

Diwali



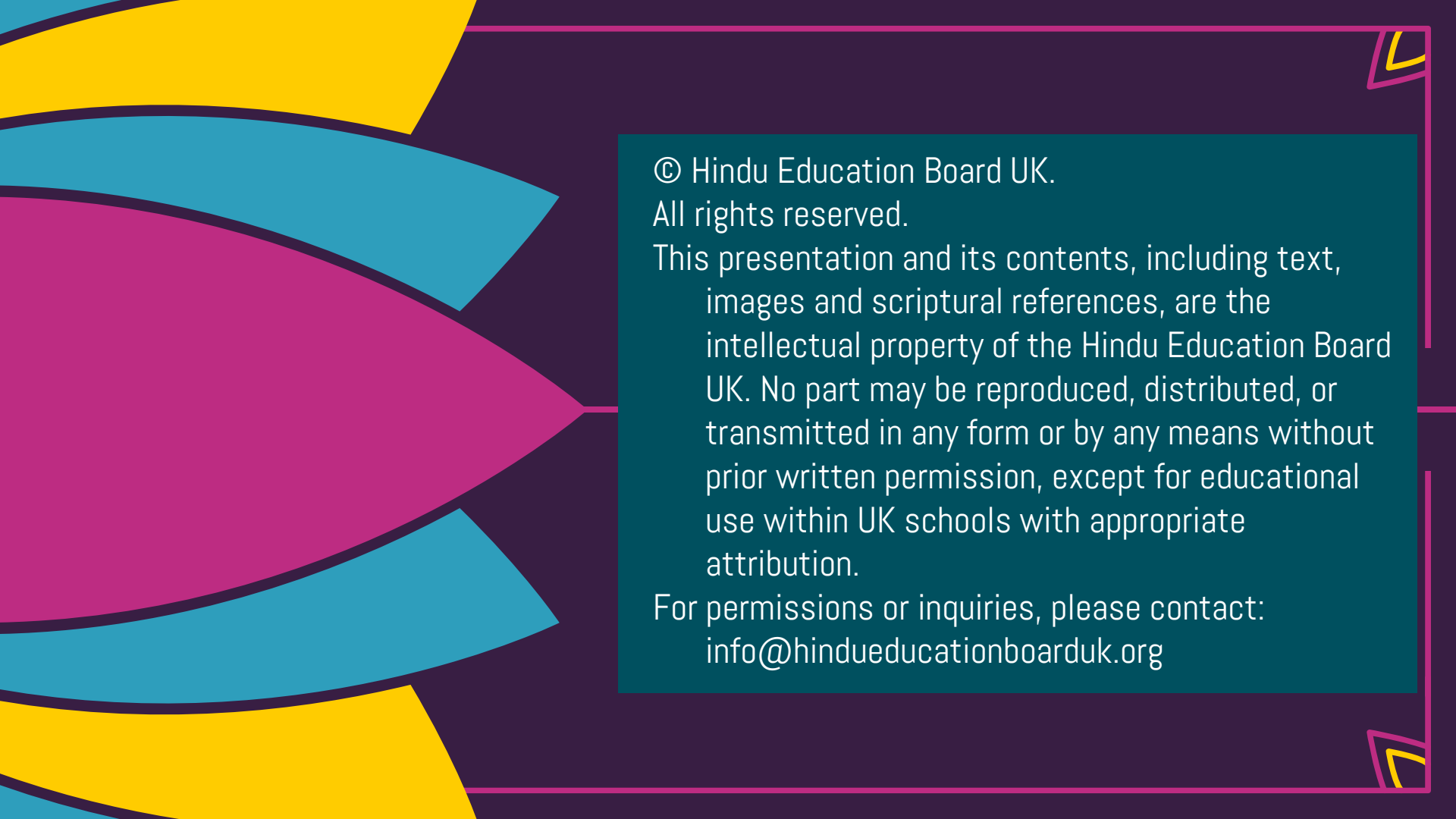
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Diwali

The Festival of Lights

Diwali, also known as Deepavali, Dīpāvali or Divali, is the Hindu festival of lights.

It is one of the major festivals celebrated by Hindus, Jains, Sikhs and Buddhists.

Diwali takes place in the Hindu month of Kartika, which falls between mid-October and mid-November.



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To prepare for Diwali, celebrants will decorate their homes and workplaces with diyas (oil lamps) and rangolis (colourful, circular, artistic patterns).

During Diwali, people celebrate in many different ways.

A few of them are:

- Performing worship ceremonies to Lakshmi (the Goddess of prosperity and wealth)
- Wearing fine traditional clothes
- Partaking in family feasts, where mithai (sweets) and gifts are shared
- Diwali festivities include a celebration of sights, sounds, arts and flavours
- The festivities vary between different regions
- Diwali is also a major cultural event for the Hindu, Sikh, Jain and Newar Buddhist diaspora



Symbolism of Diwali



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The significance of Diwali

Diwali celebrates the victory of light over dark.

- The light symbolises knowledge and wisdom.
- Darkness is a symbol for negative forces, such as evil, violence, envy, injustice, greed, oppression and suffering.
- Thus, when the lower nature in us is conquered, and we maintain the higher values of life and come to live, there is a realisation of divinity from within.
- When light prevails, there is peace and harmony for one and all.



The symbolism of a Diya

What Does the Oil in Diyas Represent?

