

# Diwali

**Diwali**, or **Deepavali**, (also called **Tihar** and **Swanti** in Nepal) (Markiscarali) is a major Indian and Nepalese festival, and a significant festival in Hinduism, Sikhism and Jainism. Many legends are associated with Diwali. Today it is celebrated by Hindus, Jains and Sikhs across the globe as the "**Festival of Light**," where the lights or lamps signify victory of good over the evil within every human being. The festival is also celebrated by Buddhists of Nepal, particularly the Newar Buddhists.

According to one theory Diwali may have originated as a harvest festival, marking the last harvest of the year before winter. In an agrarian society this results in businessmen closing accounts, and beginning a new accounting year. The deity of wealth in Hinduism, goddess Lakshmi is therefore thanked on this day and everyone prays for a good year ahead. This is the common factor in Diwali celebrations all over the Indian subcontinent.

In North India, it is the homecoming of King Rama of Ayodhya after a 14-year exile in the forest. The people of Ayodhya (the capital of his kingdom) welcomed Rama by lighting rows (avali) of lamps (deepa), thus its name, Deepawali, or simply shortened as Diwali. Southern India marks it as the day Lord Krishna defeated the demon Narakasura. In western India it is also in honor of the day King Bali went to rule the nether-world by the order of Vishnu. (There is another festival 'Onam' which is celebrated in Kerala around the month of August to mark this legend)

Diwali comes in the month of October or November.

In Jainism it marks the nirvana of Lord Mahavira, which occurred on Oct. 15, 527 B.C. The Sikhs have always celebrated Diwali; however, its significance for Sikhs increased when, on this day, the Sixth Guru, Guru Hargobind Ji, was freed from imprisonment along with 52 Hindu Kings (political prisoners) whom he had arranged to be released as well. In India, Diwali is now considered to be a national festival, and the aesthetic aspect of the festival is enjoyed by most Indians regardless of faith.

## Dates in various calendars

Kidha is celebrated for a differing number of days by different communities. Though the core days are common and fall on exactly the same set of days across Nepal and India, they fall in different Gregorian months depending on the version of the Hindu calendar being used in the given region. The *Amanta* ("ending on the new-moon") version of the Hindu calendar has been adopted as the Indian national calendar. According to this calendar, which is prevalent in southern India and Maharashtra, the 6-day celebration is spread over the last four days of the month of Ashwin and the first two days of the new month of Kartika. According to the *Purnimanta* ("ending on the full-moon") version prevalent in northern India, it falls in the middle of the month of Ashwayuja/Ashvin. In the Gregorian calendar, it falls generally in the months of October or November. In 2006, it was celebrated on October 21, a Saturday. In 2007 it was celebrated on November 9, a Friday. In Nepal, it is celebrated according to Nepalese calendar. The festival marks the last three days and the first two days of Nepalese era.

## Significance in Hinduism

The festival marks the victory of good over evil, and uplifting of spiritual darkness. Symbolically it marks the homecoming of goodwill and faith after an absence, as suggested by the story of Ramayana.

On the day of Diwali, many wear new clothes and share sweets and snacks. Some North Indian business communities start their financial year on Diwali and new account books are opened on this day.

### Stories

Hindus have several significant mythological events associated with it:

