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Vinayaka Chaviti – 17th September 2015

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On this holy occasion of Vinayaka Chaviti, we gather here to celebrate this festival as given by our Rishis from ancient times. So we have gathered here to recollect some aspects relating to Lord Ganapati to increase our awareness and gain the related experience.

Rishis have given us 2 aspects of Ganapati as Maha Ganapati and Vighneswaara or Vinayaka. Worship of Ganapati is complete by itself and it is one of the ways to relate to Brahman, the Absolute. Ganapati is given the first presiding deity for all forms of knowledge and by worshipping him we can Master all the sciences in creation. We have 5 types of worship given

by our Rishis. One is worship of Sun, worship of Vishnu, worship of Shiva, worship of Divine Mother and 5th one is worship of Ganapati. We can gain alignment with the Lord and realize the Brahman by worshipping him in any one of the above forms.

Worship of Ganapati has been happening from ancient times all over India and not only in India but many other countries as well. Maharashtra is the state in India where worship of Ganapati happens significantly. In island countries like Malaysia, Bali, Jakarta, Sumatra and even Jamaica, worship of Ganapati has been happening since ancient times.

The form of Ganapati is very attractive for everyone and hence people of all age groups, even children, like to worship the Lord in the form of Ganapati. We even have the tradition of celebrating this festival for 9 days as well. All these festivals are given to help man to keep relating to the Divine while remaining in this world, without getting deviated from the purpose of life.

As per our Scriptures, the birth of Maha Ganapati is said to have happened on 4th moon phase in the month of Magha (Aquarius). Ganapati is said to be the teacher principle which descended from the Brahman at the beginning of creation. He is also called Brahmanaspati. Ganapati was born at the beginning of creation even before the birth of Jupiter and he is called Maha Ganapati. From this Cosmic principle of Ganapati, other principles emerged. All the principles emerge from one Absolute principle of Brahman. For THAT ONE to descend as many, a deed called "Brahmanam" has to happen. This emergence happens through the utterances of various seed sounds. Those utterances happen through Ganapati and that is why he is called Brahmanaspati.

So this Maha Ganapati principle is said to have been born in the month of Aquarius. Magha means that which is related to Mahat. Mahat is the potential space. It brings out everything from 'that' in which there is seemingly nothing. It also causes the illusion that there is nothing in 'that', in which there is everything. So Mahat is the principle presiding over illusion (maya) or magic. The month of Magha (Aquarius) relates to magic and it has its influence over the star of Magha which is present in the constellation of Leo. Magha has also other names like Magus, Magi and those relating to the energies of Magha are Mahicos and the country of Mexico derives its name from Magha. As he is born in month of Magha (Aquarius), Ganapati grants us with energies of Aquarius. Hanuman too presents us with the energies of Aquarius.

But Rishis gave us to celebrate Vinayaka Chaviti on this day in the month of Virgo which is to be understood subtly. We worship Ganapati as Vighneswara because we face many hindrances in our life and he helps us overcome them. The hindrances occur because we forget our true identity that we are Divine beings and we are stuck in our ego. Ego is individualized consciousness which is required for us to exist separately but forgetting the true identity due to this ego causes problems. Due to this ego, we fall in ignorance.

In the creation of beings story, the personality is formed for the beings in Leo. In the month of Virgo, the formation of mind happens. When the mind remains in alignment with the Divine principle, it is fine; otherwise it tries to manipulate. This mind is a reflective and refractive principle which presides over the mortal man who is a reflection of the immortal one. Refraction causes a bend in the mortal man just as refraction of light results in bending of light. So in this month, there is a chance the man may lose his direction and lose his purity due to ego. So one should be very careful and take to a stronger discipline from this month. Otherwise we just lead our lives without any purpose and then we keep undergoing endless cycle of life and death.

Virgo is the 6th month among the 12 months in both the directions of wheel. If we see the story of creation, the mind is the 6th principle that descends after the Cosmic male, Cosmic female and the 3 qualities. So in this way too, there is a relation between Virgo and the mind. From this month, the matter starts dominating the spirit. So there is a chance for us to lose direction in this month and one has to walk very carefully in this month.

