

DEEPAVALI (DIWALI)



DEEPAVALI

Deepavali is the “festival of lights”, which is one of the important festivals of India. This festival is celebrated on a grand scale in almost all the regions of India and is looked upon in some parts of India as the beginning of New Calendar or Financial Year. The Indians who are away from their home country also celebrate this festival in a grand way as we all did yesterday in our temples and homes. Diwali is the other name of Deepavali, which is the easy way to pronounce Deepavali. 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”.

Light is the most important of the Deepavali symbols. Light brings warmth and illumination. By having lights in the house, one is reminded to always light up one’s own life and to bring light into the lives of others. The lamp/light points to a significant fact. Whenever it may be placed, the flame goes upwards only and never moves down. Likewise, the flame of “Jnana” (spiritual wisdom) leads one to a sublime level through the path of Righteousness.

Do you know what is the significance of Deepavali and why do we celebrate this festival? As we all know, India is a land of rich cultural heritage that has at least one festival for every month. It is the spiritual and religious richness in India that each festival is related to some or other deity, and there is a story associated with it. Similarly, there are different legends associated with Deepavali celebrations.

MAHALAKSHMI

Diwali is also celebrated as Mahalakshmi’s birthday. So she is worshipped on this day.

Why do people worship Mahalakshmi – does anyone know?

Can anyone tell me something about Mahalakshmi? What is she goddess of?

Can you tell me anything about wealth? Does wealth just mean having a lot of money?

What about health, is that a sort of wealth? Which is more important, good health or lots of money? What about spiritual wealth, do some people have that? If someone is always happy, is that a type of wealth? Is that more important, or is money more important?

Do you see the picture of Mahalakshmi on the first page of this lesson? What are standing next to Mahalakshmi? How many hands does she have? What are they holding?

Do you notice that she is letting money drop out of one hand? Does anyone know what a miser is? A greedy person? Do they ever let money drop out of their hands? Mahalakshmi uses her money to help others, so she lets go of it.

Is Mahalakshmi kind? Why do they call her the “Divine Mother?” Do you think she will give greedy people that worship her money? What if they are loving people that want money to help other people? What do you think?

If you want to make friends with Mahalakshmi, you can say the following stotra:

Lakshmi Stotra

Namastestu Mahaamaaye Shreepeete Surapoojite

Shankha Chakra Gadaa Haste Mahaalakshmi Namostute

*Meaning: I bow down at Thy Lotus Feet, Thou, the destroyer of delusion and the source of prosperity, who is worshipped by all the Gods, who is holding in her hands the conch shell, the discus and the mace
O Mahaa Lakshmi, I bow down at Thy Lotus Feet*

Drawing Exercise:

