

Five lessons from Ganesh

Of all the multitudes of deities and gods that constitute the Hindu religion, Lord Ganesha is probably one of the most loved and revered of all, regardless of individual beliefs and customs. Considered the god of good beginnings and wisdom, it is in his name that new ventures are undertaken and important life decisions made.

While there are many spiritual lessons to be learned from the stories of Lord Ganesha, there are some lessons that find a place in our every-day professional and personal lives as well. We take a look at some of them:

Act in good faith

Whatever Lord Ganesha undertook, he undertook with conviction and self-belief. It was the belief that his actions were in his and his mother Parvati's best interests is what governed his thoughts and translated into challenging acts, feats that improved his abilities and honed his skills.

It is this that we need to inculcate in ourselves, in the way we work. Any job, if it is worth doing, is worth doing well. Whatever the task you are faced with, face it with courage and conviction and do it to the best of your ability. At the end of the day, even if your effort goes unrecognised, you have the satisfaction of knowing that you gave it your best shot.

Depend on yourself

One of the other names Ganesha is known as is Vinayak, meaning master of oneself. This signifies independence in thought and action. Whether in one's professional or personal life, one must act on one's beliefs after due consideration of relevant factors. Take ownership and responsibility for your actions and their outcome. Just knowing that you alone are responsible will make you take the decision that much more seriously.

Every obstacle can be overcome

Lord Ganesha is also known as Vigneshwara, one who removes obstacles. It is for this reason that he is invoked in times of crisis by believers and also why business ventures are started with a puja (prayer ceremony) in his name. Removing obstacles is his religion.

To take this a step further, one must believe that every obstacle can be overcome. One must also make removing obstacles a dharma in one's own life. Whether in your professional or personal life, with the right attitude -- a never-say-die attitude -- even what seems like the most insurmountable difficulty can be handled without your world falling to pieces. All you need is faith in yourself.

Modesty

Lord Ganesha is considered one of the most powerful gods in Hinduism, unlike the other gods who choose bejeweled chariots, his vehicle is the modest mouse. The mouse is seen to signify darkness and, as the Lord's vehicle, is believed to signify the journey from darkness (or ignorance) to light or enlightenment.

Another interpretation is that Ganesha wins hearts through simple methods, and this too holds a lesson. A shiny car or extravagant lifestyle might impress, but to win hearts, the simplest way is through one's actions -- through simple gestures of affection and respect.

Seek knowledge

While Lord Ganesha has been attributed with many of the qualities proverbially credited to elephants, the most well-known are the ears and trunk -- which suggest curiosity, the quest for wisdom and knowledge. His large head and ears are said to indicate an open-minded attitude that helps him accrue wisdom.

These are qualities that we could do well to adopt to improve and grow as a person. Read, explore, listen and learn -- nothing is irrelevant and nothing insignificant. Only when one educates oneself and listens to all sides of an argument can one judge what one truly believes in, what one wants and how it can be achieved. that every obstacle can be overcome. One must also make removing obstacles a

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