So on the 4th moon phase of this month, we are given this festival to worship Ganapati as Vinayaka which will enable us to remain in the path without getting stuck in objectivity as from this month onwards, the objectivity gains strength until it reaches its grossest level in Scorpio. So the Ganapati who was born in Aquarius is reborn in Virgo as Vinayaka or Vighneswara to help us lift up from objectivity.

Virgo is an earthy sign which represents the gross side of nature. So it is said, in this month, Divine Mother made an idol of Vinayaka out of clay. That is why we too keep an idol made of clay for worship. Later it is to be immersed in the river or ocean water because matter emerges from etheric waters and again dissolves into it.

Ganapati is said to have 2 consorts by name Buddhi and Siddhi which actually means that he grants us with Buddhi and Siddhi when we worship him. There are no consorts in the sense we understand in our plane. Wife and husband relation between 2 persons is only in our physical plane when a being enters into a physical body. In higher planes, the nature of the being is explained as the consort of that being. In fact, there is no distinction as male and female in higher planes. Another important aspect of Ganapati is speech. That is why he is also called Vachaspati (principle which presides over speech).

We worship Maha Ganapati on a regular basis while worship of Ganapati as Vighneswara is done on this day or for 9 days from today. Vighneswara means that he ensures that there are no hindrances in our path. There are no hindrances if we follow the Divine will. There may be many hindrances if we follow our own will which may be a deviation from the Divine will. Personal will also leads to many consequences which come back to us as karma.

This Vinayaka is said to be born from the Divine Mother Parvathi when she gives life to the idol she makes out of clay. Maha Ganapati was present much before. Vinayaka can be understood to

be the mind aspect of Maha Ganapati. Mind has many powers and so Vinayaka too had many powers. He was also granted some powers by Mother Parvathi. Though he had all these powers, he still did not have complete knowledge.

We know the story that begins with Gajasura, a diabolic who is a devotee of Lord Shiva. He worships the Lord intensely and Lord Shiva appears before him. As he is a diabolic, he asks a boon for himself. He is actually called diabolic because he is highly self-oriented. Ravana, Hiranyakashyapa, Bhasmasura, etc. are referred to as diabolics because they did worship for selfish means. True worship is that which seeks the welfare of all. All self-oriented people are diabolic in nature and hence they are called Asuras. That diabolic nature comes out of ignorance due to ego. So this Gajasura had an elephant head and human body. (Gaja+asura = elephant+diabolic). During the 3rd root race, there were many beings with such forms that are combinations of animal and human forms. It was called Lemurian age and the land that was present at that time was in place of the ocean what we now call Pacific. The design of the human body which we see now has not evolved by then.

So this Gajasura asks for a boon that Lord Shiva should always remain within him. So due to his diabolic nature he felt that the Lord is for him. That is a completely wrong understanding. You belong to the Lord and it is ignorant to feel that the Lord is for you. The Lord knows better than you and he knows what is right for you. So what is the need to ask him? He will grant you what is due to you. If you start worshipping for yourself and your desires, that worship becomes diabolic. So this understanding is very important. The pity is all education, nowadays, is self-oriented and the person is taught only how to make a career for himself. The concept of living for others is not being taught in schools.

So as per the boon, Lord Shiva enters the body of Gajasura and remains there. We are told that the consort of Shiva, Parvathi was worried and approached Vishnu for help. The story is said so for the ordinary man to relate but we should know that the Divine Mother knows and it is ignorant to think that Divine Mother was worried. Also this story is given to teach us certain principles and not everything is to be taken literally. Shiva is all permeating, then how can he remain in one person alone. So Shiva remaining in the stomach of Gajasura is not to be understood literally.

So the story goes on that Vishnu takes Nandi, the vehicle of Lord Shiva to release Shiva from Gajasura. Nandi is a sound principle (an embodiment of Nada, OM) and he could please Gajasura with his music and dance. There is a subtle meaning here. With the experience of Nada, a transformation has happened in Gajasura and for the first time, he comes out of his selfish attitude and asks Nandi what he wants. Experience of Nada can cause transformation in the 7 tissues of our body and it also causes descent of light into us. That is why we are asked to utter OM properly. So Nandi has caused a transformation in the nature of Gajasura.

