

# Obtain Divine Grace by obeying your Parents

*The moon illumines the world at night and the sun during the day.*

*Righteousness illumines the three worlds, and a virtuous son illumines his entire lineage.*

(Telugu poem)

*Embodiments of Love!*

A virtuous son is greater than even those who have acquired *Jnana* (knowledge), *Vijnana* (wisdom), *Sujnana* and *Prajnana* (constant integrated awareness). Lord Vinayaka is such a virtuous son. Every individual has a Guru. But, Vinayaka has no Guru at all. He is the Guru of Gurus and the leader of leaders. He is called by the name "Vinayaka" since He has no leader above Him and He is the leader for all.

*Embodiments of Love!*

Whenever a new task is undertaken, it is customary to perform Puja to Lord Vinayaka to invoke His blessings for the successful completion of the task. Even while starting a musical concert, the singers pray to Lord Vinayaka with the *kirtan*, "*Vinayaka Nannu Brovara*" (Oh! Lord Vinayaka! Please come to my help). It is only when you thus pray to Lord Vinayaka and seek His blessings, will all your task meet with success.

Lord Vinayaka has an elephant's head and trunk. It denotes that Vinayaka can be compared to an elephant in intelligence, which always thinks twice before setting its foot forward. Similarly, it is only after intelligent discrimination that Vinayaka moves forward. The four letters in the word Ganapathi (*ga*, *na*, *pa* and *ti*) denote that Lord Vinayaka is full of *Vijnana*, *Sujnana* and *Prajnana*. People today forget the underlying meaning in the name 'Ganapati' and engage themselves in mere rituals. You may not perform any rituals, but, never give up worshipping

Lord Vinayaka. Especially, it is the foremost duty of the students to come under the leadership of Vinayaka, who is a leader unto Himself. You would not find a parallel to Lord Vinayaka. When you take such a Lord as your ideal and pursue your studies, you will be able to master all branches of education. Vinayaka has a big tummy, which is full of *Jnana* (wisdom). That wisdom is His power. We should worship such a powerful Lord. No one can comprehend the true nature of Lord Vinayaka, fully.

Lord Vinayaka is the leader for one and all. He is the divine father and mother to everybody. In accordance with the prayer *Twameva Matha cha Pitha Twameva, Twameva Bandhuscha Sakha Twameva, Twameva Vidya Dravinam Twameva* (He alone is the father and mother, friend and relation, wisdom and wealth to every individual). No one else can be compared to Lord Vinayaka in terms of power and prowess in this world. The world is unable to recognise the true nature of such a divine leader. We are, today, prepared to accept the leadership of ordinary mortals. This is an unfortunate situation.

Today is the holy day commemorating the birth of Lord Vinayaka. In fact, He has no birth at all. He created the entire universe. All the Vedas are the result of the divine sankalpa of Lord Vinayaka. All forms of knowledge have originated from Vinayaka.

*Embodiments of Love!*

Lord Vinayaka does not know what anger is. He is the embodiment of love. Where there is love, bad qualities like anger, passion, conceit etc., cannot gain entry. You might have witnessed the facial features of Vinayaka. Did His face ever reflect anger? No. He will always be smiling. Vinayaka is omnipresent. People attribute a particular place as the birthplace of God and consider it as a *Kshetra* (a sacred place of

pilgrimage). But, no single place can be ascribed as the birthplace of God. He is *Swayambhu* (Self-emergent). There is no specific place which can be ascribed as place of birth, place of upbringing, etc., for God. He is omnipresent. God will manifest in such a place where people get rid of their bad qualities and sincerely pray to Him with devotion. He is *Gunatheetha* (beyond attributes). He is *Nirgunam, Niranjanam, Sanathanam, Niketanam, Nitya, Shuddha, Buddha, Mukta, Nirmala Swarupinam* (God is attributeless, pure, final abode, eternal, unsullied, enlightened, free and embodiment of sacredness).

God appears to be angry at times. But, that is not real anger. In order to put the devotees on the right path, He pretends to be angry. If He does not pretend so, there is no chance for the devotees to change their behaviour. His pretending to be angry is just a drama. God has no trace of anger in Him. When we commit mistakes or tread the wrong path, we are afraid that God will be angry with us. But, God only pretends to be angry on such occasions so that you become aware of your own faults and deficiencies. For example, when Swami keeps Himself away from you, you feel very sad and think that Swami is not talking to you because He is angry with you. In fact, Swami does not know what anger is. He is the embodiment of love. He is full of love. However, on some rare occasions when He speaks harshly, it might be misconstrued that He is angry. This is quite natural even in our day-to-day life. When you call somebody, "Son! Please come here," it sounds that you are calling him with love. But, if the same words are uttered with a raised voice (in an angry mood), it looks as though you are angry. Therefore, all these are variations in expression and nothing else. The same was the case with Sage Durvasa, whose expressions revealed anger and thus became synonymous for anger. But in fact, Sage

Durvasa had no anger at all!

