

Ahimsa

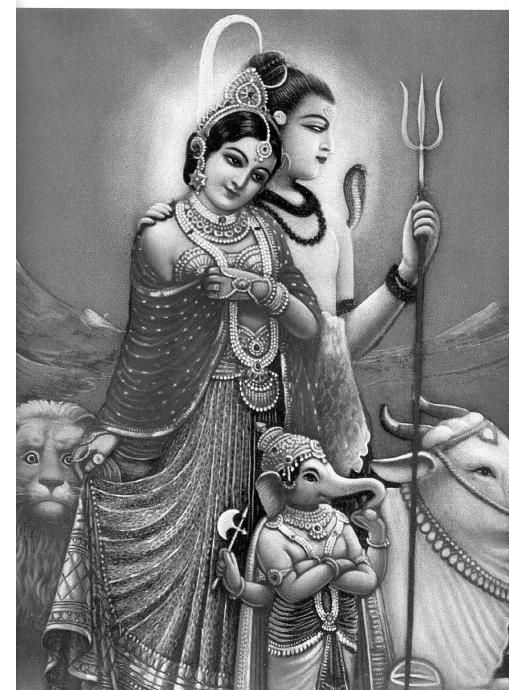
Ganesha and the Cat

A traditional story from India, retold for the children of
SRV Associations



Ganesha is the son of Mother Parvati and Lord Siva, who are the Mother and Father of all the worlds. Ganesha is known for his elephant head, his great intelligence, for courage, for steadiness in the face of all problems, and as the remover of all obstacles.

When he was a little boy, he had tremendous energy, but sometimes he did not know how best to use his energy and used it in hurtful ways. This is a story of how Ganesha learned to be a protector of all beings.



Ganesha and the Cat

A traditional story from India, retold.

One morning, Ganesha went out to play in the forest. He hugged his Mother, Parvati, and waved good bye. She kissed him and said, "Be back for lunch."

Ganesha climbed trees and picked fruits. He walked all over the forest and watched the deer, squirrels, and birds. After awhile, he wished he had someone to play with.

He looked up at a big tree with thick, low branches and saw his cat sitting quietly in the sun. He thought, "I will play with my pet cat."

The cat was asleep when Ganesh got close. He opened his eyes and yawned and stretched. Ganesha wanted to play so he stretched out both hands to pick him up. But the cat jumped away.

Ganesha thought he was playing a game with him. He ran and picked him up. But his cat really did not want to be picked up. He wiggled very fast and hard and slipped out of his arms.

Ganesha started to get mad at him.

"I want to play! Why won't you play with me?!"

He chased the cat from tree to tree and caught him again. The cat squirmed and wriggled, but he held him tight and scratched his face he was so angry. Finally, he squeezed out between Ganesha's hands.

The cat was hurt and frightened. This time the cat ran away too fast for Ganesha to follow.

It was almost lunch time so he started to walk home. He forgot all about the cat.

From far away, he heard his Mother Parvati calling him.

"Ganesha, Ganesha, come have your food!"

Her voice sounded like the most beautiful music. He ran all the rest of the way to her.

When he came to his Mother, she knelt down to hug and pick him up. But when she reached out for him he saw that she had bruises on her arms, her neck, and even her face.

"Who has hurt you?!" he asked. "How dare anyone hurt you? Why did I go to the forest to play? If I had been here I would have protected you. Tell me who did this!"

Mother Parvati smiled gently and looked at him so lovingly, then said, "Why, it was you, my darling son."

Ganesha was shocked. "I was away in the forest. How could I have done this?"

His Mother said, "Well, think back. Did you hurt any creature today?"

Ganesha had forgotten all about chasing the cat when he saw his Mother, but now he remembered.

"Mother, I wanted to play with my cat, but he didn't want to play. I got angry and scratched his face. But what does that have to do with you?"

Mother Parvati looked deep into Ganesha's eyes. He felt how much She loved him. The more he felt Her love, the bigger She became to him. She filled him. She filled the whole yard and palace. His Mother filled all the forest and mountains, all the people and animals. He saw that She was so big that all the worlds, the suns, moons, and stars - everything was inside of Her.

"Oh Mother. You are the cat. You are all creatures. You are the forest, You are me. You are everything. If I hurt anything, I hurt you too. Oh Mother, I am so sorry. I will try never, ever to hurt anything or anyone again."

Mother Parvati hugged Ganesha and gave to him a beautiful new word:

"My precious child, hear this word from Me:
Ahimsa

It means to not hurt anything or anyone with your body, your words, or your thoughts.

If you practice this powerful ahimsa like a yogi, then you will become a great protector of all beings. You will protect them with Peace, because you, yourself, will be Peace. All anger, hate, and violence will run away at the very sight of you."

From then on Ganesha practiced ahimsa. He saw his Divine Mother in all things, in all beings, and in himself too.

Ganesha is a divine protector of beings. He removes all obstacles for those who follow his example.



Om Jaya Ganapati

by Swami Damodarananda

Hymns to the Goddess by Jai Ma Music

Om Jaya Ganapati Ganesha Jaya Om
Omkara, prabhu sharanam, sharanam!

Vighna Vinashaka Durgati Paraka
Lambodara Om pahi mam

Sindura varna siddhi vinayaka
Taraka Natha bhava sindhum

Sakala vidya samasta puja
Adi vandita prabuddha jyoti

Bhakta rakshaka shakti pradayaka
Bhavani Shankara tanayam namo nama

Purushottama prabhu Adi Paratpara
Ananda ambhuti anubhava tattvam

Om Jaya Ganapati

translation by Babaji Bob Kindler

Victory to Ganapati, victory to Ganesha! O Thou whose form is one with Omkara, we take refuge at Thy Feet!

You drive away all obstacles of life and remove bad karma. O Thou who holds the entire universe in Thy stomach, we salute Thee!

To the eye You appear red like the kum kum, and You are the embodiment of all Divine powers. You are the Lord of saviors, rescuing all from the ocean of limited existence.

All forms of knowledge and the various rituals are accomplished successfully by worshipping Thee, O Great Illuminator.

You are the giver of power and devotion to the devotees. To Thee, the son of Lord Siva and Mother Parvati, salutations again and again.

You are the origin of all things and the highest Supreme Person. You are the ocean of bliss and the essence of inner experience.

Victory to Ganapati, victory to Ganesha! O thou whose form is one with Omkara, we take refuge at Thy Feet.