**THE UNIQUE JAIN FESTIVAL OF FORGIVENESS**

Michhami Dukkadam is being exchanged (probably without knowing, experiencing or feeling by many) for Forgiveness every year on Samvatsari at the end of Paryushan. Paryushan concludes with a time of confession and forgiveness for the transgressions of the previous year. To experience what forgiveness is, please follow these simple steps with your conscious mind and body.

**STEP 1**
Close your eyes...for a moment just reflect on what the word Forgiveness might really mean. What is forgiveness?

**STEP 2**
And now, very gently just as an experiment in truth -- allow the image of someone for whom you have much resentment -- someone from whom you have anger and a sense of distance -- let them just gently -- gently, come into your mind -- As an image, as a feeling.

May be feel them at the center of your chest as fear, resistance.

However they manifest in your mind-body, just invite them in very gently for this moment -- for this experiment.

And in your heart, silently say to them, ‘I forgive you’.

‘I forgive you for whatever you have done in the past that caused me pain, intentionally or unintentionally.

Let it go.

And turn to yourself in your own heart and say ‘I forgive you’ to yourself, whatever tries to block that the merciless and fear.

Let it go.

May they discover joy.

May all beings forgive themselves.

Let that loving kindness, extend to the whole planet...extend to entire universe to every level of existence, seen and unseen.

May all beings be free from suffering.

Let them go quietly.

Michhami Dukkadam

-The South Asian Times Parivar

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Invoking the god of good beginnings

Lord Ganesh or Ganpati is the god of auspicious beginnings and remover of obstacles. Ganesh (or Vinayak) Chaturthi is a day on which Ganesh, the elephant-headed son of Shiva and Parvati, is believed to bestow his presence on earth for all his devotees. (It fell on September 3 this year). The festival lasts for 10 days. While celebrated all over India, it is most elaborate in Maharashtra, Goa, Gujarat, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.

The following is a popular Ganesh invocation mantra beseeching him to let the projects we embark on always come to fruition unhindered.

Vaktra thunda maha soorya koti sama praba
Nirvignam kurume deva sarva kaaryeshu sarvardha.

Lord Ganesh has 108 names. The visual depicts the Lord as per 12 of his names.