



## Ganesha (Vinayaka) Chathurthi Festival Details

Festival Aspects	Festival Details
Religion	Hinduism
Title	Ganesha (Vinayaka) Chathurthi
Description	<p>Ganesha Chathurthi is the day people offer their homage, adoration, and worship by remembering Lord Ganesha (also known by Ganapathi, Vinayaka) and singing His glories.</p> <p>The annual worship of Lord Ganesha takes place on the 4<sup>th</sup> day of the bright half of <i>Bhadrapada</i> (the sixth month of the Hindu Calendar) Celebration takes place over 10 days.</p>
Spiritual Significance	<p>The essential purpose of Ganesha Chathurthi festival is to teach an individual to avoid the company of bad people and cultivate the company of the good. It is an occasion for people to purify their minds and to remind men of their inherent divinity and awakening in them the sense of oneness of all mankind.</p> <p>Whether a person achieves eminence or goes down depends on the kind of people with whom he associates. However, students should not associate with fair-weather friends. The only true friend is God. All others are friends only for their own selfish purposes. God is always with you, in you and around you. He will not give you up in any circumstance. But if your heart is polluted, God will leave you. There is no room in a polluted heart for God. The Ganapathi festival is an occasion for people to purify their minds. People generally tend to see in others the faults which they themselves have. Thereby they try to cover up their own defects by attributing the same defects to others. This is a bad quality. A man can improve only by recognising his faults and not by seeing the same faults in others. You must see what is good in others and look at your own defects. Only such a person can improve. Man does violence to his human nature by ignoring his defects and magnifying the faults in others. This trait is widely prevalent among students today. Students should aim at achieving harmony in thought, word and deed.</p> <p>Easwara's family consists of Shiva, Parvathi, Ganapathi and Subrahmanya. When you consider the vehicles of the four, you find that by nature they are antagonistic to each other. Shiva's vehicle is Nandi (the Bull). Parvathi's vehicle is the lion. By nature the bull and the lion are inimical towards each other. On Easwara's head there is Ganga. In His forehead He has fire. There is natural antagonism between water (in the Ganga) and fire in the Lord's forehead. Ganapathi has the elephant's face and His vehicle is a rat. There is a natural antagonism between Parvathi's lion and Ganapathi's elephant-head. Likewise there is natural enmity between the serpent around Easwara's neck and Ganapathi's vehicle, the rat. There is also enmity between Shiva's serpent and Subrahmanya's peacock. In spite of the natural enmity of these different</p>



	<p>vehicles of Easwara's family, there is no discord at all among them. Perfect harmony prevails among the members of the family and their different vehicles. This harmony and unity is an example to the world. Unity is essential for achieving good things.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 25, #27 (1992)</p> <p>Students! Realise that you have a conscience that is your guide and consciousness which represents your divinity. Ganapathi, who presides over the senses, should be your guide in acquiring mastery over the senses. There is an inner meaning in worshipping Ganapathi for ten days. The idea is that each day should be dedicated to acquiring control over one of the <i>Indhriyas</i> (sense organs).</p> <p>Students and devotees should realise that control of the senses is quite simple. What is necessary is not to encourage negative feelings when they arise, but to adopt positive attitudes. For instance, Buddha confronted the anger of a demon with his love and transformed him. Many students today are subject to depression and are confused in mind. The reason for this is their weakness owing to lack of self-confidence. When there is total faith in God there will be no room for depression.</p> <p>Students! There is need for observing festivals like Vinayaka Chaturthi for external satisfaction, but what is more important is to realise the inner significance of Vinayaka worship which is likely to have lasting effect. The worship of inanimate idols should lead to contemplation on the subtle spiritual entity represented by the idol. This is the process by which realisation of the Atma (Self) takes place. Realise and act on the basis that the living Divinity is within you, Ganapathi represents the ideal person who is guided by intelligence and wisdom. Engage yourself in acts which will please the Divine such as moderation in speech, giving up ill-will and hatred and eschewing all bad thoughts and restraint on desires. By combining spiritual practices with academic studies make your life fruitful.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 30, #20 (1997)</p>
Prayer	<p><b>Prayer:</b>  <i>Vakratunda Mahakaya Surya Koti Sama Prabha; Nirvighnam Kuru  Me Deva Sarva Karyesu Sarvada</i></p> <p><b>Meaning:</b> O Lord with the curved trunk, mighty body, and effulgence of billions of suns, always remove all obstacles from all our endeavors at all times.</p> <p><b>Prayer:</b>  <i>Om Gam Ganapathaye Namaha</i></p> <p><b>Meaning:</b> My salutations to Lord Ganesh</p>



