

## Ganesha's Birth Story

1

Ganesha is the son of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati. Parvati had left all luxuries of life when she married Shiva and came to live with him on Mount Kailas. One day she asked Nandi, the most devoted bull and guard of Shiva, to guard her door while she took a bath. She



strictly instructed Nandi not to allow anybody in. However, when Lord Shiva came home, Nandi could not tell his master not to enter his own home. Parvati was very annoyed at this disobedience by Nandi. But she understood that Nandi had to



obey his master. She realized that none of the guards of Shiva would ever become guards loyal only to her.

Next day before having bath, Parvati was smearing saffron and sandal paste (perfumes) over her body. A thought came to her mind while she did this. After scraping the paste off her body, she did not throw it away. With this thick paste, she created a statue of a little boy. She then made the statue alive.

2

Parvati was very happy with her new creature. She declared that the living statue of the boy was now her son. She asked him to guard the door while she was bathing. The boy replied that he would not let **anyone** to disturb Parvati while she bathed. Parvati went to have a bath.

3

4

When her husband Shiva came home, the little boy stopped him at the door and blocked his way. Lord Shiva told the boy that it was his house and to let him enter. But the boy would not obey him, because he was loyal only to Parvati. He told Shiva he had promised his mother that he would not let anybody in. Shiva got very angry at this boy he had never before seen.

5

Lord Shiva sent his guards, led by Nandi bull, to move the boy from the gate and let him go inside his home. The little boy fought them and defeated them. Shiva then called the other gods, but the little boy could not be defeated by gods either.

6

Now Lord Shiva himself came to fight with the little boy. The angry Shiva cut off the head of the boy and threw it far away from where they were fighting.



When Parvati saw the headless body of her son, she became sad and angry. She turned herself into a fierce Shakti (power, energy force). She was determined to destroy the army of gods that had killed her son.

7

When Lord Shiva knew her plans, he asked Parvati not to destroy the gods. He told Parvati that he was the one who had killed her son. He also begged her to forgive him.

8

9 Parvati demanded to have her son alive again, and Shiva agreed to this. Shiva could bring her son back to life, but he needed to find the boy's head. He asked his guards to go and get the head of the boy, but they could not find it anywhere.

10 The boy clearly needed a head. Shiva asked the guards to bring to him the head of the first creature they found whose head was lying towards the north.

11 Lord Shiva's guards went out again, this time searching for a creature whose head could substitute for the missing head. The first animal they saw with its head in a north direction was an elephant. So they cut the elephant's head and brought it to Shiva.



12 Shiva placed the elephant's head on the little boy's body and gave life back to the boy. Parvati was very happy to see her son alive again. Shiva told Parvati that the boy would be his son, too. He said they would call him "Gajaanana" - the one having the face of an elephant."

13 Parvati asked Shiva to give a position of authority to their son. Shiva decided that their son had shown great power, loyalty, and bravery when he fought for his mother's privacy. The boy stood firm and removed all obstacles when fighting against the army of gods. Therefore, he would have the role of removing obstacles from everyone's path who prays to him. People would also pray to him as the first god – before praying to any other god.

14 Therefore, this son of Shiva and Parvati came to be known as the remover of all obstacles. Because their son had also defeated all of Lord Shiva's guards (Ganas), Shiva said the boy would also be known as "Ganesh" – the god over the Ganas.



Parvati was now very happy. With a smile on her face, she lifted her son Ganesh on to her lap. Thus the family of Shiva and Parvati got a great son in form of Ganesha.