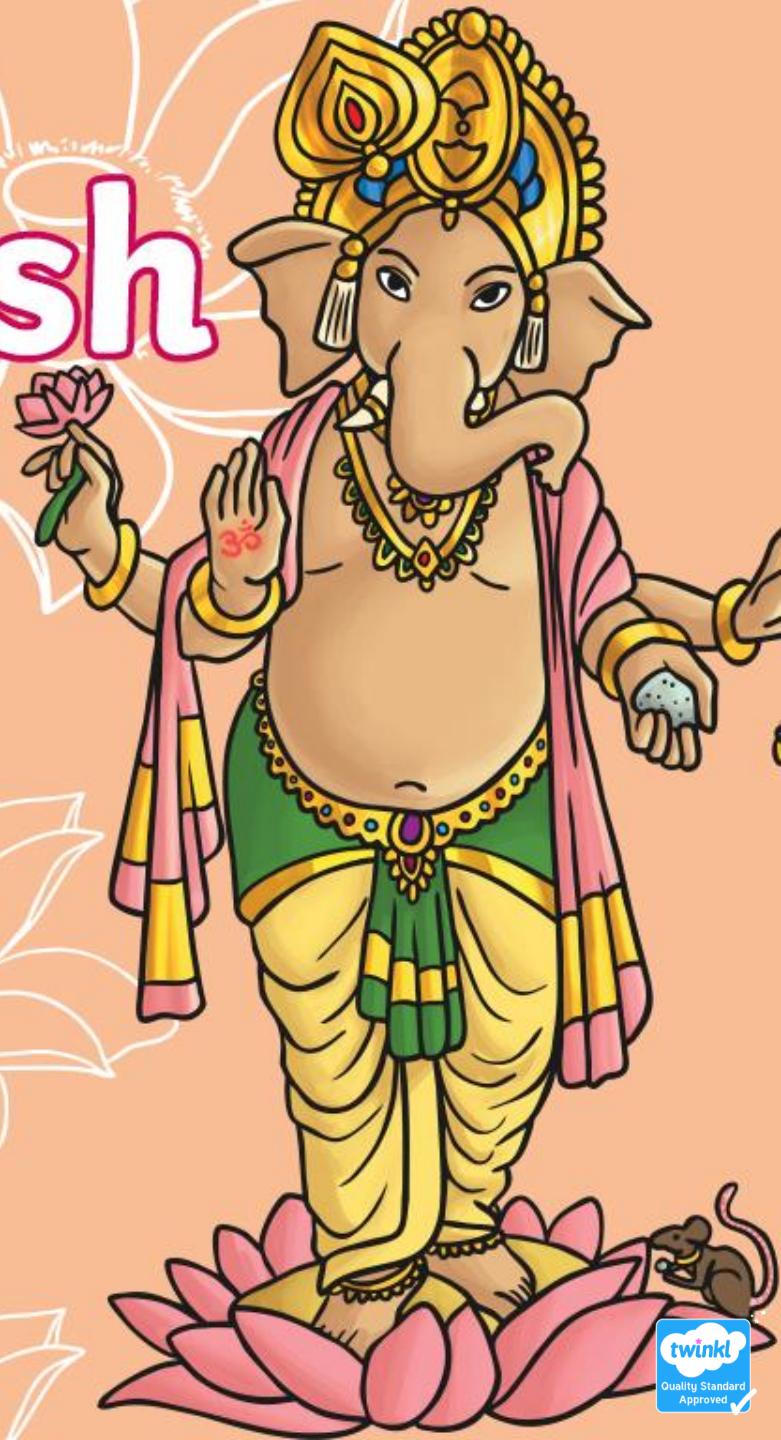


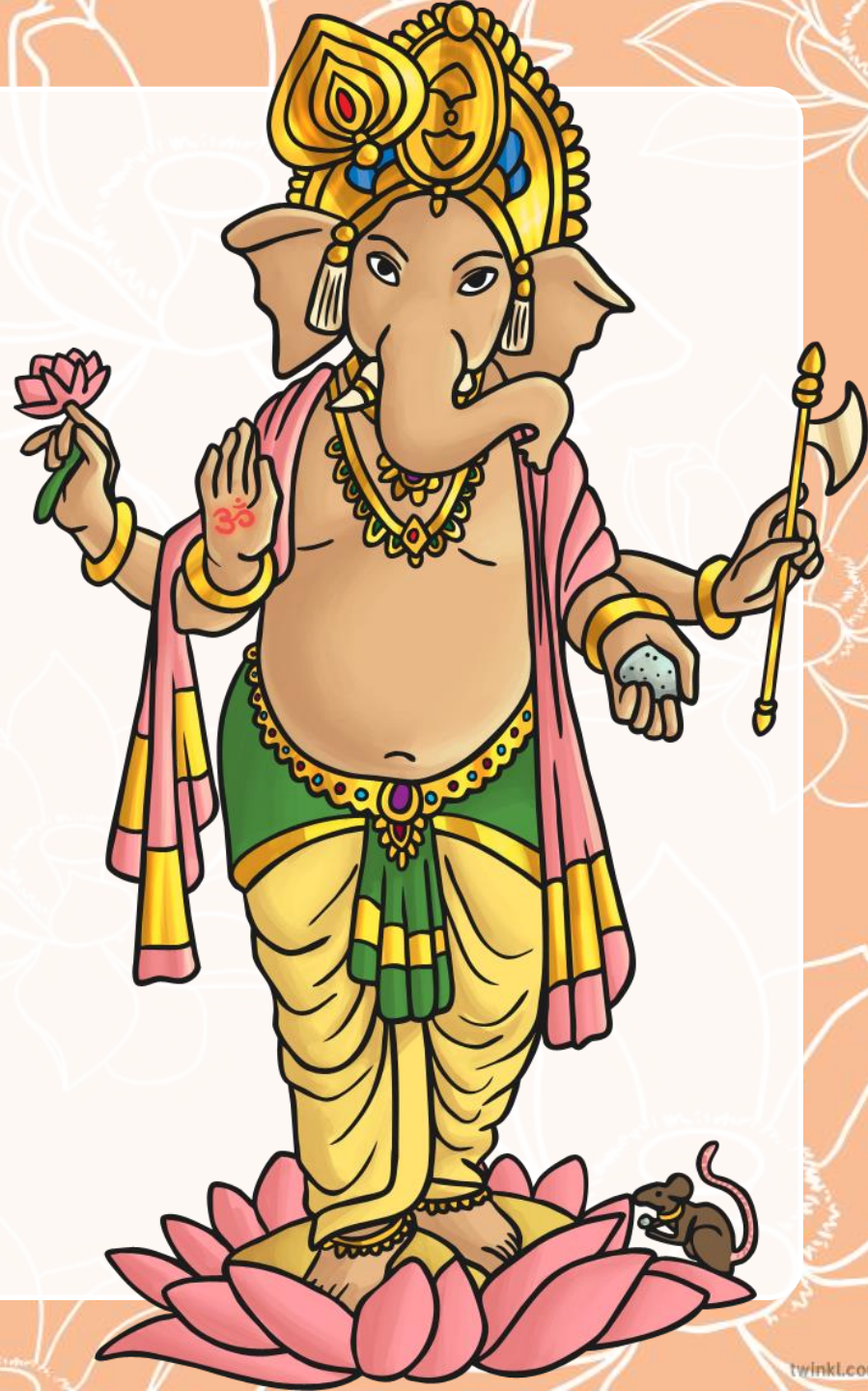
Ganesh



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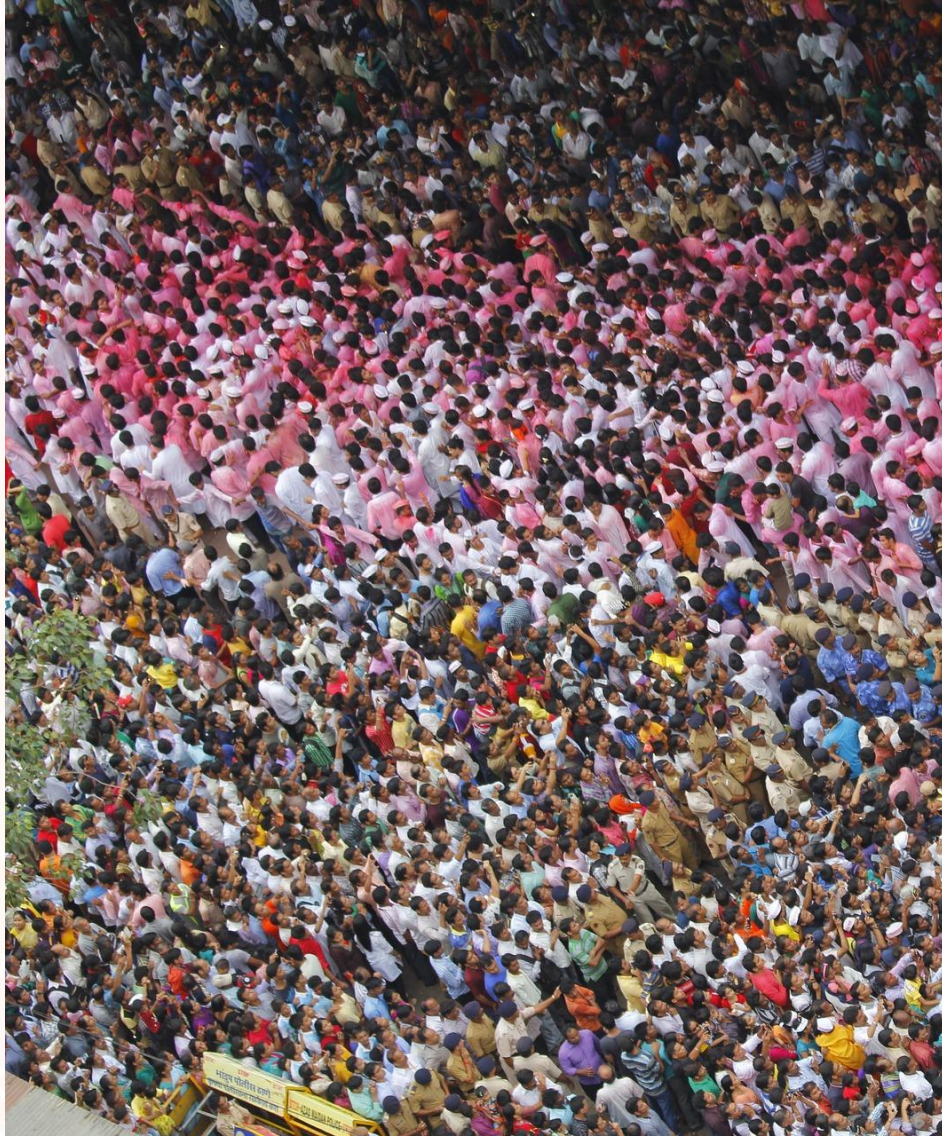
Lord Ganesh is one of the best known and most popular Hindu deities. Some of his other names include Heramba and Ganpati.

Ganesh is the son of Lord Shiva and the goddess Parvati. He is depicted as having an elephant's head on a human body. Ganesh has four hands. His fourth is held up to offer his protection and blessing. Ganesh's tusks, one broken and the other unbroken, represent imperfection and perfection in the world. A rat depicted near to his feet symbolises his ability to overcome anything.



Ganesh is known as the Remover of Obstacles, just like a real elephant. He is also called the Lord of Beginnings. Hindus pray to Ganesh when they are about to start something for the first time, such as a new job. He is believed to bestow good fortune and wisdom. Ganesh is also the patron god of travelling.





Ganesh Chaturthi is a joyous, ten-day festival which takes place in August or September. This festival is a time to celebrate the birth of Lord Ganesh. There are many different stories about Ganesh's birth. In one, Pavarti makes her son out of cloth then Shiva brings him to life.

