



HAPPY
Diwali
FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS

The name of the festival comes from the Sanskrit word dipavali, meaning row of lights. Diwali is known as the 'festival of lights' because houses, shops and public places are decorated with small earthenware oil lamps called Diyas. These lamps, which are traditionally fueled by mustard oil, are placed in rows in windows, doors and outside buildings to decorate them. In towns in India (and in Britain) electric lights are often used in Diwali displays.

Hindus celebrate Diwali to mark the return of Lord Rama to Ayodhya after 14 years exile and his victory over the demon king Ravana. It is believed that the people lit oil lamps along the way to light their path in the darkness.

Sikhs celebrate Diwali as Bandi Chhorh Diwas, the day the 6th Guru Hargobind Singh Ji was freed from prison with 52 Hindu kings from Gwalior fort in 1619 and came to Amritsar. The Sikhs celebrated his return at the Golden temple by lighting oil lamps.

Like Christmas in the West, Diwali is very much a time for buying and exchanging gifts. Traditionally sweets and dried fruit were very common gifts to exchange.

Diwali is also a traditional time to redecorate homes and buy new clothes. Diwali is also used to celebrate a successful harvest.

Diwali has one common theme no matter where people celebrate: it symbolizes the victory of light over darkness, knowledge over ignorance, good over evil, hope over despair.

Happy Diwali