During the Mahabharata war, Aswatthama, the son of Dronacharya, took a terrible vow to annihilate all the Pandavas. Having come to know of this, Droupadi prayed to Krishna to save the Pandavas. The leelas of the Lord are not only wonderful but also mysterious. God enacts dramas and even changes the scenes in His play for the welfare and safety of His devotees. In this instance, the Lord saved the Pandavas with a delicate touch that He alone is capable of.

He went to Sage Durvasa. He was immensely delighted to receive Krishna. The sage asked, "Lord, what brought You to my humble ashram?" Krishna smiled and said, "I have a small job for you." The sage was happy and said, "I am at Your service. You just have to command." Krishna then said, "Good! Tonight, you have to save the Pandavas." Durvasa was puzzled and asked, "Lord, it is You who protect everything in creation. Who am I to do that job?" Krishna replied, "That is a different matter. But for this job, you will be My instrument. I extend protection in many different ways. On this occasion, you have to do something specific as per My instructions." Durvasa wanted to know what it was and Krishna continued, "Dig a pit, ask the Pandavas to hide themselves in it, cover it with planks, grass and mud, and then take your seat on the shelter so prepared. The enemies of the Pandavas may come and ask you about the whereabouts of the Pandavas. They may say, "You know the past, present and future. Please tell us where the Pandavas are hiding." Durvasa intervened and said, "Lord, I cannot tell a lie." Krishna countered, "Did I ask you to utter falsehood? I am Myself the Embodiment of Truth, and I will always ask you to speak only the truth. However, you are at liberty to change your voice suitably to achieve the desired result. I am sure you understand." The sage

nodded and smiled.

Some time later, after the Pandavas were hidden, Aswatthama came there, exactly as Krishna had foretold. Durvasa was sitting with his eyes closed. Bowing to the sage, Aswatthama enquired, in a most humble manner, about the whereabouts of the Pandavas. Durvasa slowly opened his eyes; which were like flame. Angrily he roared, "Yes, the Pandavas are here, right below me." Aswatthama was frightened because the sage was well known for his bad temper and his propensity to curse those whom he is angry with. Promptly, he fled from the scene, and the Pandavas were duly saved. All Avatars employ such techniques, and Swami too does the same when required.

The sages and saints, *yogis* and *jnanis* for ages have been providing *rakshana* (protection) and *sikshana* (correction) and make people tread the right path. Sage Durvasa did the same thing. Ignorant people accuse him of being one of anger in spite of being a great *tapasvin*. But, those people who are able to understand the real intention behind his apparent anger realise the truth. God has no anger. In fact, one who has anger is not fit to be called God at all!

Once Mother Parvati and Easwara called Vinayaka and His younger brother Subrahmanya, and advised them to go round the world. They also told them that whoever came first would be given a phala (fruit) as reward. This competition was intended to demonstrate the greatness of Vinayaka to the world. The younger brother Subrahmanya immediately plunged into action. He mounted His vehicle, the peacock, to fly round the world. But, Vinayaka did not move and sat in His own place. Easwara then enquired, "My dear son! Why did You not start on Your journey round the world?" Vinayaka laughed at this question and replied "Oh! Father! I need not go

anywhere. The fruit of all My journey round the world is right in front of me." So saying, Vinayaka made a *Pradakshina* (circumambulation) round His father and mother (Lord Easwara and Mother Parvati) and sat down calmly. He claimed victory in the race. In the meanwhile, Subrahmanya came there, after completing His journey round the world. He was very much tired and reported to His father about His successful completion of the task. Lord Easwara then declared Vinayaka as the winner in the race and handed over the fruit to Him. The place where this episode took place is called Palani, in the State of Tamil Nadu.

The underlying meaning in this story is that the parents are the very embodiment of divinity and it is enough if one does *pradakshina* to them in reverence. That would be tantamount to the *punya* (merit) acquired by visiting all the holy shrines in the world. Without the parents, there can be no son at all! If children are to be virtuous, it is the parents who have to take care of them. The parents are responsible for the success of their children in all the endeavours.

It is common practice for students to visit temples during examination time and pray for success in the examinations. They offer coconuts in the temples with the pocket money given by their parents. These are all external practices, which have little to do with sincere devotion. If they really wish to achieve success in their endeavour, it is enough if they please their parents and obtain their blessings. If they are satisfied, you are sure to succeed. In order to drive home the point that children should strive to please and satisfy their parents first, Lord Easwara and Mother Parvati arranged this competition of going round the world for Lord Vinayaka and Lord Subrahmanya. If you want to obtain the grace of God, it is enough if you obey the command of your parents lovingly. There is

no greater divinity than the parents who are present right in front of your eyes. They have struggled hard in several ways to bring you up to the present state. They made a lot of sacrifice, so that you may come up in life. No parent would ever like to displease his children. They appear to be angry sometimes and may even give some punishment, but that is only outward. In their heart of hearts, they have abundant love for you. Even if they pretend to be angry, it is for your own good. The stream of infinite love ever flows in their hearts. Here is a small example: When the child does some mischief, the mother gives a beating. But, how? The beating merely produces sound but does not cause any pain to the child. Her anger is borne out of love only. On certain occasions, they may show anger, but it is only temporary. It is never permanent. You may think that your parents are angry with you. But, that is your own misunderstanding; you may not be able to understand their love, which is lying dormant. Even if they show anger and say “chee” (an expression in Telugu to indicate one's disapproval), it is only out of love. Students shall, therefore, try to understand the real nature of their parents.