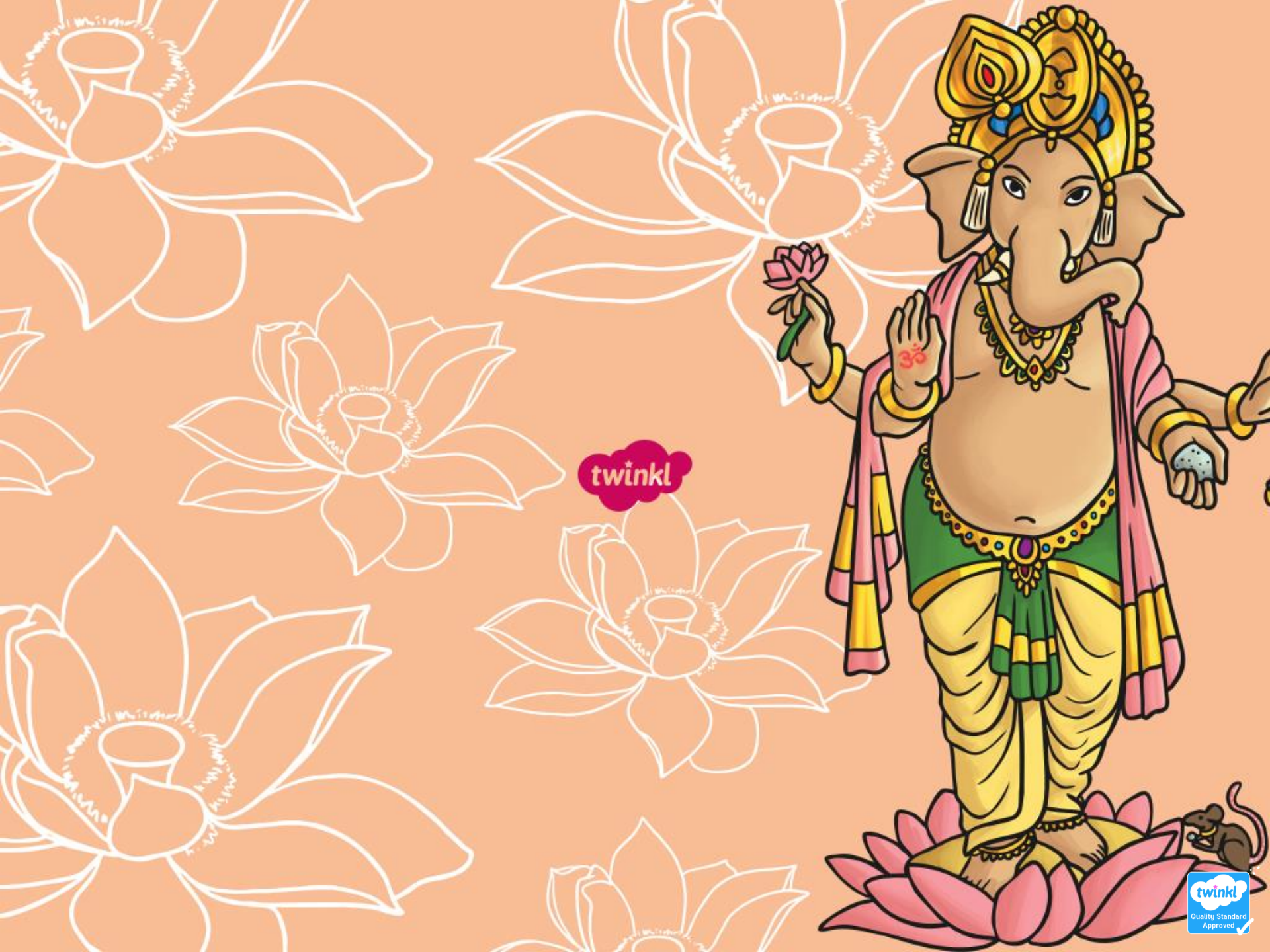
At the beginning of Ganesh Chaturthi, statues of Ganesh are anointed with a special paste and flowers. Offerings are made to Ganesh including coconut and modaks (sweet dumplings) which are thought to be his favourite food.

At the end of the festival, the statues of Ganesh are carried in huge processions to the sea, rivers or lakes. This is accompanied by drums, singing and dancing. The statues are put into the water. This final ritual is sending Ganesh home to the sacred mountain of Kailash.



Ganesh Chaturthi





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