

DEEPAVALI (DIWALI)



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Deepavali, the “festival of lights”, is one of the most important festivals of India. This festival is celebrated on a grand scale in almost all the regions of India. Diwali is looked upon in some parts of India as the beginning of New Calendar or Financial Year. Indians all over the world celebrate Diwali.

Deepavali is also commonly known as Diwali. In Sanskrit, Deepavali is a combination of two words - Deepa and Avali. Deepa means lights, and Avali means row. So, Deepavali means “row of lights”.

Do you know the significance of Deepavali and why we celebrate this festival? Every festival in India has a legend that goes along with it. Similarly, there are different legends associated with Deepavali.

Legend 1: Return of Sri Rama to Ayodhya

One of the famous legends behind the celebrations of Diwali is about the prince of Ayodhya, Lord Sri Rama. The king of Lanka, Ravana kidnapped Rama’s wife, Sita from the forest during their exile. In order to free Sita from Ravana’s custody, Rama and Lakshmana (Rama’s younger brother) attacked Lanka with the help of Hanuman and the Vanaras. In that war, Sri Rama killed Ravana, and released Sita. He returned to Ayodhya with his wife Sita and younger brother Lakshmana after fourteen years of exile.

When Rama returned after the battle with his wife Sita and his brother Lakshmana, as well as Hanuman and other friends, the people of Ayodhya decorated their homes and the entire city. They placed tiny diyas or deepams, everywhere. This was on the day of Kartik Amavasaya. Amavasaya means “new moon day”, when there is no moon out at all. Thus, on Kartik Amavasaya, the diyas show up very bright as it is otherwise dark outside.

Rama is symbolic of all that is good. The demon he killed, Ravana, is symbolic of all that is bad. Therefore, Diwali celebrates the victory of good over bad.

Legend 2: Death of Narakasura

There was once a demon named Narakasura, son of Bhudevei (mother Earth). Even though Narakasura was the son of a divinity, he had the nature of demon. Narakasura acquired immense power from a boon given by Lord Brahma after a severe penance. He caused a lot of trouble to people on Earth, and to Gods in the heaven, with his mighty power. He took all the divine elephants of Indra - King of the Gods, and insulted Indra's mother. Indra felt humiliated at his loss, and even worse that his mother was assaulted. He wanted to take revenge, but Narakasura was so powerful that no one could stop him. Indra did not know anyone powerful enough to stop him except for Lord Krishna, who was an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. So Indra went and pleaded with Krishna to stop this terrible demon.

Krishna agreed to help Indra. Krishna, along with His wife Satyabhama – an incarnation of Mother Earth, fought with Narakasura. Together, they killed Narakasura, and freed the Earth and Heaven of all the problems caused by him. People celebrated the death of Narakasura with great joy by lighting lamps at their homes.

Mahalakshmi

Diwali is also celebrated as Mahalakshmi's birthday. Goddess Lakshmi appeared during Samudra Manthan - the churning of the ocean, by the Rakshasas (demons) on one side and Devataas (Gods) on the other side. Therefore, the worship of Goddess Lakshmi, the Lakshmi Puja, on the day of Diwali, became a tradition.

Daily Slokas:**Ganesh Sloka:**

*Vakra Tunda Mahaa Kaaya; Suryakoti Samaprabha
Nirvighnam Kurume Deva; Sarvakaaryeshu Sarvadaa*

Saraswati Stotra:

*Saraswathi Namasthubyam; Varade Kamaroopini
Vidyarambham Karishyami; Siddhir Bhavatume Sada*

Guru Stotra:

*Gurur Brahmaa Gurur Vishnu; Gurur Devo Maheshwarah
Guruh Saakshaat Parabrahma; Tasmai Shree Gurave Namah*

Vishun Stotra:

*Shuklambharadharam Vishnum Shashivarnam Chaturbhujam
Prasanna Vadanm Dhyayet Sarva Vignopa Shantaye*

Rama Mantra:

*Sri Rama Rama Rameti, Rame Rame Manorame
Sahasranama tattulyam, Rama Nama Varanane*

Durga Stotra:

*Om Sarva Mangala Maangalye Shive Sarvaartha Saadhike
Sharanye Triyambake Gauri, Naaraayani Namostute*

Hanuman Mantra:

*Manojavam Maarutatulyavegam; Jitendriyam Buddhimataam Varistham
Vaataatmajam Vaanarayoothamukhyam; Sriramadootam Sirasa Namami*

Matru Devo Bhava Sloka:

*Maathru Devo Bhava; Pitru Devo Bhava
Acharya Devo Bhava; Athidhi Devo Bhava*

Morning Sloka:

*Karaagre Vasate Lakshmi; Kara Madhye Saraswathi
Kara Moole Tu Govinda; Prabahate Kara Darshanam*

Bath Sloka:

*Gange cha Yamune chaiva Godavari Saraswati,
Narmade Sindhu Kaveri jalesmin sannidhim kuru*

Drawing Exercise:

