



ROYTEC

# Diwali

*The festival of new beginnings and the triumph of good over evil, and light over darkness*

(Diwali Booklet 2021)





## Meaning and Significance of Diwali

**D**ivali (Diwali, Deepavali) is the Festival of Lights that symbolizes the lifting of spiritual darkness celebrated mainly by those of the Hindu way of life. Diwali means an array of lamps (deep: lamp; vali: array) and, every year, it is celebrated by Hindus around the world with the lighting of diyas (see picture at right). A diya is a small clay pot that contains oil and a cotton wick that is lit. In Trinidad, oil (coconut preferably) is used to keep the diyas burning.

Diwali is observed on the new moon day (Amavasya, Amaavaasya) of the month of Kaartik (Kartik) in the Hindu

calendar. Diwali Day can occur any time between the 14th day (in the dark half) of the month of Aashwayuja and the 2nd day of the bright half of Kaartik. In 1966, Diwali Day was proclaimed an annual public holiday in Trinidad and Hindus all over the country celebrate the occasion with pageants and the lighting of diyas.

According to the scholars, the origins of Diwali are based both on harvesting festivals and the legends of India. The festivities are in celebration of: (1) wealth and prosperity; (2) the new year; and (3) the triumph of good over evil.

On the day of Diwali people awake early in the morning and take a bath and begin preparations for the evening ahead. They prepare prayer items and food. Persons usually fast





without consuming food or drinks until the prayer and deeyas are lighted in the evening.

**Significance of Diwali:** The literal meaning of Diwali is a 'row of lights'. The festival is heralded as the triumph of good over evil and was first celebrated on Lord Rama's homecoming with his wife, Sita and brother, Lakshmana after defeating the demon king, Ravana. Coincidentally, the night of Diwali is the darkest night (amavasya) but is filled with light nonetheless.

**Significance of Lakshmi Puja:** An elaborate puja is performed to bring in the new year as per Hindu calendar. Families dress up in festive finery. During the puja rituals, the main door is kept open as a symbol of inviting the Goddess into our homes. Beautiful rangolis made of flowers and/or colours and other decorative items adorn the threshold of houses and torans or door hangings are used to enhance the beauty of the home. New ventures and new accounting years are also initiated on this day by worshipping Goddess Lakshmi.





## **Worship of Devi – Mother as the form of God**

### *The Goddess Lakshmi*

The Goddess Lakshmi is one of the central figures of Hindu mythology associated with the festival of Diwali. Legend states that Lakshmi emerged from the ocean of milk after the churning by the devas (gods) and the daanavas (demons). This event is a source of great joy because Lakshmi is considered to be the embodiment of loveliness, grace and prosperity. Another event associating Lakshmi with Diwali is highlighted in the The Puranas (a series of Hindu religious text steeped in allegory). According to these texts, Diwali represents the day

Lord Vishnu (the Preserver) married Goddess Lakshmi (the Goddess of wealth and prosperity). The marriage of Lord Vishnu to Goddess Lakshmi denotes the connection between preservation and wealth.

The idea of addressing and worshipping God as Mother is a very ancient tradition in India. This idea finds expression in the Vedas and the Upanishads and was further developed in the Puranas and the Tantras.

The following seem to be plausible reasons for the development of Mother-worship:

1. the position women enjoyed at home and in society in the days when such worship started,





and the position occupied by the mother as the highest of all feminine types at home and in society;

2. the security the aspirant feels in the natural love and consideration of the mother towards her child; and
3. the concept that God creates, sustains, and destroys the universe by his Power or Shakti. Swami Vivekananda points out a source in an old Vedic hymn to the Goddess: "I am the light. I am the light of the sun and moon; I am the air which animates all beings." This is the germ which afterwards develops into Mother-worship. By Mother-worship is not meant difference between father and mother. The first idea connoted by it is that of energy—I am the power that is in all beings.'





 *Divali Prayer* 

| <b>Sanskrit Prayer to Mother Lakshmi</b>  | <b>Meaning of prayer</b>  |
|---|---|
| Om Lakshmi Karo Tu Kalyanam,<br>Arogyam Sukh Sampadam, Mama<br>Shatru Vinashayea, Deep Jyotir<br>Namastute. | O Mother Lakshmi, thou art thy divine bestower of wisdom, remover of sickness and sorrows, and the light of prosperity. O illuminant mother of bliss, dispel the enemies of darkness that reside within me. I bow to you. |

Photo courtesy: **UWI-ROYTEC** Divali Celebrations 2015



## Recipe for Kheer Sweet Rice / rice pudding



| <b>Ingredients:</b>  | <b>Method:</b>  |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• White Rice</li><li>• Condensed milk</li><li>• Slivered almonds</li><li>• Evaporated milk</li><li>• Eliche</li><li>• Ghee</li></ul> | <p>In a small pot, place washed rice in a small amount of water in pot and bring to a boil until the rice grains are fully cooked. Add evaporated milk, eliche and ghee, stir continuously. Add condensed milk to taste and turn off stove. Add almond and stir. Then place in decorated pot to serve either hot or cold.</p> |

Method provided by: **Sarika Moonian-Mc Coon**

### Bhojan (Foods) prepared for Divali

- Rice
- Kurhi
- Channa and Alloo
- Mango
- Pumpkin
- Soya
- Bhagie
- Chatylne

*Wishing the Hindu community  
a happy Diwali*



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