

# Hinduism and spiritual significance diwali

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Diwali is an important festival for Hindus. The name of festive days as well as the rituals of Diwali vary significantly among Hindus, based on the region of India. In many parts of India, the festivities start with Dhanteras, followed by Naraka Chaturdasi on second day, Diwali on the third day, Diwali Padva dedicated to wife- husband relationship on the fourth day, and festivities end with Bhau-beej dedicated to sister-brother bond on the fifth day.

Dhanteras usually falls eighteen days after Dussehra. On the same night that Hindus celebrate Diwali, Jains celebrate a festival of lights to mark the attainment of moksha by Mahavira , Sikhs similarly celebrate Bandi Chhor Divas, and Arya Samajists celebrate Shardiya Nav- Shasyeshti. Diwali is an official holiday in India , Nepal , Sri Lanka , Myanmar , Mauritius, Guyana , Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname , Malaysia , Singapore and Fiji. Diwali is one of the happiest of holidays, with significant preparations.

People clean their homes and decorate them for the festivities. Diwali is one of the biggest shopping seasons in India; people buy new clothes for themselves and their families, gifts, appliances, kitchen utensils, small to big ticket items such as cars and gold jewellery. People also buy gifts for family members and friends which typically includes sweets, dry fruits and seasonal specialities depending on regional harvest and customs. It is also the period when little kids hear ancient stories, legends, myths and battle between good and evil, light and darkness from their parents and elders. Girls and women go shopping, and create rangoli and other creative patterns on floors, near doors and walkways.

Youth and grown ups graduate to helping with lighting and preparing for patakhe (fireworks). There is significant variation in regional practices and <https://assignbuster.com/hinduism-and-spiritual-significance-diwali/>

rituals. Depending on the region, prayers are offered before one or more deities, with most common being Lakshmi - the goddess of wealth and prosperity. On Diwali night, fireworks light up the neighborhood skies. Later, family members and invited friends celebrate the night over food and sweets. Spiritual significance Diwali is celebrated by Hindus, Jains and Sikhs to mark historical events, stories or myths, but they all spiritually mark the victory of light over darkness, knowledge over ignorance, good over evil, hope over despair.

In the Yoga, Vedanta, and Samkhya schools of Hindu philosophy, a central belief is that there is something beyond the physical body and mind which is pure, infinite, and eternal, called the Atman. The celebration of Diwali as the "victory of good over evil", refers to the light of higher knowledge dispelling all ignorance, the ignorance that masks one's true nature, not as the body, but as the unchanging, infinite, immanent and transcendent reality. With this awakening comes compassion and the awareness of the oneness of all things, and knowledge overcomes ignorance.

Diwali is the celebration of this Inner Light over spiritual darkness, knowledge over ignorance, right over wrong, good over evil. Religious significance in Hinduism The religious significance of Diwali varies regionally within India, depending on the school of Hindu philosophy, regional myths, legends and beliefs. Many see Diwali honouring the return of the hero Rama, his wife Sita and his brother Lakshmana from exile, as told in the ancient Hindu epic called the Ramayana.

To some, Diwali marks the return of Pandavas after 12 years of Vanvas and one year of agyatavas in the other ancient Hindu epic called the

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Mahabharata . Many other Hindus believe Diwali is linked to the celebration of Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth and prosperity, and wife of deity Vishnu. The five day festival of Diwali begins on the day Lakshmi was born from the churning of cosmic ocean of milk during the tug of war between the forces of good and forces of evil; the night of Diwali is the day Lakshmi chose Vishnu as her husband and then married him.

Some Hindus offer pujas to additional or alternate deities such as Kali, Ganesha, Saraswati, and Kubera. Other Hindus believe that Diwali is the day Vishnu came back to Lakshmi and their abode in the Vaikuntha; so those who worship Lakshmi receive the benefit of her good mood, and therefore are blessed with mental, physical and material well-being during the year ahead. In India's eastern region, such as West Bengal , Lakshmi is not worshipped, only deity Kali is worshipped and the festival is called Kali Puja. In India's Braj and north central regions, deity Krishna is recognized.

People mark Mount Govardhan, and celebrate legends about Krishna. In other regions, the feast of Annakoot is celebrated, with 56 or 108 different cuisines prepared, offered to Krishna, then shared and celebrated by the local community. In West, South and certain Northern parts of India, the festival of Diwali marks the start of a new Hindu year. Along with Goddess Lakshmi, offerings are made to Ganesha who symbolizes ethical beginnings and fearless remover of obstacles; Saraswati who symbolizes music, literature and learning; and Kubera who symbolizes book keeping, treasury and wealth management.