

Vigneshwara

Religion



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Vigneshwara, one of the popular deities worshipped by members of most Indian religions. It is Maharashtra's most important festival. Ganapathy is also the God of Knowledge and is invoked at the commencement of any function. He is the god that protects his devotees from any obstacles (vighnam). Hence the name Vighneswara. He is also described as the Supreme Leader (Vinayaka). Ganapathy is said to have had two spouses. Buddhi (intellect) and Siddhi (achievement). Thus he is the master of knowledge and achievement. Probably, a combination of Sidhhi and Vinayak have given Mumbai's most famous Ganesh temple the name of Siddhivinayak. His parents were Siva and Parvati.

Legend has it that Ganapathy himself wrote the Mahabharata, to the dictation of Guru Veda Vyasa. He is also considered the most intelligent. A challenge was thrown to brothers Ganapathy and Karthikeya by Sage Narada. The challenge was whoever went around the globe first would have the fruit first. Karthikeya went around the world which took quite some time while Ganapathy went round his parents thrice and claimed the fruit. The logic he gave was that since his parents represented the universe he had gone round them.

Now do not look at this story as a rational logical person but try and understand the thought behind it. It is to do with the use of the Intellect. Ganapathy used it to know what the Sage meant while his brother took the Sage ka order at face value. Similarly in our lives we must learn to use our Intellect (the ability to discriminate between right and wrong) and look at the deeper meanings of things. Using our intellect will force us to make

decisions, right or wrong, time will tell. If wrong, so what, we will learn by our mistakes. The key is to try.

Ganesh Puja was prevalent in Maharashtra since the ancient times. We owe it to Bal Gangadhar Tilak for reviving it. He used to unite the people and arouse them against the misdeeds of foreign rule. Its popularity has only grown in recent times. The annual ceremony at Chowpatty (Mumbai ka beach) gets lacs of people wanting to have a dekho at the Elephant God being immersed into the Arabian Sea.

Lord Ganesh is worshipped in different forms in India and abroad. At Jabbalpore the Lord appears in a female form. At Srisailam in Andhra Pradesh he appears as playing a flute.

He is worshipped as Mahabini in Borneo, Totkar in Mongolia, Tchoprak in Tibet, Brahganesh in Cambodia, Kwanshidiyik in China, and Vinayaksha in Japan. Vaishnavites call him Vishwak Sena. There is a rock cut temple in King-Hsein in China for him. With five faces he is worshipped in Nepal. In a Yogic pose of meditation he attracts the people of Java. He can truly be said to be India's international God.

Taking his example I would urge Indians to be outward looking. India prospered when its interaction with the world was at its zenith. Let's shed our inhibitions and complexes of the Nehruvian Era and participate in the world as Equals, second to none.

As Ekadanta, the Lord has limitless powers. As Heramba, he removes obstacles. As Lambodara, He protects all worlds. As Surpa Karna, He shows

compassion by giving the highest knowledge. All these names for Lord Vinayaka, who is the Lord of all.

The Lord has four hands. In one hand he has a rope while in another he has an axe. With the axe he cuts off the attachment of his devotees to the world of plurality and thus end all the sorrows that go with it. The rope is used to pull the devotee close and closer to the Truth. In a third hand he holds a rice ball that represents the joys of Sadhana. With the other hand he blesses his devotees and protects them from obstacles that they may encounter on their Spiritual path of seeking the Supreme.