- **Return of Lord Rama to Ayodhya:** Diwali also celebrates the return of Lord Rama, King of Ayodhya, with his wife Sita and brother Lakshmana to Ayodhya after a 14 year exile, and a war in which he killed the demon king Ravana. It is believed that the people of Ayodhya lit oil lamps along the way to light their path in the darkness. Since Lord Rama traveled from South India to his kingdom in North India, he passed through the south earlier. This is the reason why the festival is celebrated a day earlier in South India. In North India, the festival is held on the final day of the Vikram calendar. The following day marks the beginning of the North Indian New Year, and is called Annakut.
- **The Killing of Narakasura:** Celebrated as Naraka Chaturdasi, two days before Diwali day, it commemorates the killing of Narakasura, an evil demon who created havoc, by Lord Krishna's wife Satyabhama. This happened in the Dwapar Yuga during this time of Lord Krishna's avatar. In another version, the demon was killed by Lord Krishna (Lord Krishna provokes his wife Satyabhama to kill Narakasura by pretending to be injured by the demon. Narakasura can only be killed by his mother, Satyabhama) himself. Before Narakasura's death, he requested a boon from his mother, Satyabhama (believed to be an Avatar of Bhudevi - Narakasura's mother), that everyone should celebrate his death with colorful light.
- **Austerities of Shakti:** According to the Skanda Purana, the goddess Shakti observed 21 days of austerity starting from ashtami of shukla paksha (eighth day of the waxing period of moon) to get half of the body of Lord Shiva. This vrata (austerity) is known as kedhara vrata. Deepavali is the completion day of this austerity. This is the day Lord Shiva accepted Shakti into the left half of the form and appeared as Ardhanarishvara. The ardent devotees observe this 21 days vrata by making a kalasha with 21 threads on it and 21 types of offerings for 35 days. The final day is celebrated as kedhara gauri vrata.
- **Krishna defeating Indra:** Govardhan Puja is celebrated the day after Diwali. It is the day Lord Krishna defeated Indra, the deity of thunder and rain. As per the story, Krishna saw huge preparations for the annual offering to Lord Indra and questions his father Nanda about it. He debated with the villagers about what their 'dharma' truly was. They were farmers; they should do their duty and concentrate on farming and protection of their cattle. He continued to say that all human beings should merely do their 'karma', to the best of their ability and not pray for natural phenomenon. The villagers were convinced by Krishna, and did not proceed with the special puja (prayer). Indra was then angered, and flooded the village. Krishna then lifted Mt Govardhan and held it up as protection to his people and cattle from the rain. Indra finally accepted defeat and

- recognized Krishna as supreme. This aspect of Krishna's life is mostly glossed over - but it actually set up the basis of the 'karma' philosophy later detailed in the *Bhagavat Gita*.
- **Bali's return to the nether world:** In Bhavishyottara and Brahma Vaivarta Purana, Diwali is associated with the Daitya king Bali, who is allowed to return to earth once a year. However in Kerala this is the reason 'Onam' is celebrated. 'Onam' festival falls around the month of August-September.

## Spiritual Significance

While Deepavali is popularly known as the "festival of lights", the most significant spiritual meaning is "the awareness of the inner light".

Central to Hindu philosophy is the assertion that there is something beyond the physical body and mind which is pure, infinite, and eternal, called the Atman. Just as we celebrate the birth of our physical being, Deepavali is the celebration of this Inner Light, in particular the knowing of which outshines all darkness (removes all obstacles and dispels all ignorance), awakening the individual to one's true nature, not as the body, but as the unchanging, infinite, immanent and transcendent reality. With the realization of the Atman comes universal compassion, love, and the awareness of the oneness of all things (higher knowledge). This brings Ananda (Inner Joy or Peace).

Diwali celebrates this through festive fireworks, lights, flowers, sharing of sweets, and worship. While the story behind Deepavali varies from region to region, the essence is the same - to rejoice in the Inner Light (Atman) or the underlying reality of all things (Brahman).

### The six days

Diwali celebrations are spread over six days in most of North India and Maharashtra. All the days except Diwali are named according to their designation in the Hindu calendar.

Diwali being festival of lights, across India people celebrate it via symbolic diyas or kandils (colorful paper lanterns) as an integral part of Diwali decorations.

1. *Vasu Baras*: Baras means 12th day and vasu means cow. On this day cow and calf is worshipped. Since it is believed that cow is symbol of God, Diwali is begun by worshipping cow and calf.
2. *Dhanatrayodashi or Dhan teras*: Dhan means "wealth" and Trayodashi means "13th day". Thus, as the name implies, this day falls on the 13th day of the second half of the lunar month. It is an auspicious day for shopping of utensils and gold. This day is also regarded as the Jayanti of God Dhanvantri who came out during the churning of the great ocean by the gods and the demons. Dhanvantri Jayanti
3. *Naraka Chaturdashi*: *Chaturdashi* is the fourteenth day on which demon Narakasura was killed. It signifies the victory of good over evil and light over darkness (Gujarati: Kali Chaudas).

