

## Ganesha Chaturthi

Ganesha Chaturthi is the birthday of Lord Ganesha. It falls on the fourth day of the bright fortnight of the month of Bhadrapada which falls in the months of August-September.

During one of His birthdays, His mother, Shakti Parvati, cooked for Him twenty-one types of delicious food and a lot of sweet porridge. Ganesha ate so much that even His big belly could bro not contain it. Mounting His little mouse, He embarked on His nightly rounds. His mouse suddenly stumbled upon seeing a huge snake. To adjust His belly, Ganesha put the snake as on as a belt 'round His stomach'.

All of a sudden, He heard from the sky someone laughing at Him. He looked up and saw the moon mocking Him. Ganesha, infuriated, broke off one of His two tusks and hurled it at the moon. The moon hid himself behind the clouds. Immediately Ganesha pronounced a curse on him saying, "Let no one look at your face on my birthday. If anyone, knowingly or unknowingly, looks at you, they will be completely misunderstood in the family circle and neighborhood for no reason whatsoever."

The symbology behind the mouse and snake and Ganesha's big belly and its relationship to the moon on His birthday is highly philosophic. The whole cosmos is like the belly of God. Shakti Parvati is the primordial energy who cooks twenty-one types of dishes, meaning twenty-one expansions: seven lokas above, seven lokas below and seven oceans, all of which are inside the cosmic belly of Ganesha, held together by the cosmic energy kundalini symbolized as a huge snake which Ganesha ties around Him.

The mouse is nothing but our ego. Ganesha, using the ego as vehicle, represents the fact in every one of us that our great Self or consciousness controls the ego and uses it as a vehicle or instrument in daily efforts. In other words, one who has controlled the ego has Ganesha consciousness or God-consciousness.

Now the moon on that day, that is, Ganesha's birthday, is malefic and will not allow the mind of man to concentrate on God. That is why Ganesha punished him with His tusk and made it well known to all people by warning them of the danger of looking at the moon on such an auspicious day as His birth. In other words, it is an astrological fact that on that day, the moon creates bad moods in human beings.

