

By Swami Jyotirmayananda



Begin EVERY Venture with “Sri Ganesh!”

According to the Vedic culture, all projects should begin by adoring God, Who is the Beginning of all that exists, represented by Lord Ganesha. This is so emphasized that Vedic literary works suggest that rather than saying, “Begin!” (which in Sanskrit is “*arambha*”) you say, “Sri Ganesh!” “Sri Ganesh,” a name of God (because of what He represents), is more reverential and gives God credit for the success of the project.

And there is a humorous way to think about this teaching. *Rambha* is well known in the scriptures as a heavenly *apsara*, a source of worldly enjoyment. When many Indian people begin any project, they say, “Let’s do *arambha*,” implying “Let’s begin.” But *arambha* implies that your goal is to achieve fleeting enjoyments, not genuine and lasting happiness.

There is a significant difference between starting your project with reverence and a joyous mind or beginning a project with dullness or over-excitement, or even mental imbalance, cursing people around you, finding fault with them. Generally, the goal of projects is worldly—how much fame you will acquire, how much money you will earn, or what heavenly enjoyments you will achieve in the afterlife, etc. Such worldly or heavenly enjoyment is not your ultimate goal, because those who achieve such enjoyment ultimately exhaust their good karmas and return again to another lifetime. The cycles of birth and death have not terminated.

However, when you begin any project by invoking Sri Ganesha, you are acknowledging God Who dwells within your heart, Who is the Source or Beginning of all. In so doing, you are commencing your project in the most auspicious manner possible.