So Gajasura grants a boon and Vishnu tells that Nandi is the vehicle of Lord Shiva and wants him back. As a result, Lord Shiva comes out and the story goes on.

Meanwhile, Parvathi comes to know that Shiva is coming back to Kailash and gets ready to welcome him. There comes the story of Virgo. She prepares a form of Vinayaka and grants life to it. We should understand that it is the rebirth of Maha Ganapati as Vinayaka to help lift the beings in Virgo so that they do not become like Gajasura. By worshipping Vinayak, we get only ideas of things which are to happen through us. That means personal will merges into the Divine will. Vighneswara acts as a hindrance to those thoughts which lead us to unwanted activities. So he acts as a filter and sends through only the right thoughts. He will also protect you by hindering some activities which may be harmful or cause distress to you. So Vinayaka can either remove or create hindrances for your own good.

So Parvathi grants that Vinayaka with all her powers. Though one has all the powers, the absence of the knowledge of Brahman results in ego because one starts thinking that he owns all the powers. More capability leads to more pride in the absence of knowledge of true identity. Parvathi asks the boy to guard the palace while she readies herself. The boy, due to his ego and incomplete knowledge could not recognise Shiva and stops him from entering the palace. He fights with Shiva but loses in the duel. Shiva had to remove his head and grant him a new head which is to be understood as granting of complete knowledge. So Vinayaka gains complete knowledge from his father Shiva. He now realized the Brahman and that his capability comes from THAT.

He is said to have arranged for himself a diabolic, whom he defeated, as his vehicle. The name of that diabolic is Mooshakasura. Mooshakam means the intelligence which tries to deceive others and exploits them in some way or the other. It tries to earn wealth effortlessly. Many people have such kind of intelligence leading to thoughts of deceit and clever stealing. Vinayaka having this diabolic with such thoughts as his vehicle means that he presides over that intelligence and prevents such thoughts from touching those who worship him.

Another thing which worshippers of Vinayaka should realize is, listening is more important than speaking. That is why we have one of the names of Ganapati as "Surpakarna" which literally means "having big ears" but symbolically it means that hearing is very important. If you take the example of Rama, when he comes across another person, he is the first one to greet but not the first one to speak. He is keen to listen to others and takes only the truth by the discrimination of his Buddhi. If you are talking unnecessarily or casually, it means that your mind is not stable enough. It has a bearing upon the energy system of your body.

Vinayaka is one of the most important intelligences who was born on earth. He is ever present on earth like Hanuman. He is the one who becomes the scribe for Veda Vyasa to write Mahabharata. He is to be understood as an important avatar of Maha Ganapati among the many

avatars of Maha Ganapati. He is said to have elephant head which symbolises his complete wisdom and he is said to have large ears which symbolizes that he grants us with good hearing ability.

He is said to be wearing "time" as the sacred thread over the left shoulder. The sacred thread is called "Yagnopavitam" (Yagna + Upavitam). That means, at all times, he is into doing Yagna, leading life as an offering. Upavitam means sacred thread. The sacred thread is given during the thread ceremony and by wearing it the person has taken a vow that he would do Yagna at all times. The sanctity of that thread is retained only if you live for the welfare of others. Otherwise it is just becomes an ordinary thread.

Vinayaka's trunk symbolizes the Sushumana nadi in the beings. Nada (soundless sound) is always reverberating in that Nadi. So when we see his trunk, we should relate to our Sushumna. He graces us a lot to remain in the path of Yoga. That is why we have regularly do Ganapati Puja to remain in the path of Yoga. Yoga practice happens without any hindrances if one worships Ganapati regularly.

Ganapati has been granted all their powers by Vishnu and Brahma. Lakshmi and Saraswati are said to be ever present near Ganapati. So their energies are available through Ganapati. Ganapati is always in alignment with Lord Shiva.

Kumara is said to be the disciple of Ganapati and he realises Brahman due to his discipleship under Ganapati. We have the story where Shiva keeps a race between Ganapati and Kumara on who can first circumscribe the whole creation. That competition is to make Kumara realise the greatness of Ganapati. Ganapati wins the race and as a result Kumara realises the greatness of Ganapati and becomes the disciple of Ganapati.

