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Ganesh Chaturthi:

Ganesh Chaturthi is one of the most popular of Hindu festivals. This falls on the fourth day after new moon (amavasya) on the Chaturthi day in the Sukla Paksha period of the month of Bhadrapada/Aavani (August/September). This function is celebrated over a span of nine days in our Temple. A special Abhishekam is performed every day to Lord Ganesha in the morning. This is followed by alankarams (decoration of the God) of different styles including vibhoothi, flowers, and sandal wood paste. We also perform Maha Ganapathy Sahasranama Puja (very special events in which the priests chant 1000 namas of Lord Ganesha) everyday in the evening.

Lord Ganesha is the 'remover of obstacles', and hence he is worshipped before starting anything new. On Ganesh chaturthi day, devotees read a number of stories about Lord Ganesha. Two such stories are given below.

Once Siva and Parvati had a special fruit and both the sons (Ganesha and Subrahmanya) wanted it. The parents then suggested that the one who circled the world three times and comes back first would get it as a prize. Subrahmanya got on the peacock, his vahana, and flew around the globe in high speed. Lord Ganesha, on the other hand is very slow on his vehicle, the mouse. However, he came up with a bright idea that led him to win the prize. He walked around his parents (Parvati and Parameswara) three times with great devotion. When his parents asked him why he was not circling the world like Subrahmanya, he answered that his parents are the whole world for him. He also said that he don't have to go further to travel the whole world. Subrahmanya on returning back learned of this and accepted his defeat and bowed to his brother Lord Ganesha.

Another story of Lord Ganesha is the one that leads the devotees to the story of Syamantaka Jewel, which is quoted in Srimad Bhagavatam (The story describing the life of Lord Krishna). Once in a moment of embarrassment, the moon in the sky had a laugh at Lord Ganesha and drew a curse from Him. When moon realized his mistake, Ganesha withdrew His curse. However, not completely. He made it known that seeing the moon on His birthday (fourth day after new moon) is inauspicious. The bad effect can, however, be nullified if one listens to the story of Syamantaka Jewel. Once Satrajit, a nobleman of Dwaraka, had a Jewel called Syamantaka, gifted to him by the sun God. This gem could produce eight measures of gold everyday to its owner. He gave this precious stone to his brother Prasena. The mysterious absence of Prasena made Satrajit suspect Lord Krishna to have played a foul play. Lord Krishna had not done anything wrong. So, Lord Krishna took all special efforts to trace the truth behind the missing Prasena. He found the corpse of Prasena. There were footprints of a lion nearby. Following these footprints, Lord Krishna entered the cave of Jambavanta. He fought with Jambavanta for 28 days. At last, Jambavanta understood that Sri Krishna was Sri Rama himself and handed over Syamantaka Jewel to Him. Lord Krishna gave the Gem to Satrajit and thus put an end to all the accusations against Him. Lord Krishna was surprised at all the things that had happened. He was told by The Great Sages, that the whole thing was because He saw the moon on the fourth day after new moon and Lord Ganesha's curse on the moon. Lord Krishna then worshiped Lord Ganesha. The devotees believe that those who see the moon on this day will not suffer if they listen to the story of Syamantaka Jewel.

May The Blessings of Lord Sri Venkateswara and Sri Mahalakshmi be with you and your family.

HTCS