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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 is the most important Jain religious observance of the year. It is observed over a period of 8-10 day (it fell this year August 27 thru September 4) with intensive study, reflection and purification. 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. Allow....Allow them to be touched... power of your thought is immense and it'd touch them... just for a moment at least... by your forgiveness. Allow forgiveness.

It is so painful to hold someone out of your heart. How can you hold on to that pain, that resentment, even a moment longer? Fear, doubt... let it go... and for this moment, touch them with your forgiveness. 'I FORGIVE YOU.' Now let them go gently, let them leave quietly. Let them go with your blessings.

STEP 3

Now picture someone who has great resentment for you. Someone near or dear May be a friend, customer/client or employer/employee.... supplier/creditor or a banker/broker of insurance anyone who has any cause of resentment for you. Could be spouse or parent, child or neighbor

who had any cause of resentment for you in recent past. Feel them in your chest, may be in the heart, seeing them in your mind as an image -- sense of their being. Invite them gently in. And in your heart, say to them 'I ask your forgiveness, for whatever I may have done in the past that caused you pain, intentionally or unintentionally --- through my words, through my actions, through my thoughts. However I caused you pain, I ask your forgiveness. I ask your forgiveness.' 'Through my anger, my fear, my blindness, my laziness. However I caused you pain, intentionally or unintentionally -- I ask your forgiveness.' Let it be. Allow that forgiveness in. Allow yourself to be touched by their forgiveness. Power of your thoughts is immense... they are forgiving you. If the mind rises up with thoughts like self-indulgence or doubt, just see how profound our mercilessness is with ourself and be open to the forgiveness. Allow yourself to be forgiven. Allow yourself to be forgiven. And gently very gently ... let them go on their way in forgiveness for you -- in blessings for you.

STEP 4

And turn to yourself in your own heart and say 'I forgive you' to you/yourself. whatever tries to block that the merciless and fear. Let it go. Let it be touched by your forgiveness and your mercy. And gently in your heart, calling yourself by your own first name, say, 'I FORGIVE YOU' to you. It is so painful to put yourself out of your heart. Let yourself in. Allow yourself to be touched by this forgiveness. Let the healing in. Say, 'I FORGIVE YOU' to you. (you will feel very peaceful...light hearted and relieved if not, try repeating step 2, 3 & 4... till you have softened your heart, feel your inner peace... then go to step 5)

STEP 5

(say with immense love and joy,...openly, loudly...) Let that forgiveness be extended to the beings all around you. May all beings forgive themselves. May they discover joy. May all being be freed of suffering.



Lord Mahavir, the last Tirthankara in the Jain tradition.

May all beings be healed. May they be at one with their thru nature. May they be free from suffering. May they be at peace. Let that loving kindness, that forgiveness, extend to the whole planet... extend to entire universe to every level of existence, seen and unseen. May all beings be freed of sufferings. May they know the power of forgiveness, may they know their true being. May they know their vastness their infinite peacefulness. May all beings be free. May all beings be free.

Michhami Dukkadam
-The South Asian Times Parivar

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.

Vakra thunda maha kaya soorya koti sama praba

Nirvignam kurume deva sarva kaaryeshu sarvadha.

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

