

# श्री सनातन धर्म सभा – दक्षिण आफ्रिका

**Shree Sanathan Dharma Sabha of South Africa**

Established 1941

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## Ganesh Chaturthi



Ganesh Chaturthi is observed to mark the appearance day of Lord Ganesh on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thithi (day), of the Shuklapaksh (Bright Fortnight) of the month of Bhadrapada (Normally Aug/Sept of each year).

The following is a mantra from the Rg Veda:

ॐ गणानां त्वा गणपतिं हवामहे कविं कवीनामुपमश्रवस्तमम्।

ज्येष्ठराजं ब्रह्मणां ब्रह्मणस्पत आ नः शृण्वन्नूतिभिः सीद सादनम् ॥ ऋग्वेद २.२३.१

om gaṇānāṃ tvā gaṇapatiṃ havāmahe kavim kavīnāmupamaśravastamam |

jyēṣṭharājam brahmaṇām brahmaṇaspata ā naḥ śṛṇvannūtibhiḥ sīda sādānam | |

rgveda 2.23.1

*The purport of this mantra is: We invoke Ganapati, the most respectable Lord and protector of all, the knower of Truth in its entirety among all truth-seers and the most praiseworthy and most brilliant.*

Ganesh is the son of Lord Shiva, brother of Kartikeya. According to Vyaasdev (Brahma Vaivarta Purana, Ganapati Kanda 9.8), Ganesh is none other than Lord Krishna himself. Parvati engaged in a special type of Vrat (fast or penance) called Supunyak Vrat, with the aim of having a child as beautiful

and Divine as Krishna himself. In every Kalpa (completion of 4 yugas), Krishna appears as the son of Parvati. (Brahma Vaivarta Purana, Ganapati Kanda 8.82). Ganesh is therefore a combination of 3 Principle deities of Sanathan Dharma VIZ Vishnu, Shiva and Parvati. The fact that Parvathi engaged in vrat for the purpose of being blessed with a child supports the Hindu idea of observing 16 Sanskaars or Sacraments (one of which is the Garbhadāna Sanskaar) that help develop the Human Being into a Divine Being who will be an asset to his family, society, country and the universe.

According to Sadhu Rangarajan (Yuva Bharathi 1975), "Legends are many as to how Ganesh got this therianthropomorphic form. But wise youth will ponder over the symbolic representation of the *Ganesh Tattva*. Ganesh stands for clarity of mind. For the clarity of the mind, a large head which can conceive and understand the Vedic truths is required. And the ears should be wide enough to hear clearly the *srutis*. The long trunk stands for the power of discrimination which can solve gross problems in the outer world, which are similar to lifting of heavy weight, and also be employed in the subtle realms of inner personality layers, which can be compared to plucking small blades of grass. His pot-belly stands for the capacity of the mind to digest all sorts of experiences--pleasant or unpleasant. Thus, every aspect of his form is a symbolic representation of an aspect of the perfected mind, the *pranava swaroopa*. Similarly, every action attributed to Lord Ganesh also represents some subtle truth. His riding the mouse points out that a perfected mind can ride over and control desires which run towards sense objects. His circumambulating the Divine Parents and thus defeating his brother in a race round the world signifies that all knowledge is encompassed by the realization of the Supreme Wisdom.

If rightly understood, Hindu religion is not merely a faith with a plethora of gods and goddesses or different modes of worship. Each god stands for a *tattva* and once it is rightly understood, the worth of Hinduism as a universal religion, which crosses the barriers of country and clime, castes and creeds,

can be realized. Let us hope that our intelligent youth will strive to understand the real meaning and significance of Hinduism.”



The worship of Ganesh is included in Deity worship and Yagya first. Lord Narayan enjoins in the Brahma Vaivarta Puran: The worship of Ganesh removes all the obstructions of the universe. By adoring Surya, one is freed from ailments, by adoring Vishnu; one gets purified, by adoring Siva, one gets moksha and all his sins leave him. By adoring Agni, the mind is purified. By adoring Durga, one is blessed with the means and intellect of worshipping God. In all the three worlds, one gets the full benefit of worship if all these deities are worshipped.

On Ganesh Chaturthi, one should arise early and start worship at Brahma Muhurtha (the period just before sunrise). Ganesh is worshipped with the prescribed 16 types of offerings according to one's means. The pastimes of Ganesh indicate that sweet modak (laddoo) is one of his favourite eatables. After worship, these blessed eatables are distributed to devotees for their benefit. One should then chant a sacred mantra as many times as possible.

ॐ एकदन्ताय विद्महे वक्रतुन्दाय धीमहि तन्नो दन्ति प्रचोदयात्

om ekadantāya vidmahe vakratundāya dhīmahi tanno danti pracodayāt

Chanting of this mantra with meditation and faith is said to bring complete success (dharma, artha, kaama and moksha). Stotras, (divine hymns) dedicated to Ganesh are also recited. Singing of bhajans and offering of ahuthees into the fire (Homa or Hawan) are also prescribed.

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