

and Pārvatī that of a she-elephant. Pārvatī delivered a son in the form of an elephant. That son was named Gaṇapati. (Uttara Rāmāyaṇa).

3) *His tusk broken.* Once Paraśurāma arrived at Kailāsa to meet Śiva. At that time Śiva was asleep. So Gaṇapati did not allow him to get in. A duel broke out between them. In that duel one of Gaṇapati's tusks was broken. (Padma Purāṇa).

4) *Gaṇapati turned into crow.* An exceptionally hot summer set in once in South India. The whole land became parched. So Agastya went to Śiva and requested for some holy water, and the Lord put Kāverī who was worshipping him just then, in the Kamaṇḍalu (something like a teapot which sannyāsins carry with them) of Agastya and sent him back. Indra, who did not relish this action of Śiva, asked Gaṇapati to somehow or other upset Agastya's Kamaṇḍalu of holy water, and Gaṇapati, in the guise of a crow went and sat on the brink of the Kamaṇḍalu and thus upset it. Agastya and the crow quarrelled with each other. Then did the crow assume its original form as Gaṇapati and blessed Agastya. Moreover, Gaṇapati filled Agastya's Kamaṇḍalu with holy water, which the latter distributed among devotees in South India, and that is the present Kāverī river.

5) *Other stories about Gaṇapati's head.* The Purāṇas contain two different stories as to how Gaṇapati happened to have the elephant's head. Once Pārvatī pointed out to Gaṇapati the planet Saturn, and his head got burned down due to the ocular power of Saturn, and according to one story Gaṇapati's head thus lost was replaced with that of an elephant. The other story is more interesting. When once Śiva tried to enter the room where Pārvatī had gone to take her bath clad in a single clothing Gaṇapati prevented Śiva from doing so. Śiva, enraged at the obstruction made by Gaṇapati, cut off his head, and when his anger was cooled down he replaced Gaṇapati's lost head with that of an elephant. (Padma Purāṇa).

6) *Wedding of Gaṇapati.* Gaṇapati has two wives called Siddhī and Buddhī.

When Gaṇapati and Subrahmaṇya attained the age of marriage they were in a hurry to get married. Śiva conducted a test. Śiva and Pārvatī told them that he who returned first after going round the world would be married first. Accordingly Subrahmaṇya mounted his vehicle (peacock) and set out for a tour round the world. Gaṇapati did nothing of the sort. But after a little time he went round his parents, viz., Śiva and Pārvatī. Asked for an explanation about his action Gaṇapati replied that since the whole universe existed in Śiva and Pārvatī, going around them tantamounted to touring round the world. Pleased at this reply his parents got Gaṇapati married first.

7) *Vighneśvaratvam.* (Power to remove all obstacles). Gaṇapati is called Vighneśvara because he is the god who removes all obstacles from the paths of men or creates them.

Gaṇapati has the power to get anything done without any obstructions as also the power to put obstacles in the path of anything being got done. Therefore, the custom came into vogue of worshipping Gaṇapati at the very commencement of any action for its completion without any hitch or hindrance. Actions begun with

such worship would be duly completed, Indians believe. In support of that belief the following story from the 6th taraṅga of Lāvānakalāmbakam, Kathāsaritsāgara may be quoted.

The Devas decided to appoint Subrahmaṇya as chief of the army to kill Tārakāsura. When Indra took up the pot of water purified by mantras to anoint Subrahmaṇya's head with it, his hands became benumbed, and he stood aghast. Then Śiva said that any action begun without Gaṇapati pūjā would meet with such obstacles. At once Indra worshipped Gaṇapati and his hands recovered from the paralysed condition. And, Subrahmaṇya was duly anointed with the holy water.

8) *Gaṇapati wrote the Mahābhārata.* After the death of the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas sage Vyāsa entered again into meditation. But, the whole story of the Bhārata reflected in the mirror of his mind. He wanted to translate the story into a great poem and requested Brahmā to suggest a suitable person to write the story on his dictation, and Brahmā suggested Gaṇapati's name. Then Vyāsa thought about Gaṇapati and he appeared before the sage. But, Gaṇapati did not appreciate the idea of serving as Vyāsa's scribe. So he stipulated a condition that he would write down the poem provided Vyāsa dictated it in such a manner that he had not to lay down his pen even once before the epic was completed. To this Vyāsa stipulated the counter condition that when he dictated without the least interruption or pause Gaṇapati should not write down the matter without understanding the meaning of it. And, under such conditions the composition of the Mahābhārata was completed within three years. (Ādi Parva, Chapter 1, Verses 74-80).

9) *Gaṇapati pūja.* Gaṇapati occupies the most prominent place among the Devas connected with Śiva. In South India, Gaṇapati pūjā came into vogue in the 6th century A.D., and idols of Gaṇapati now extant might have been made at that period. In South India, temples dedicated to Gaṇapati are in no way less in number than those to Subrahmaṇya. The idol of Gaṇapati is installed at the gateways of villages and forts, under the fig tree, at the entrance of temples and at the south-western corner of Śiva temples. Two types of idols are important: the Itāmpiri (the proboscis turned to the left side) and the Valāmpiri (the proboscis turned to the right side). It is stated that the enormously big belly of Gaṇapati contains in it the whole universe.

10) *Synonyms of Gaṇapati.*

Vināyako vighnarāja
dvaimātura-gaṇādhipaḥ /
apyekadanto heramba
lāmbodaragaṇānaḥ. (Amarakośa).

(Vināyaka, Vighnarāja, Dvaimātura, Gaṇādhipa, Ekadanta, Heramba, Lambodara, Gaṇāna).

GAṆDĀ. A dāsī, who served the saptarṣis. (Anuśāsana Parva, Chapter 93).

GAṆDAKAM. A particular locality on the banks of river Gaṇḍakī. Bhīmasena once conquered this place. (Sabhā Parva, Chapter 10, Verse 15).

GAṆDAKANDU. A Yakṣa of the assembly of Kubera. (M.B. Sabhā Parva, Chapter 10).

GAṆDAKĪ (GAṆDAKA). A river in northern India which falls into the Gaṅgā.

2) *Origin.* There arose an argument between the