



卐 Literal Meaning:

Deepavali means “Row of lights” in Sanskrit.

Dīpāvali (also transliterated Deepavali) or Diwāli (contracted spelling) is the Hindu Festival of Lights.

卐 Significance & History:

Diwali symbolizes the victory of good over evil, and lamps are lit as a sign of celebration and hope for mankind. The reason for celebrating Diwali is the return of Lord Ram, after killing Ravan (Demon) during his exile for 14 years. The day of killing Ravan is celebrated as **Dushehra** (19~21 days before Diwali). Celebrations focus on lights and lamps, particularly traditional diyas and fireworks.

According to the Vedic culture, the message of “*Tamaso ma jyotir gamaya*” (from darkness unto light) is given through the festival of Deepavali to the people of the world

The Story of Rama and Sita:

Lord Rama was a great warrior King who was exiled by his father Dashratha, the King of Ayodhya, along with his wife Sita and his younger brother Lakshman. Lord Rama returned to his Kingdom Ayodhya after 14 years of exile, in which he put an end to the demon Ravana of Lanka, who was a great Pundit, highly learned but still evil dominated his mind.





After this victory of Good over Evil, Rama returned to Ayodhya. In Ayodhya, the people welcomed them by lighting rows of clay lamps. So, it is an occasion in honor of Rama's victory over Ravana; of Truth's victory over Evil.

卐 Five days of Diwali:

Deepavali is celebrated for five consecutive days. As per western calendar, it usually occurs in the month of October or November. A lunar half-month is 15 days. Diwali as a new-moon day, marks the last day of a 15-day period. All the days except Diwali are named using this designation in the Indian calendar.

Dhan Teras:

(or Dhan-trayodashi) Dhan means "wealth" and Trayodashi means "13th day". Thus, as the name implies, this day falls on the 13th day of the first half of the lunar month. On Dhan Teras, Goddess Laxmi is worshiped to provide prosperity and well being. Hence, Dhan Teras holds a lot more significance for the business community.



Kali Chaudas: (or Naraka Chaturdasi) Narak means 'new era of Light and Knowledge'. Chaturdasi implies fourteenth day. This day is allotted to the worship of Maha-Kali or Shakti. Also, Lord Krishna killed the demon Narkasur on this day.





Diwali: The actual day of Diwali, is celebrated on the third day of the festival, when the moon completely wanes and total darkness sets in the night sky.

Bestu Varas: (Varsha-pratipada or Padwa) Beginning of the New Year. Pratipada means the first.

Bhai Bij: (also Bhayyaduj, Bhaubeej or Bhayitika) This is a day on which all sisters will invite their brothers for meals. The sisters will wish their brothers longevity, health, prosperity and happiness, thereby also renewing their affection.

卐 How is Diwali celebrated:

Diwali is celebrated by lighting diyas (earthen lamps), drawing rangolis (multicoloured designs drawn on the ground with coloured rice flour), cleaning and decoration of homes, wearing new clothes, preparation of sweets in homes, lighting of fireworks, and Lakshmi Puja.

Tradition of Lights: The Diwali illuminations with lighted diyas bring the supernatural brightness and joy with the hope of finding light in darkness, achieving knowledge where there is ignorance, and spreading love amidst hatred. Diwali is also known as the Festival of Lights. So, during this festival, 'deeps', or oil lamps, are burned throughout the day and into the night to ward off darkness and evil.

Homes are filled with these oil lamps, candles and lights. Some people use decorated light candles, some decorated diyas. Traditionally people use 'earthen lamps' with cotton wicks and oil to light up the dark night.





Tradition of Rangoli: 'Rangoli' is a sanskrit word which means a creative expression of art through the use of color. In ancient India, rangolis were used to decorate the entrances of homes.

In a rangoli, powdered colors are sprinkled on cleaned and dusted floors to form decorations. The colored powder is usually applied 'freehand' by letting it run from the gap formed by pinching the thumb and the forefinger.



Tradition of Fireworks:

Diwali is incomplete without fireworks. Old and young alike love the splendor and sparkle of fireworks. The earthen lamps that we light on Diwali night are generally placed on balcony and window ledges. Twinkling anaars, rockets whizzing past, dazzling fireworks exploding in the skies above... it's sheer dynamite!



References:

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