
Ganesha (Remover of Obstacles .. and the story of why he has his tusk in his hand)

This is Lord Ganesha – the remover of obstacles. Hindus offer prayers to him at the beginning of every auspicious occasion or major endeavor, seeking his blessings for success.

You will notice that he has the head of an elephant and that one of his tusks is shorter than the other. There is a very interesting story that explains how this happened. Ganesha offered to be the scribe for Sage Vyasa as he recited the epic poem, the Mahabharata if he recited the poem without stopping. In turn, Sage Vyasa imposed his own conditions – that Lord Ganesha would write without stopping and he could write a verse only when he understood each verse. The feather that Lord Ganesha was using to write the epic poem broke while he was writing. To hold his end of the bargain, Lord Ganesha broke his tusk and continued writing!

Legend has it that it took three years of continuous speaking and writing to capture the Mahabharata.. On a side note, the Mahābhārata is the longest epic poem known and has been described as "the longest poem ever written". Its longest version consists of over 100,000 shlokas or over 200,000 individual verse lines (each shloka is a couplet), and long prose passages. At about 1.8 million words in total, the Mahābhārata is roughly ten times the length of the Iliad and the Odyssey combined. No wonder it took that long to write it down!

See also in this exhibit, Ganesha (Painted on Tiles) and Ganesha (Buddhi, Siddhi, Riddhi) for additional descriptions.

1. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ganesha>
2. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahabharata>
3. <https://www.artisera.com/products/annapakshi-1>
4. www.livehistoryindia.com
5. www.heritage-india.com
6. Wikimedia commons