

12. Vinayaka Principle Is All-Pervasive

Bharat (India) is the motherland of many noble souls who earned great name and fame in all the continents of the world.

This is the land of valorous people who vanquished foreign rulers and attained independence.

This is the land which excelled in music, literature and other fine arts.

Having been born in this great land of Bharat, oh boys and girls, it is your sacred duty to protect its rich cultural heritage.

(Telugu poem)

THE festival of Ganesh Chaturthi was celebrated the other day. Our students also had a celebration, which was full of beauty, splendour and bliss.

All can experience the Vinayaka Principle

Embodiments of Love – Students!

First of all, you should know who Vinayaka is. Vinayaka is the leader of the universe; there is no leader above him. He is the leader of all and master of all. It would be your misfortune to forget such a leader and master. He eats only simple food, which is cooked without oil. The food he eats is called *kudumulu*, which is prepared by grinding various types of food grains, making the mixture soft by mixing it with water, and cooking it in steam. He eats only such simple food. This preparation is also called *undrallu*. Those who eat such food will not suffer from even a minor illness at any point of time.

Vinayaka has two consorts, Buddhi and Siddhi. Being in the constant company of Vinayaka, they have acquired all types of knowledge from him. They also eat simple food like Vinayaka.

Vinayaka is omnipresent. He teaches through silence and conducts himself in an exemplary manner. Some people think that Vinayaka is worshipped only in Bharat (India) but the Vinayaka Principle is all-pervasive and is worshipped by all. People may follow different paths, but all can experience the Vinayaka Principle. This Vinayaka Principle is present in everyone in the form of breath. It would be sheer foolishness to limit your worship of Vinayaka to idols made of clay and metals. In fact, Vinayaka is your master, who is in you, with you, and around you. By constant contemplation on Vinayaka, all your sins will be destroyed.

Inner meaning of immersion of Vinayaka idol

Yesterday, our students brought the idols of Vinayaka in decorated chariots and took them out for immersion in a procession. What is the significance of immersion of idols in water? 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. Vinayaka is the divine parent of all and loves all His children. He considers them as His only property. Emulating his example, all parents should consider their children as their property. Similarly, the children should also have utmost regard for their parents. Never forget your mother, never forget your father.

Vinayaka is the bestower of intellect and spiritual attainments (*buddhi* and *siddhi*). If your intellect (*buddhi*) is good, everything will become good for you. Therefore, when you commence your studies or start any new work, first offer worship to Vinayaka. Even before eating your food, pray to Vinayaka. All *Bharatiyas* (Indians) pray to Vinayaka before undertaking any new venture. When they construct temples, they usually install the idol of Vinayaka in the front. It is a tradition of the *Bharatiyas* (Indians) that whenever they have to start some work, they do it only after offering worship to Vinayaka. A singer wanting to present a concert first offers prayer to Vinayaka. Our students also dedicate their first *bhajan* (devotional song) to Vinayaka when they start their *bhajan* programme. Vinayaka is the master of your life. There is no leader other than him.

Vinayaka is the Master of the Universe

Worship of Vinayaka should not be limited to Vinayaka Chaturthi day only. You should worship him at all places and at all times, whether it is the fourth, eighth, or ninth (*chaturthi*, *ashtami*, or *navami*) day of the new moon or any other day. “Everywhere, at all times, under all circumstances contemplate on God (*Sarvada sarva kaleshu sarvatra Hari chintanam*).” However, there is a special significance of worshipping Vinayaka on Vinayaka Chaturthi day.

As it will be difficult for people to perform this elaborate ritualistic worship regularly on all days, a certain number of days have been fixed for the special worship of Vinayaka like three, five, or ten days. Moreover, it is difficult for people to prepare the food offerings (*naivedyam*) to Vinayaka on all days, although the food of Vinayaka is very simple and easy to prepare. His food is cooked only in steam without putting it directly on fire. Such food keeps us healthy and free from diseases.

Though Vinayaka has a big belly, it does not mean that he eats much. He takes only limited food. When people sing songs in praise of Vinayaka, they describe him as “one with big belly”. But he does not eat all that is offered to him. He sanctifies those offerings and confers his blessings.

Vinayaka is ever on the move to bless his devotees. God is like that only.

Vinayaka is the leader of all beings. He is the controller and sustainer of the entire creation. If Vinayaka does not sustain and control creation, there will be total destruction. It is only Vinayaka who protects creation from destruction. He is present everywhere. Whether you are aware of it or not, he is always with you, in you, around you, above you, and below you.

Vinayaka and breath control

People cannot live without air. It is their life principle. Vinayaka permeates the life principle of humanity. People celebrate Vinayaka Chaturthi with great joy and prepare a number of delicious dishes. But Ganesha is not interested in eating all the delicious items offered to him. He is happy to live on air.