Then we have the story of Ganapati overeating and falling down and moon laughing over it. Here moon means the mind principle. The mind laughs on seeing others suffer. That is not right. You should be sympathized to those who suffer and try to help them if possible. That is a good quality. If someone's suffering is making you laugh, it means that you have a very bad quality.

So as moon laughs, Parvathi curses the moon that whoever sees the moon would have to face lot of criticism and dishonor in life. It is not that Parvathi got angry but the story is said so for us to understand that if your mind laughs at others' suffering, you should bear the consequences. The consequences are to ensure that you realize your mistake. One should not be enjoying others' suffering. Draupadi had to face dishonor because she laughed when Duryodhana fell into water unknowingly.

Then we have the story of wives of the 7 sages who face criticism for no mistake of theirs due to seeing the moon. Then the 7 Sages and their wives request Mother Parvathi to withdraw the curse as it is not possible for beings to abstain from seeing the moon. So she partially withdraws

the curse that no one should see the moon on the day he laughed seeing Vinayaka. That day is this day, the 4th moon phase in the month of Virgo.

Then we have the story of Krishna facing criticism of stealing a special stone (jewel) called Shamantaka Mani, because he saw the moon on this day. Then a highly symbolic and astrologically significant story is given as to how Krishna recovers the stone. The story links the sun signs of Sagittarius, Leo and Aries through their symbolisms of Horse, Lion and Bear. It symbolically tells how one has to travel through from Base Centre to Heart Centre to Head Centre to get the jewel or Mani present there. It is the light in the head. Buddha attains that Mani through his practice and he gives a mantra "Mani Padme Hum".

Then people approach Krishna seeking help as to what can they do on this day to avoid dishonor for seeing the moon. Krishna tells that one can worship Vinayaka on this day, recollect certain aspects relating to him and remain in his presence as much as possible on this day. So that is how we have this worship of Ganapati as Vinayaka on this day.

It is much better if you can do Ganapati Puja on a daily basis. You gain the grace of all the intelligences by worshipping Ganapati because all the intelligences agree with Ganapati. You can complete Ganapati Puja in almost 12 minutes if you do it in a simple manner. You can even do worship simply with a flower and by offering some sweet. If you can do it regularly, then your life is completely transformed. All the planetary intelligences cooperate with you if you worship Ganapati.

There are many symbolic stories given in Shiva Purana in relation to Ganapati. If you have time, you can read them and understanding the inner meaning and teaching given in them.

By worshipping Ganapati regularly, your life becomes stable and complete in all aspects. You can please him by worshipping him in a very simple manner. He even graces you when you recollect him once. So we recollect this grand principle of Ganapati on this occasion so that we remain aligned to him at all times.

I conclude with an example of how Ganapati affected the life of one of our group members strongly. He visits India regularly. We have a group member by name Alex who is a highly positioned police officer in Miami Police Dept. Some years back, I gave him an idol of Ganapati and told him to keep it in his house and just see that idol every day. He started relating with that form of Ganapati so much. He started getting good experiences through it. He could solve many cases in his profession very easily by relating to Ganapati. It has become true to him and his family. The first time he wanted to come to India, for a function here, he booked a ticket but did not know that a Visa was required. He came to know that a Visa is required but there was not sufficient time as per the regular norms. But he recollected Ganapati and could get Visa in one day and could make it to India as planned.

Many of us too keep worshipping but we need to have complete belief, devotion and intent in worship. That is what matters the most.

We also have the story of 9 avatars of Ganapati. Ganapati manifested in 9 different forms to grace his devotees. In a place called Pune, there are temples of all these 9 forms of Ganapati. The name of the place originally was "Puni". Puni means sacred. Puni became Pune due to the influence of British. There are 8 idols of Ganapati in all the 8 directions around this city of Pune and one in the centre of the city.

Recently in a place called Posadas, for five days, I spoke about the significance of Virgo and its relation with the signs of Leo and Libra. You can relate to them for more details. So let us gain purity in this month of Virgo by worshipping Ganapati and continue to remain in his alignment so that we are lifted up in the days to come.

-Swasthi.