	<p><b>Prayer:</b>  <i>Gajananam Bhuta Ganadhi Sevitam  Kapittha Jambu Palasara Bhaksitam    Uma Sutam Shoka Vinasha Karanam  Namami Vignesvara Pada Pankajam   </i></p> <p><b>Meaning:</b>  1: (I Salute) Sri <i>Gajananam</i> (Who is having an Elephant Face ), Who is Served by the <i>Bhuta Ganas</i> (Celestial Attendants or Followers) and Others,  2: Who Eats the Core of <i>Kapittha</i> (Wood Apple) and <i>Jambu</i> (Rose Apple) Fruits,  3: Who is the Son of Devi Uma (Devi Parvati) and the Cause of Destruction of Sorrows,  4: I Prostrate at the Lotus-Foot of Vigneshwara (the God Who Removes Obstacles ).</p> <p><b>Prayer:</b>  <i>Shuklambaradharam Vishnum Shashivarnam Chaturbhujam,  Prasanna Vadanam Dhyayeth Sarva Vighnopashantaye</i></p> <p><b>Meaning:</b>  Here is the literal meaning of the words and the inner significance as given by our Beloved Swami:  <i>Shuklambaradharam</i>: One who is clad in white. White signifies purity.  <i>Vishnum</i>: Vishnu, in Sanskrit, means one who is omnipresent. Ganesha pervades all.  <i>Shashivarnam</i>: One with a grey complexion (<i>vibhuti</i>). <i>Vibhuti</i> also refers to glorious divine powers.  <i>Chaturbhujam</i>: One who has four hands. These four hands represent the four aspects of Ganesha’s compassion and benevolence. He holds the <i>pasha</i> (rope) in one of the hands to pull us toward God when we adore Him or put us into bondage when we forget Him. The second hand carries the trident, used to redeem the good and punish the bad. The third hand is the <i>varadahasta</i> or boon-bestowing hand. The fourth hand is <i>abhayahasta</i>, or the hand bestowing fearlessness to devotees. In other versions, the fourth hand carries a mace, a tusk, or a steam-boiled sweet (<i>modaka</i>)  <i>Prasanna Vadanam Dhyayeth</i>: We meditate on Lord Ganesha, who has a pleasant and smiling face. Swami’s ABC of life is ‘Always Be Cheerful.’ He would often say, “Have a smiling face. Don’t have a long face or a ‘castor oil face’ (a face with a grimace when one is given castor oil as a laxative).”  <i>Sarva Vighnopashantaye</i>: Removes all obstacles (when we act right) to make us progress in the right direction.  - SSSIO Sathya Sai - The Eternal Companion (Volume 2, Issue 9, September 2023)</p>
Purpose of Rituals	Devotees revel in making different idols of Lord Ganesha for worship. These idols are immersed in water at the end of the festival. Special kind of food is made as an offering on this day using sesame seeds, rice flour, and jaggery.



