudh Chaturthi to the Ananta Chaturdashi, Ganesha is worshipped. On the 11th day, the image is taken through the streets in a procession accompanied with dancing, singing, to be immersed in a river or the sea symbolizing a ritual see-off of the Lord in his journey towards his abode in Kailash while taking away with him the misfortunes of all man. All join in this final procession shouting “
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Ganapathi Bappa Morya, Purchya Varshi Laukariya” (O father Ganesha, come again early next year). After the final offering of coconuts, flowers and camphor is made, people carry the idol to the river to immerse it. It’s usually a joyful time for all but it does have very serious consequences.

Each year in India and other countries that celebrate Ganesha Chaturthi, tons of idols are immersed in fresh waters throughout the festival. Beaches are usually littered with rotten leaves, twigs, clothes made for the idols, puja material, and broken idols of Lord Ganesha all washed ashore by the waves. Clean up usually takes few days. A day after idols of Lord Ganesha were immersed in the Yamuna, water production at two of the Capital’s water treatment plants had to be scaled down on account of pollutants floating in the waters. 3The Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB) has slapped a ban on immersion of idols made of chemicals and inorganic paints in water bodies during the ensuing Vinayaka Chaturthi celebrations. The immersion of idols made of chemicals like plaster of paris and chemical paints will result in water pollution and affects the environment and hence the directive,’ he added. Mr. Kannan said that the Board had identified eight places in the district to immerse the Ganesha idols used for worshipping during the festival. Over the years, Plaster of Paris has replaced clay as the material for making the idols of Lord Vinayaka. Oil-based and synthetic colors are being increasingly used to paint the idols instead of eco-friendly natural colors and vegetable colors. This is resulting in the destruction of our rich marine wealth and polluting our coastal waters. A visit to the beach a few days after immersion is enough to gauge the amount of pollution. 4To prevent pollution of water bodies, the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board has arranged for

mobile water tanks present to for the immersion of Ganesha idols. The devotees can immerse the Ganesha idols in the mobile water tank near Ganapathi temple in Hosamane area. 5In Berhampur A youth of the city has made an idol of Lord Ganesha for a puja pandal using only eco-friendly material. There is a collected effort to create awareness about pollution of water bodies caused due to immersion of Ganesh idols made of plaster of Paris and painted with harmful synthetic paints. Green Yatra (www.greenyatra.org) is a company that has a plan for a safe and environmentally friendly Ganesha Chaturthi celebration called Go Green Ganesha. Go Green Ganesha is a fight against using harmful materials, such as Plaster of Paris (PoP) for Ganesha Idols. Its main goal is to save our marine life and environment by adopting Go Green Ganesha (eco-friendly) idols as an environment-saving alternative to the harmful Plaster of Paris (PoP) Ganesha idols that are widely used during the Ganesha festival a cultural and religious celebration of India. Along with creating awareness, we also provide solutions by introducing Go Green Ganesha (Eco friendly Ganesha Idols). This year, we are planning to introduce even more powerful, logical, strategically, and practical solutions to replace Plaster of Paris's (PoP) Ganesha Idols with eco-friendly bio degradable Go Green Ganesha idols. Some of the few prominent supporters of Go Green Ganesha 2010 were 93. 5 RED FM, MPs Mr. Milind Deora, Mr. Sanjay Nirupam, Mayor of Mumbai-Mrs. Shradha Jadhav, Mayor of New Mumbai-and Mr. Sagar Naik, respected social activists such as Dr. Ravi Kant Singh (SARRC).

Lord Ganesha is one of the five major deities in Hinduism. He is loved by millions and worshiped all over the world. He has many names like: Ganapati

= Lord of All Ganas (Gods), Akhurath = One who has Mouse as His Charioteer, Chaturbhuj = One who has Four Arms, Durja = Invincible Lord and Vighnahara = Remover of Obstacles. He is the elephant god that can remove all obstacles.