



Diwali: Celebrating the light of wisdom

Diwali, the festival of lights as it is known the world over, celebrates the victory of good over evil, light over darkness and knowledge over ignorance. Lights are lit on this day not just to decorate homes, but also to communicate a profound truth about life. Light dispels darkness and when the darkness within you is dispelled through the light of wisdom, the good wins over the evil in you.

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Though there are many legends about the festival, Diwali is essentially celebrated to lit the light of wisdom in every heart, the light of life in every home and bring a smile on every face. Diwali is the shortened form of Deepavali, which literally means rows of lights. Life has many facets and stages to it. It is important that you throw light on all of them, for if one aspect of your life is in darkness, there can be no complete expression of life. That’s why rows of lights are lit on Diwali to remind you that every aspect of life needs your attention and the light of knowledge.

Every lamp that you light is symbolic of a good quality. There are good qualities in every human being. Some have forbearance, love, strength, generosity; others have the ability to unite people. The latent values in you are like a lamp. When they are lit, awakened, that is Diwali. Don’t be satisfied with lighting one lamp; light a thousand. If you have the value of service in you, don’t be satisfied only with that. Lit the lamp of wisdom in you, acquire knowledge. Awaken all the facets of your being.

Another profound symbolism is wrapped in the firecrackers that go off during Diwali. In life, you often become like a firecracker, waiting to explode with your pent-up emotions, frustration and anger. When you continue to suppress your emotions such as cravings, aversions and hatred, they are bound to reach a bursting point. Bursting crackers is like a psychological exercise created by ancient people to release bottled-up emotions. When you see an explosion outside, you feel similar sensations within you as well. Along with the explosion, there is so much light. So when you let go of the suppressed emotions, you become hollow and empty and the light of knowledge dawns.

Wisdom is needed everywhere. Even if one member of the family is shrouded in darkness, you cannot be happy. So, you need to lit the light of wisdom in every member of your family. Extend it to every member of society, every person on the planet.

When true wisdom dawns, it gives rise to celebration. Often in celebrations, you tend to lose focus or awareness. To maintain awareness in the midst of celebrations, the ancient *rishis* brought sacredness and *puja* (rituals) to every celebration. For the same reason, Diwali is also a time for *pujas*. The spiritual aspects of Diwali add depth to the celebrations. Any celebration has to be spiritual as a celebration without spirituality has no depth.

Celebration is the nature of the spirit and every excuse to celebrate is good. In celebration, you should not only have a party; you must remind yourself of the wisdom. For the one who is not in knowledge, Diwali comes only once a year, but for the wise, Diwali is every moment and every day. Be wise and celebrate Diwali every moment and everyday of your life.