	<p>Ganesha is also offered coconut, jaggery, and 21 <i>modaks</i> (sweet dumplings), considered to be Ganesha's favorite food. At the conclusion of the festival, the idols are carried to local rivers in huge processions accompanied by drumbeats, devotional singing, and dancing, and are immersed in ponds, lakes, seas, or oceans, in an auspicious ritual known as <i>visarjan</i>.</p> <p>The ritual symbolizes the concretization of the formless into a form and the dissolution of that form into the formless. Clay, which has no form, is used to create a beautiful idol of Ganesha. Immersion in water dissolves the form into clay again. The manifest Universe comes from the formless and returns to the formless state. The <i>nirguna nirakara</i> (attributeless and formless) God takes a beautiful form for our redemption before returning to the original state.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">- SSSIO Sathya Sai - The Eternal Companion (Volume 2, Issue 9, September 2023)</p> <p>When the idol of Vinayaka is immersed in water, it loses its form, and the Vinayaka Principle becomes all-pervasive. If you put sugar in water, it will mix with water, permeating its every molecule. Likewise, the merger of the idol of Vinayaka with water signifies His all-pervasiveness.</p> <p>Every festival is celebrated by various culinary preparations. For Vinayaka Chaturthi, these preparations are of a special kind. The edible offerings to Vinayaka are totally free from oily substances. Vinayaka is offered only items cooked through steam. What is the reason? According to the science of Ayurveda (the ancient Indian system of medicine), food cooked through steam is easily digested. Moreover, the Vinayaka festival, which is celebrated in the month of <i>Bhadrapada</i>, falls in a month when sesame and jaggery come to the market after the harvest. The sesame seeds are powdered and mixed with rice flour and jaggery and cooked in balls which are offered as <i>Naivedhyam</i> to Vinayaka. Jaggery is a cure for several ailments relating to phlegm and bile. The sesame seeds have the power to cleanse the lungs and improve the vision. These balls of sesame and jaggery are thus noted for their medicinal properties for curing both external and internal ailments. These were the reasons for the observance of various festivals by our ancients.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 25, #27 (1992)</p>
Chant / Song	<p><b>Chant:</b>  <i>Ganapati Bappa Morya, Purchya Varshi Laukariya</i></p> <p><b>Meaning:</b> Meaning: Goodbye Lord Ganesha, please come back next year.</p> <p><b>Song:</b>  You take all the obstacles away, O Lord Gananatha  You give us happiness, You give us auspiciousness  You take all the sorrows away, O Lord Gananatha  There is no emptiness, there is no loneliness</p>



	<p>When we start off the day with Your name, O Lord Gananatha          - SSSIO Sai Rhythms – You take all the obstacles away</p>
Story	<p><b>Vision of Lord Ganesha after seventy-eight years</b></p> <p>The experience of Swami Amritananda at Puttaparthi is a valuable example of this aspect of the divinity of Baba. As soon as Amritananda reached Prasanthi Nilayam, Baba accosted him, "Amritam," and Amritananda was genuinely astonished at the familiarity and even affection with which the call was saturated, and said, "Only Ramana Maharshi, a saint of South India, with whom I spent seventeen years, accosted me in that manner. The voice and manner were exactly the voice and manner of the Maharshi!" Later Baba asked the eighty-five year old Swami about a Ganapati Homa, a sacrifice to the elephant-headed God, which he had performed for forty-one days when he was seven years old! He told the Swami all the details of that sacrifice, including the long involved mantra, "words of Power," with which the offerings were placed each time in the fire. The mantra, as disclosed by Baba, begins, "<i>Om Sreem Hreem Kleem Gloum Gam.</i>" This is a mantra of Seed Sounds. Baba told him that he had repeated this mantra a thousand times a day for forty-one days and made as many coconut offerings in the fire of the sacred sacrifice. "But what is the reward promised in the Scriptures?" Baba asked the old ascetic. He answered that if the sacrifice is done with scrupulous regard for ritual, Lord Ganapati Himself will appear in "the fiery enclosure," as the golden-colored effulgent elephant-headed God; that with His trunk He will receive the final and concluding offerings and will grant everlasting bliss by means of the Darshan. Baba asked him whether he had the Vision. Amritananda replied that it was not so easy for a seven year old boy to get the Vision of the Lord by the mere number and quantity of offerings and mantras. Baba interrupted him, saying, "No, no. It is due to all that mantra and all that sacrifice that you have now come to Me. You will today, after an interval of seventy-eight years, get the reward mentioned in the Scriptures."</p> <p>He asked the Swami to look at Him, and when he did, Amritananda saw the golden-colored elephant, the Ganapati as described in ancient texts. He was overwhelmed with joy and bliss for four days following this Darshan, and forsook food, drink, and sleep.</p> <p>- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Sathyam Shivam Sundaram, Vol 1, #10</p>
Activity Suggestions	<p>Making idols of Ganesha using clay or playdoh; the idols can be decorated with beads and gems.</p> <p>- SSSIO-USA SSE SOuL Activities – All “This” is permeated by the Divine</p>