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“DIWALI: The Festival of Lights”

Diwali or Dipawali, is India's biggest and most important Festival. The festival gets its name from the row(awali) of clay lamps (deeps) that Indians light outside their homes to symbolize the inner light that protects us from spiritual darkness. Over the centuries, Diwali has become a national festival that is enjoyed by most Indians regardless of faith: Hindus, Jains, Buddhists, and Sikhs.

Diwali, celebrated in October or November each year, originated as a harvest festival that marked the last harvest of the year before winter. On the day of Diwali festival, doorways are hung with torans of mango leaves and marigolds. Rangolis are drawn with different colored powders to welcome guests. The traditional motifs are often linked with auspicious symbols of good luck.

Indians celebrate with family gatherings, glittering clay lamps, festive fireworks, strings of electric lights, bonfires, flowers, sharing of sweets, and worship to Lakshmi. Some believe that Lakshmi wanders the Earth looking for homes where she will be welcomed. People open their doors and windows and light lamps to invite Lakshmi in.

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Diwali is a five-day festival. The first day of Diwali is called DhanTheras. On this day, Lord Dhanvantari appeared, delivering Ayurvedic medicine for mankind. People buy new utensils or gold or silver on this day. The second day of Diwali is called Naraka Chaturdasi. On this day, Lord Krishna destroyed the demon Narakasura. On the third day, Deepavali is celebrated, which involves the worship of Goddess Laksmi and Lord Ganesha. Besides this, houses are illuminated with lamps, candles and various multicolor strings of light bulbs. On fourth day, Govardhana Puja is performed. The final day is known as Bhai Dooj and celebrates the love between a brother and sister.

[Hindus interpret the Diwali story based upon where they live:](#)

In northern India they celebrate the story of King Rama's return to Ayodhya after he defeated Ravana by lighting rows of clay lamps.

Southern India celebrates it as the day that Lord Krishna defeated the demon Narakasura.

In western India the festival marks the day that Lord Vishnu, the Preserver, sent the demon King Bali to rule the nether world.

In all interpretations, one common thread rings true—the festival marks the victory of good over evil.

One of the rituals traditionally associated with Diwali is gambling. Families and friends get together to indulge in dice or cards. It is believed that on this day Goddess Parvati played dice with her husband Lord Shiva and she decreed that whosoever gambled on Diwali night would prosper throughout the ensuing year.

Deepavali is celebrated around the world, particularly in countries with significant populations of Hindu, Jain and Sikh origin. These include Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, Malaysia etc...

"Everything comes to us that belongs to us if we create the capacity to receive it"

- Rabindranath Tagore (1861 - 1941)

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