

Happy Diwali!



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Diwali or Dipavali (meaning a Line of Lights) is the magical Festival of Lights observed by those of the Vedic/Hindu, Jain, and Sikh cultural traditions. Diwali is a multi-day New Year festival that takes place every year in the autumn season around the New Moon in Libra. This year, the festivities as well as pious religious ceremonies will extend from October 28 to November 3.

One of the most important days of the Diwali festival is Dhanteras (or Dhanatrayodashi), which will occur on October 29 this year. This day marks the beginning of the public holiday of Diwali. It commemorates the god Dhanvantari who imparted the wisdom of Ayurveda to help rid humanity of suffering. Dhanteras, Lakshmi, Ganesha, and Kubera are all propitiated for their blessings throughout Diwali, including on the day of Dhanteras.

The most significant day of Diwali happens during the Amavasya tithi. This is when the Lakshmi Puja is performed, which will occur on October 31 this year. Lakshmi's birth and all the blessings of her love, wisdom, beauty, and abundance are commemorated on this day.

The late Swami Krishnananda Saraswati of the Divine Life Society wrote a beautiful essay about the spiritual meaning of Diwali, in which he explained:

Diwali is an occasion for spiritual exhilaration, a lighting up of all darkness, socially as well as personally, outwardly and inwardly, for the purpose of allowing entry of the Supreme Light of God into the hearts of all people. Diwali is the celebration of the rise of knowledge. It is also the celebration of the victory of the sattvic or divine elements in us over the rajasic and tamasic or baser elements which are the real asuras, the rakshasas, and others. The whole world is within us. The whole cosmos can be found in a microscopic form in our own body. Rama-Ravana-Yuddha and Tarakasura-Vadha, and all such epic wars – everything is going on inside us. Diwali is thus also a psychological context, wherein we contemplate in our own selves the holy occasion of self-mastery, self-subjugation, and self-abnegation leading to the rise of all spiritual virtues which are regarded as the luster or radiance emanating from self-knowledge.

Bhagavati Mahalakshmi, the goddess of prosperity, does not merely mean the goddess of wealth in a material sense. Lakshmi does not mean only gold and silver. Lakshmi means prosperity in

general, positive growth in the right direction, and a rise into the higher stages of evolution. This is the advent of Lakshmi. Progress and prosperity are Lakshmi. In the Vishnu Purana, we are told that Narayana is like the sun, and Lakshmi is like the radiance of the sun. They are inseparable. Wherever Narayana is, there is Lakshmi. Wherever is divinity, there is prosperity. So, on this day of Diwali, we worship the Supreme God who is the source of all conceivable virtues, goodness and prosperity, which is symbolized in illumination, light, and worship in the form of aarati, joyous attitudes, and feeling in every respect. So, in short, this is a day of rejoicing over the victory of sattva over the lower gunas, and the victory of God Himself over the binding fetters of the soul.

For the full text, see (https://www.swami-krishnananda.org/disc/disc_95.html)

We at ACVA wish all our friends and followers a blessed Diwali. May the Divine Light that shines so brightly now dispel darkness and ignorance and bring wisdom, joy, and prosperity to all beings everywhere.

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