



## Significance of Dussehra and Deepawali

**Deepawali** is a very important festival of India. Deepawali means – Rows of Deepak or lamps. (In India Deepawali is celebrated by lighting Deepak all around the house, on the terrace, balcony, and front door and on each window.).

It is the festival of happiness. The question is why do we celebrate Deepawali? There are many myths associated with Deepawali celebration, but one of the most important one is linked with “the Victory of Good over Evil”.

Two weeks ago we all celebrated **Dussehra**. Ram’s victory over Ravana is described as the triumph of good over evil and is celebrated every year by Hindus as ‘Dussehra’. Ravana represents devil in spite of being very intelligent and smart and Ram is remembered for his godly virtues and that’s why we worship him as God.

‘Dussehra’ is also interpreted as “Dasa-Hara”, which means the cutting of the ten heads of Ravana. On this day, people resolve to cut ten heads – Passion, pride, anger, greed, infatuation, lust, hatred, Jealousy, selfishness and crookedness.

Rama is one of the most popular heroes of Hinduism. The majority of details concerning Rama come from the Ramayana, one of the two great epics of India. Born as the eldest son of Kaushalya and Dasaratha, king of Ayodhya, Rama is referred as *Maryada Purushottama*, literally *the Perfect Man*.

For the sake of his father’s honor, Rama accepted an exile of fourteen years in the forest. His wife, Sita and brother, Lakshman being unable to live without Rama decided to join him, and all three spent the fourteen years in exile together. Sita was kidnapped by Ravana in the forest. Rama met Hanuman, the monkey God, who helped him to fight against Ravana. Rama fought a colossal war against Ravana’s armies to release his wife Sita from Ravana’s captivity. Finally Rama killed Ravana in battle and liberated his wife. By then Rama had completed his exile, therefore he returned back to Ayodhya (the capital of his kingdom) with his wife Sita and brother Lakshman. The day they came back to Ayodhya is celebrated as Deepawali –festival of happiness, victory of good over evil.

### **What do we do on Diwali?**

We wear new clothes, play with fire crackers and worship Goddess Laxmi and Lord Ganesh.

### **Why do we pray Goddess Laxmi on this day?**

Story---Deities and devils were fighting for the drink of immortality. The pot was at the bottom of the sea. Goddess Laxmi had manifested herself on the day of Deepawali while the churning of the sea. Since Goddess Laxmi is the goddess of wealth we all worship her on this festival. Wealth is not everything but definitely the key to the happiness. Wealth is very important to fulfill our day-to-day needs but to get a happy and successful life we also need knowledge, strength and wisdom.

**Goddess Laxmi** --- Goddess of wealth, fortune, love and beauty. She is the consort of Vishnu, the operator. She brings wealth and happiness in our life.

**Goddess Saraswati** – Goddess of Knowledge, music and art. She is also regarded as the goddess of sound and speech. She is the consort of Brahma, the Hindu God of creation.

Knowledge is very important to lead our life in righteous manner.

The other thing that we need in our life is strength to achieve wealth and knowledge. We need strength to fight against atrocities, adversities, gain confidence and work hard to reach to our goal. The goddess of strength energy and power is Maa Durga – the warrior.

**Goddess Durga** – Goddess of power, energy and strength. She is also known as the mother of Ganesha. She is the consort of Lord Shiva, the destroyer. Once we have wealth, knowledge and strength we can achieve success but there is still something lacking and that are wisdom.

**Lord Ganesh**—Lord Ganesh is God of wisdom, learning and the remover of obstacles. Before any undertaking is begun, praying him is said to ensure success.

We all worship Goddesses Laxmi, Saraswati, Durga and Lord Ganesh to achieve success and lead our life in a righteous manner.

### **The supreme power of all the three Goddess is Goddess Gayatri**

By reciting Gayatri Mantra one can pray Maa Gayatri.

Meaning if Gayatri Mantra – May Almighty illuminate our intellect and take us to the righteous path. Gayatri Mantra is the Mantra of wisdom. It helps in self introspection and self rectification, but nothing comes in a day. It takes long time to achieve something in life.

**Pundit Shriram Sharma Acharya, Vishwamitra of this era, who has made Gayatri Mantra accessible to each and every individual.**

Deepawali is not just to clean home and light lamps but also tells us that we should clean our heart and soul. We should be like a Deepak who can light many other Deepaks or spread the light in others lives.