

Diwali: Festival of Lights

Diwali or Deepawali or Dipawali is one the most important, hugely waited and immensely cherished festival celebrated across India and in parts of Nepal. Originally, the name was Deepawali, which has its origin from Sanskrit, meaning “rows of Deep”.

Over the years the name has been pronounced as Diwali, especially in Hindi, whereas it still remains Dipawali in Nepali. Diwali also popularly known as “Festival of Lights” is celebrated with great gusto and is observed as an official holiday across in India.

Importance:

The festival of Diwali is not only significant to Hindus, but, has importance in Jainism, Buddhism, and Sikhism. For Hindus, it is associated with the return of Lord Rama to Ayodhya, after his 14 years of exile and victory over the demon Ravana.

On that day, he was welcomed to the kingdom to Ayodhya with rows of Deep, lightened throughout the kingdom.

Thus, there is a tradition of lighting oil lamps that symbolize the victory of good over evil and freedom from spiritual darkness.



Hindus, also make preparations to welcome goddess Lakshmi by drawing rangoli, and footsteps (Paduka) On the entrance that would allure goddess Lakshmi to visit one’s home and bring prosperity along with her.

Customs:

There are numerous customs and traditions associated with Diwali, namely, burning of crackers, playing cards, lightning of lamps, wearing new clothes, distribution of sweets, exchange of gifts etc.

A Five Day Festival:

Diwali celebrations spread across five days, with each day having its own significance and set of rituals.

The first day is called “Dhanteras”, on which new utensils and silver ware is brought to the house. The second day is called “Chhoti Diwali”, which normally involves preparation for the next day and the tradition of playing cards is observed in many families.

The next day, or third day is the “Badi Diwali”, which involves the worshipping of mother Lakshmi. The fourth day is the Govardhan Puja and finally the five days end with Bhai Dooj.

The festival of Diwali is truly a “Festival of Lights”, as it not only involves lighting of Lamps but, it brings the light of happiness, togetherness, spiritual enlightenment and prosperity for everyone.

With the sounds of crackers killing all bad-omens, the lighted lamps-lighting the lives of people, the prayers and pujas creating an atmosphere full of goodness and purity, the festival of Diwali indeed fills the atmosphere with an aura of goodness and a heaven like atmosphere.

Time to celebrate

According to the Hindu calendar, the festival of Diwali is celebrated on the new moon day that marks the end of Ashwin and beginning of Kartik month.