In fact, one's anger is his own enemy, and happiness, his heaven. One should always be happy. A person with anger and irritable temperament can never achieve anything. Vinayaka is one who always obeyed his parents' command. That is why it is said that there is no leader above Him. Students sometimes ask for money from their parents to go to a cinema. When parents refuse, they think that the parents are angry. These are trivial issues. The parents, especially the mother, will be even ready to sacrifice her life, in order to save her children in times of danger. Unfortunately, today there are sons who even go to a court of law against their mothers. It is, therefore, essential that they change their attitude towards their

parents and realise that they are verily embodiments of love.

Any number of diversions or silly thoughts may arise in children, but the parents' love towards their children remains unwavering. There are several sons in the world who are angry with their parents, but relationship of the parents and their children is one of love only. Whatever differences that may arise between them are only temporary. The relationship between parents and their children is one of love, nothing else. Lord Vinayaka is the embodiment of love. He always showers love only. When He was acting as a scribe to write the *Mahabharata* to the dictation of Sage Vyasa, he displayed the same attitude of love. Since He was the embodiment of Love, Vyasa selected Him particularly to undertake the duty of a scribe. Throughout the period of writing the *Mahabharata*, Vinayaka displayed this quality of pure love. That is why you do not find even a single mistake in the *Mahabharata*. Since He was flawless, His word was also flawless. You do not find the bad qualities of anger, jealousy, envy or pride in Vinayaka. They are the qualities of a human being devoid of noble qualities.

Dear students! From today onwards, you give up whatever little anger you have towards your parents and cultivate pure love towards them. Love begets love. Receive love from your parents in abundance and prosper in life.

Today is the festival of Vinayaka Chaturthi. It is a very important festival. There is a custom in some families to invite the newly married son-in-law for the festival. Therefore, do not hesitate to go to your in-law's house to spend some time happily with them.

*Oh newly married bridegroom, visit your in-laws' house,  
Come, spend your time in fun and frolic with your brothers-  
in-law and sisters-in-law,  
The entire household and the neighbourhood will honour you*

*w i t h l o v e a n d a f f e c t i o n .*

(Telugu song)

When a son-in-law visits his spouses parents' house, the entire household gets into a festive mood. One is sure to feel happy and mentally relaxed. There are, however, some stone-hearted sons-in-law, who cultivate ill-feelings towards their in-laws and do not visit their house. Such ill-feelings are the result of food. As is the food, so is the head. The feelings of the heart reflect the thought in the head (mind). Therefore, we must take the right food. You should never take such food as would kindle the flames of anger and envy in you. Since ancient times, sages in India have observed strict diet regulations. They always made it a point to consume *sattwic* food, not *rajasic* food. By consuming *rajasic* food, anger is generated. On the other hand, if you consume *thamasic* food, you will feel sleepy even while you eat. Therefore, both *rajasic* and *thamasic* types of food must be avoided. Only *sattwic* food must be taken. Excess of chillies, salt and sour items must be avoided in food. Before you take food, never forget to offer your prayers:

*Brahmarpanam Brahma Havir*

*Brahmagnou Brahmanahutam*

*Brahmaiva Thena Ganthavyam*

*Brahma Karma Samadhina.*

(Brahman is the ladle as well as the oblation. He is the sacrificial fire as also the sacrificer. And finally, Brahman is the goal of one who is engaged in the act of sacrifice.)

When you pray in this manner before you partake of your food, God immediately responds thus:

*Aham Vaishvanaro Bhutva*

*Praninam Dehamasritah*

*Pranapana Samayukta*

*Pachamyannam Chaturvidham.*

(I am present in all beings in the form of digestive fire. United with the *Prana* (exhalation) and *Apana* (inhalation), it is I who consume the four kinds of food.)

While taking food, you must always ensure that you take only such items which you can easily digest. Never consume food which you cannot digest. Just as you sit down happily for taking food, so also when you get up after taking your food, you must feel happy and light. Some people sit for food with a light stomach and get up with a heavy stomach after eating bellyful. This is not the proper method of taking food.

Always take light food. These are the habits you must cultivate at least from this auspicious day of Vinayaka Chaturthi. If you cultivate these good habits and qualities you can become as great as Lord Vinayaka.

(Bhagawan concluded His discourse with the Bhajan, "*Prema Muditha Manase Kaho...*")