



What does Lamp Lighting Signify?

In Hindu Culture, light is a powerful metaphor for knowledge and consciousness. Lighting a lamp signifies the value Hindus attach to education, self enquiry and improvement, which bring harmony to individuals and communities. The act of lighting a lamp affirms the fact that knowledge dispels ignorance just like light dispels darkness.

असतोमा सद्गमय।
तमसोमा ज्योतिर् गमय।
मृत्योर्ममृतं गमय।

asato mā sad gamaya
Tamaso mā jyotir gamaya
mrtyor mā amrtam gamaya

From ignorance, lead me to truth;
From darkness, lead me to light;
From death, lead me to immortality

Reference: (Bṛhadāra yaka Upani ad 1.3.28)



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Celebrating Deepawali
(Diwali)
the authentic way
A GUIDE FOR OFFICIAL FUNCTIONS



"Happy Diwali"

Guideline for celebrating Deepawali in an authentic way

Whether an organization is having a public Deepawali party or it is a quieter celebration, below is a guide on how to celebrate it in the authentic spirit and a culturally appropriate way.

 Deepawali is a very pious and spiritual festival. It is customary to start off the celebrations by lighting a lamp, without wearing any footwear. Once the lamp is lit the space is sanctified.

 The pious spirit of Deepawali is best honoured in a tobacco free and alcohol free environment where only vegetarian food (no poultry, fish or meat) is served.

 Wearing ethnic dress is welcome to make the celebration vibrant and colourful.

 Usually, a group of people celebrating Deepawali together bring in a plate of vegetarian (no poultry, fish or meat) sweets to celebrate.

 "Happy Diwali" is the most common greeting that is exchanged.

Make the Festival of Lights very special for everyone attending your celebration.

Deepawali The Festival of Lights

In an increasingly culturally diverse Aotearoa (New Zealand) organizations (workplaces, private and public institutions) now celebrate multicultural festivals. Deepawali (Diwali) is one of them. It is the biggest and brightest of festivals Hindu people celebrate. Here is some essential information about this festival and how to celebrate it in an authentic and a culturally appropriate way at your function – be it private, public or at your workplace.

The Meaning of Deepawali

Deepawali is a Sanskrit word composed of 2 roots (deep & awali) which means “row of lights”. The word is often contracted to “Diwali”. On Deepawali day, rows of small clay lamps (deep/diyas) are traditionally lit and placed in houses. Fireworks are let off everywhere; giving Deepawali is description, “the festival of lights”.

The Deepawali festival

Deepawali is India's biggest and most significant festival celebrated by Hindus around the world. The festival of Deepawali symbolizes the light of knowledge that destroys ignorance. In Hindu culture, striving to remove ignorance is the primary goal of life. Deepawali is marked by five days of celebration. Each of the five days of festivities denotes a different tradition with the common theme of reverence towards goodness in the natural order and celebration of life.

Origins of Deepawali

Deepawali was the day thousands of years ago when the kingdom of Ayodhya erupted with joy on the home coming of **Lord Ram** after victory over the tyrannical king Ravan.

Also, on this day, Lakshmi, the goddess of peace and prosperity, incarnated. Hence, the association of Deepawali with the worship of **goddess Lakshmi**. Deepawali also marks the victory of **Lord Krishna** over the diabolical Narkasur and the rescue of 16 000 women from his captivity.

The 5 Day Gala Festival of Deepawali Dhan Teras

The 'festival of wealth' (Dhan = prosperity, Teras = thirteenth day) is celebrated on the thirteenth day of the fortnight of waning moon (Krishna paksha) in the Hindu month of Karthik (October-November). This day marks the arrival of Goddess Lakshmi.

Chhoti Deepawali

Chhoti (mini) Deepawali, also called Narak Chaturdashi, is celebrated on the eve of Deepawali. The demonic Narakasur was slain on this day by **Lord Krishna**.

Deepawali

Deepawali commemorates that auspicious day on which the triumphant **Lord Ram** returned to Ayodhya after vanquishing Ravan. Ever since then, this day symbolizes victory of good over evil.

Govardhan Pooja/Annakoot

Govardhan Pooja follows the day of Deepawali. It commemorates **Lord Krishna's** feat of lifting the Govardhan mountain on his little finger in order to save the residents of Vrindavan from torrential rains.

Bhaiduj

Bhaiduj is a celebration of the bond between brothers and sisters. Brothers and sisters pray together on the day.