ESSAY on Diwali

Diwali is a festival of lights which signifies the wealth and prosperity of a family, community or person. Diwali is celebrated with great enthusiasm by Indians across the globe.

History of Diwali:
The word Diwali comes from the Sanskrit word deepavali, meaning "rows of lighted lamps". When we talk about Diwali, we are talking about a festival that is thousands of years old and which has roots in the Hindu religion and culture that stretch back to antiquity.

The diya (also called arati or deepam) symbolize the Vedic fire altar and the process of its ritualistic construction as respective to the Hindu calendar month of Kartik. Diwali is mentioned in Sanskrit texts such as the Padma Purana and the Skanda Purana both of which were completed in the second half of the 1st millennium CE.

The diya are mentioned in Skanda Kishore Purana as symbolising parts of the sun, describing it as the cosmic giver of light and energy to all life and which seasonally transitions in the Hindu calendar month of Kartik.

Celebration of Diwali:
Months prior to Diwali, households and shops are cleaned thoroughly to prepare for the grand festival. Houses are painted and decorated with lights, bulbs and so on. It is believed that the Goddess Lakshmi will visit a clean home before any other during Diwali festivities.

During the festival of lights, people leave their work and join family and friends for this festive night. They light up the entire house with earthen lamps (diyas). Clay lamps, known as diya are filled with oil and a wick.

On this day, the whole house is lit up with diya instead of lighting bulbs or candles. Each of the five days of Diwali have their own significance and designation, where-

**The first day:** Naraka Chaturdasi marks the defeat of the demon Naraka at the hands of Lord Krishna and his wife Satyabhama.

**On the second day:** Amavasya, devotees pray to the Goddess Laxmi, as many believe that she is in a most benevolent moon during this period and often grants wishes to her followers. On Amavasya, people also narrate the story of Lord Vishnu, who took on the incarnation of a dwarf and banished Bali to hell.

**The third day:** Kartika Shuddha Padyami, Bali steps out of Hell and rules the earth as per the boons given to him by Lord Vishnu. The fourth day – Yama Dvitiya, also known as Bhai Dooj, is observed, and is associated with sisters inviting their brothers into their home.

**The fifth day:** Dhanteras, is a celebration of wealth and prosperity. It is celebrated two days before Diwali and people around the world try their hand at gambling as it is considered that with Goddess Parvati’s blessing, whoever gambles on this day will be showered with prosperity throughout the coming year. According to legend, Goddess Parvati played dice with her husband, Lord Shiva, on this day.
Significance of Diwali:
Often, during this time, people offer prayers to Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, in order to bless their homes with prosperity. And after the festival is over, families spend the next few days visiting each other and exchanging gifts.

This tradition of gifting is so integral to Diwali festivities that financial transactions take place even on this extended holiday. The festival spiritually signifies victory of light over darkness and knowledge over ignorance.

It is celebrated by Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, and Newar Buddhists, although for each faith it marks different historical events and stories. Diwali marks the onset of winter and the beginning of all things new, both in nature and humanity.

We do encourage parents and teachers to review the contents of our essay that we hope would be useful for students as well as lecturers teaching English as a foreign language. There is indeed scope for you to improve your writing, so we welcome you to write critical comments about this essay on Diwali. Do read our tips on how to write a good essay and also see our short expository essay samples and compare them with the essay on Diwali to widen your perspective.