Here, air symbolises the life principle (*prana*). There can be no life without the life principle. You can see that you breathe in and breathe out. You cannot live without breathing. When you take the breath in, you experience the sound “*So*”, and when you breathe out, you experience the sound “*Ham*”. In this way, one’s breathing signifies “*Soham* (That I am, or God I am).” In the science of breath control (*pranayama*), the inhalation of breath is called *puraka*, exhalation is called *rechaka*, and retention of breath is called *kumbhaka*. You can attain the state of meditation only when the durations of inhalation, exhalation, and retention are equal. Inhalation, exhalation,

and retention are the three main aspects in the practice of breath control, which can be learnt only by the grace of Vinayaka. These processes of inhalation, exhalation, and retention are directed by the will of God. But people do not understand the secret behind this and celebrate Vinayaka Chaturthi in a ritualistic way.

Vinayaka bestows intellect and spiritual attainment

Vinayaka is called *Siddhi Vinayaka* because he bestows *buddhi* (intellect) and *siddhi* (spiritual attainment). Both of these are very essential for people.

Vinayaka has the head of an elephant, which has a great significance. Since the elephant is considered very auspicious, all big temples keep their own elephants for ceremonial processions. The elephant is the biggest of all animals. The footprints of all animals like lion or tiger will be erased when an elephant walks over their path. When an elephant passes through a thick forest, it creates a path even for cars, buses, and chariots to pass through. Likewise, Vinayaka makes the path for all to follow. When people were going from Ayodhya to Mithila for Rama's wedding, the procession was headed by elephants.

The grand procession was led by elephants, horses, and chariots.
The entire army of Dasaratha followed the elderly Sage Viswamitra.
King Dasaratha was accompanied by his ministers and vassal kings.
It appeared as though the entire Ayodhya moved en masse toward Mithila.
It was a wonderful and blissful sight to behold.
(Telugu poem)

The elephant is so powerful that when it trumpets, all barking dogs will be silenced. Without understanding the real significance of the elephant head of Vinayaka, we make an idol with a trunk and take it out in a procession

Not only Vinayaka, but all gods transcend physical forms. There can be no birth and death for the one who transcends physical form. God has no form. If you ask God, "Who are You?", He will reply, "I am Brahman (*Aham Brahmasmi*).” Who is Brahman? He signifies inhalation and exhalation, which have no form. Nobody can question who begot Brahman? Where is He? Likewise, the primordial sound *Om* has no form. It has no beginning, no end. How can there be an end of something that has no beginning?

Inhalation and exhalation are two related processes. Similar are happiness and sorrow, merit and sin. God is beyond all these. One who is born will also die. But God has neither birth nor death. Never forget this divine principle, which signifies the unity of the entire creation.

The answer to the question, "Who is God?" is that God is the principle of oneness in the entire diversity of the creation.

Therefore, students! It is your delusion to limit God to the idols of Rama, Krishna, and Vinayaka and worship them. Did you see Krishna anywhere? Where is He? You have seen the picture of Krishna made by artists like Ravi Varma and created His idol accordingly. Did Ravi Varma see Krishna before painting His picture? No. He imagined the form of Krishna by reading the description given in the sacred texts and made the picture. No one has seen God. However, the physical form in which God incarnates has a great significance. God does not assume physical form without a reason. Therefore, never forget His physical form. God assumes the physical form to strengthen the moral fabric of the world.

I was very happy to see the enthusiasm of our students yesterday when they brought decorated idols of Vinayaka here. It was heartening to see that our students understood the real significance of Vinayaka Chaturthi and celebrated it in its true spirit. It is not possible to experience the divine principle without understanding the spirit behind these celebrations. Therefore, try to know the inner significance of celebrating festivals. When you understand that Vinayaka is the omnipresent divine principle, you will be celebrating this festival in its true spirit. In fact, all festivals should be celebrated with proper understanding of their significance.

(Bhagawan concluded His discourse with the *bhajan*, “*Vinayaka Vinayaka*”.)

Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam, 2009-08-26.

Righteousness (*dharma*) is the code of conduct that will promote the ideals of each stage of the human being – learner, householder, earner, master, servant, spiritual aspirant, renunciant, etc. When the code is distorted and people undermine their earthly careers, forgetting the high purpose for which they have come, the Lord incarnates and leads him along the correct path. That is to say, He comes as a person to restore the principles and re-establish the practice of *dharma*. This is what is referred to as *Dharma-samstapana* in the *Gita*. Among these forms assumed by the Lord, there is no higher or lower.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

If you have faith and if you keep the name of Rama as constant companion, you are in Vaikunta, Kailas, or Heaven, all the time. These are not distant regions that have to be reached by tortuous travel; they are springs of tranquility that are in your own heart.

You cannot have this chance of the proximity of the greatest of all sources of joy in any other place. Here it is so near, so easy to attain, so full of grace. If you fall back, you will seldom get the chance again. Ask and get what will save you, not what will bind you.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba