

## **PILLAYAR NONBU**

Pillayar is the elephant headed God in Hindu Iconography. He is the first Son of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvathi. In Hindu religious functions and in temples He is the God to be worshipped first. No religious function starts without invoking the blessings of Lord GANESHA. He is also known as GANAPATHI, VinAyaGar and VigNeswarar.

In spiritual teaching, Lord Ganesha is the deity for the first CHAKARA, MOOLADHARAM. He allows the breathing pattern to flow smoothly from the MOOLADHARA to all the other Chakaras. He gets chanting with arugamPULL (Kusa Grass) He is offered Aval Pori, Mothagam and Kolukattai.

NONBU means fasting and breaking the fast with a function.

### **Nagarathars and Pillayar Nonbu**

Nagarathars are saivites and the first God to be worshipped in Saivism is Lord Ganesha. Nagarathars are well known for their magnanimity in sponsoring temple consecrations and Kumbaabishekams. They follow the traditional Hindu Poojas and festivals ritually. One such ceremony is Pillayar Nonbu. The origin of Pillayar Nonbu is not clear and not written as original. There are stories about it spread by elders in various families.

Hypothesis Story: 1. Lord Ganesha killed demon GAJAMUGASURAN on the day of Sashti in SATHAYA star in the month of MARGAZI. Since Nagarathars worshipped Lord Ganesha as MARAGATHA vinayagar in KaveripoomPattinam they celebrated this function with faith and fervour

Hypothesis Story: 2. In Kaveripoompattinam a Nagarathar family teenage girl was ill treated by her step-mother and accused of stealing her diamond ring. The girl worshipped Lord Ganesha for 21 days from the month of KARTHIKAI. She counted days by a thread from her saree. On the 21<sup>st</sup> day from KARTHIGAI she got an answer from the Lord and her innocence was revealed. This fell on the day of Sathayam and Sashti.

Hypothesis Story3: Nagarathars are well-known to travel abroad in ship to East Asian Countries. During one such time a group of Chettiars were stranded in an island after a shipwreck. They counted the days till rescue by taking one thread from their dhoti each day. They were rescued on the 21<sup>st</sup> day which was in month Margazhi and the star was sathayam with Thithi Sashti.

For the above reasons it became traditional to celebrate this function as a family during MarGazi month on the day when SASHTI THITHI and SATHAYAM star coincides. On that day 21 threads are taken from new dhoti, made into a wick, and embedded in Dough flour with ghee as the fuel. In India, they will keep a flower Called AVARAM POO as the dayflower. This has 21 petals. All sweet items and typical chettinad snacks are served at the end of function. The elder of the house or the group takes the IZHAI and offers to all in the family or community. This function is celebrated worldwide by all nagarathars, some SriLankan Tamils and also a community in Karnataka.

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