The oil that is used to light the Diyas represents all the negative human qualities and that includes hatred, jealousy, greed, lust, anger and others. The wick represents our inner self, the soul.

The lighting of Diyas symbolises that we need our mind to clear from these negative things by realising our Inner Self and connecting to divinity within. The disappearing oil of the Diyas symbolises the disappearance of negativities from the home.

It also symbolises that enlightenment emerges only when we stride on the path of righteousness, just as Lord Rama did.



“Diya” or “Deepa” is a small oil-filled lamp



The symbolism of a Diya

What Does a Diya Symbolise?

A Diya symbolises the flame of knowledge that will remove ignorance.

A Diya also signifies the light and positivity that it spreads in the home. It is a normal practice in the Hindu community where people light diya in their homes every evening.

It signifies the surrender of one's soul to the almighty, just like a wick is absorbed into the bright light of the flame. It shows us the path of gaining knowledge and enlightening ourselves.



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The Five Days of Diwali



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Days of Diwali

01
Dhanteras



02
Choti Diwali
(Kali Chaudas)



03
Lakshmi
Puja



04
Govardhan Puja
New Year on a Hindu Calendar



05
Bhai
Dooj



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Dhanteras

01

Dhanteras is a symbol of annual renewal, cleansing and an auspicious beginning for the upcoming new start.

The word dhanteras derived from “dhan” meaning wealth and “teras” meaning thirteenth.

On this day, many Hindus clean their homes. They install diyas, small oil-filled lamps that they light up for the next five days.

Many people decorate their homes and offices with colourful rangoli designs.

On the evening of Dhanteras, families offer prayers (puja) to Lakshmi and Ganesha.



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Choti Diwali (Kali Chaudas)

02

Families also prepare festive food for Lakshmi Puja.

Choti Diwali is also a day for visiting friends and exchanging gifts.

Hanuman Puja is performed by many Hindus around the world.

Diwali is celebrated to mark the return of Rama to Ayodhya after defeating Ravana and completing his fourteen years of exile. Hanuman was a dedicated devotee of Ram. Therefore, people also worship Hanuman the day before Diwali's main day.



Lakshmi Puja

03



On Diwali, people wear new clothes and light diyas. This symbolises that light and knowledge defeats darkness and ignorance.

On the night of Diwali, worship is dedicated to Lakshmi to welcome her into their cleaned homes and bring prosperity and happiness for the coming year.

The day of Diwali is when Rama, Seeta and Lakshman returned from exile and people lit divas outside their homes to guide their way back.

Lakshmi is the consort of Vishnu. So, when Shri Rama (reincarnation of Vishnu) comes home, his consort Seeta (reincarnation of Goddess Lakshmi) comes as well. Lakshmi puja is performed to welcome her. Footprints of Lakshmi is a very popular way to depict her arrival. Along with that, rangoli is done on the ground.



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04

This day celebrates family and community bonds, where gifts are shared. It also marks a new year on a Hindu Calendar.

For many Hindus, the fourth day is celebrated as Govardhan puja, honoring the legend of Krishna, saving the community from a big storm, which he accomplished by lifting the Govardhan mountain.

The agricultural symbolism is also observed on this day by many Hindus as Annakut, literally "*mountain of food*". Hindu temples prepare over one hundred dishes from a variety of ingredients, which is then dedicated to Krishna as an offering before being shared among the community.

Hindus show gratitude to the elements that provide vital sustenance for life. This is visible with the mountain of food offered.



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Bhai Dooj is the fifth and last day observed during the Diwali festival.

On this day, sisters invite their brothers to their homes and this day is mainly focused on sharing food and enjoying family company.



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How Diwali is celebrated in different Dharmic faiths



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Hinduism

For Hindus, Diwali is celebrated over a course of 5 days. The main Diwali day is the day when Ram, Lakshman and Seeta returned from their exile of 14 years and Hindus light divas on this day.

Hindus celebrate this historical moment as a victory of good over evil.

The Goddess Lakshmi is worshipped . She is the Goddess of wealth, fortune and prosperity. Ganesh is the lord of intellect and wisdom, and he is revered as the remover of obstacles. He is also remembered and worshipped during this festival.



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Jainism

It is a celebration of Lord Mahavir's teachings and his contributions to the religion and to greater humanity.

His teachings promote compassion and justice through ahimsa (non-violence), advocating the importance of all living beings.

Jains offer prayers to Lord Mahavira and place lights to mark his passage and to keep his knowledge alive.



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Buddhism

Diwali is the auspicious day on which Emperor Ashoka decided to follow the path of Buddhism.

Buddhists celebrate both Buddha as well as Emperor Ashoka on Diwali.

Diwali marks Emperor Ashoka's decision to follow the path of peace.



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Sikhism

For Sikhs, Diwali is really important not just for its spiritual significance but it is also marked to celebrate the release from prison of the sixth guru, Guru Hargobind, and 52 other princes in 1619.

The Moghul Emperor, Jahangir, had kept the sixth guru as a political prisoner because he was afraid of the Guru's growing power as the number of his followers grew.

Sikhs celebrated the return of Guru Hargobind by lighting the Golden Temple and this tradition continues today.



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Happy Diwali To All!

We hope you enjoyed learning about how Diwali is celebrated.

Diwali is a time for light, joy, kindness and togetherness.

We wish everyone happiness and peace during this special festival.



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