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# Aarsha Vidya Bharati - Sep 2022

## Bhadrapada - Ashvina 2079

A monthly newsletter that will bring you more happiness, more wisdom and more freedom



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This is one of many articles from our monthly newsletter. Access the [Sep 2022 issue](#) or read any of [the articles](#).

## Welcoming Ganesha into our homes and hearts

By Rashmi Kaikini, Mumbai

Ganesh Chaturthi is 31<sup>st</sup> August, 2022

(A longer version of this article first appeared in our Sep 2021 issue)

Adored and worshipped by millions, Śrī Gaṇeśa, the most exalted, is firmly entrenched in the



hearts of his bhaktas (devotees). Śrī Gaṇeśa is invoked as *Vighnahartā*, one who removes the obstacles at all three levels, *ādhyātmika* (obstacles centered on one's body and mind), *ādhibhautika* (obstacles caused by disturbances in the immediate environment) and *ādhidaiivika* (obstacles caused by natural disasters) and bestows *jñāna* (knowledge) and *aiśvarya* (prosperity).

Śrī Gaṇeśa caturthī is one of the most spectacular and magnificent festivals of India celebrated on the 4th day of Śukla pakṣa, in the month of Bhādrapada.

Lokmanya Tilak was the first person to install a large clay *mūrti* of Śrī Gaṇeśa in a public place and started the 10-day long celebrations which turned into a National festival. He used the celebration as a means to bind the fragmented Hindu community and oppose the British government ban on Hindu gatherings.

Each Hindu family takes pride in celebrating this festival. Some learn and chant the *Saṅkaṭanāśana Gaṇeśa stotram*, some visit Ganapati temples, some sing bhajans, some listen to *Gaṇapati Atharvaśīrṣa upaniṣad*, some volunteer in *Gaṇeśotsava* Mandals and arrange cultural programs, organize free blood donation and medical camps, some make special offerings and donate to temples, some visit mandals, friends and relatives where the *mūrti* is worshipped and seek the grace of *Gaṇeśa*.

Symbol or a form is a carrier of some meaning. When the mind is all over, to arrest the mind a form is worshipped. *Gaṇapati* is the one with the face of an elephant, and four arms, each having a certain object. One has a *paśa* which pulls us towards him, second has an *aṅkuśa* to cut all that we don't need, another has *abhaya* mudra, which is a gesture of blessing. His entire

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body is smeared with reddish looking *gandha* (sandal paste). We worship him with *dūrvā* grass and red flowers (hibiscus) as revealed in the *Gaṇapati Atharvaśīrṣa Upaniṣad*.

After the 10 days of intense prayers, japa, *sevā* and feasting, on *Ananta Caturdaśi*, accompanied by the traditional dhol and lazim, *Gaṇeśa* is taken for *visarjana* (immersion). The processions make their way to the river or sea with loud *jai-kāras*,

‘Ganapati Bappa Moraya, Pudhachya varshi lavakar ya’, O Dear *Gaṇeśa*! Come back soon next year. As the *mūrti* is ceremoniously immersed in the waters, *Gaṇeśa* returns to his abode carrying all our *Saṅkaṭa* (difficulties) with him. Firmly established in our hearts, the manifest form returns to the unmanifest.



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