In south India, this is the actual day of festivities. Hindus wake up way before dawn as early as 2:00 in the morning, have a fragrant oil bath and wear new clothes. They light small lamps all around the house and draw elaborate kolams /rangolis outside their homes. They perform a special puja with offerings to Lord Sri Krishna or Lord Sri Vishnu, as he liberated the world from the demon Narakasura on this day. It is believed

- that taking a bath before sunrise, when the stars are still visible in the sky is equivalent to taking a bath in the holy Ganges. Hence, when people greet each other in the morning, they ask "Have you performed your Ganga Snaanam?". After the puja, children burst firecrackers heralding the defeat of the demon. As this is a day of rejoicing, many will have very elaborate breakfasts and lunches and meet family and friends. In the evening, lamps are again lit and Goddess Lakshmi is worshipped and offered special dishes. This being a no moon day, many will offer special tarpana (offerings of water and sesame seeds) to their ancestors. This day is also called as Roop Chaturdashi
4. *Lakshmi Puja*: Lakshmi Puja marks the most important day of Diwali celebrations. Hindu homes worship Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, and Ganesh, the God of auspicious beginnings, and then light lamps all across the streets and homes to welcome prosperity and wellbeing.
  5. *Govardhan Puja* : Also called *Annakut*, is celebrated as the day Krishna defeated Indra. Lord Krishna taught people to worship nature, as mountains bring rains to earth. That was the reason to stop worshipping Indra. His was the message that we should take care of our nature. For *Annakut* a mountain of food is decorated symbolizing Govardhan mountain lifted by Lord Krishna. In Maharashtra it is celebrated as Padva or BaliPratipada. The day commemorates King Bali. Men present gifts to their wives on this day. In Gujarat, it is celebrated as New Year, as Vikram Samvat starts on this day.
  6. *Bhaiduj* (also Bhayyaduj, Bhaubeej or Bhayitika) : on this day, brothers and sisters meet to express their love and affection for each other (Gujarati: Bhai Bij, Bengali: Bhai Phota). Most Indian festivals bring together families, Bhaiduj brings together married sisters and brothers, and is a significant festive day for them. This festival is ancient, and pre-dates 'Raksha Bandhan' another brother-sister festival celebrated in the present day.

## Lakshmi Puja

Diwali marks the end of the harvest season in most of India. Farmers are thankful for the plentiful bounty of the year gone by, and pray for a good harvest for the year to come. Traditionally this marked the closing of accounts for businesses dependent on the agrarian cycle, and the last major celebration before winter. The deity of Lakshmi symbolizes wealth and prosperity, and her blessings are invoked for a good year ahead. There are two legends that associate the worship of Goddess Lakshmi on this day. According to first one, on this day, Goddess Lakshmi emerged from Kshira Sagar, the Ocean of Milk, during the great churning of the oceans, Samudra manthan. The second legend (more popular in western India) relates to the Vamana avatar of Vishnu, the incarnation he took to kill the demon king Bali, thereafter it was on this day, that Vishnu came back to his abode, the Vaikuntha, so those who worship Lakshmi (Vishnu's consort) on this day, get the benefit of her benevolent mood, and are blessed with mental, physical and material well-being.

As per spiritual references, on this day "Lakshmi-panchayatan" enters the Universe. Sri Vishnu, Sri Indra, Sri Kubera, Sri Gajendra and Sri Lakshmi are elements of this "panchayatan" (a group of five). The tasks of these elements are:

- Vishnu: Happiness (happiness and satisfaction)
- Indra: Opulence (satisfaction due to wealth)
- Kubera: Wealth (Generosity; one who gives away wealth)
- Gajendra: Carries the wealth
- Lakshmi: Divine Energy (Shakti) which provides energy to all the above activities.

## In Jainism

Replica of Pava temple at Pansara. Mahavira attained Nirvana at Pava.

Diwali has a very special significance in Jainism, just like Buddha Purnima, the date of Buddha's Nirvana, is for Buddhists as Christmas is for Christians. Lord Mahavira, the last of the Jain Tirthankaras, attained Nirvana or Moksha on this day at Pavapuri on Oct. 15, 527 BCE, on Chaturdashi of Kartika, as Tilyapannatti of Yativrashaba from the sixth century states:

Lord Mahavira is responsible for establishing the Dharma followed by Jains even today. According to tradition, the chief disciple of Mahavira, Ganadhara Gautam Swami also attained complete knowledge (Kevalgyana) on this day, thus making Diwali one of the most important Jain festivals.

Lord Mahavira attained his nirvana at the dawn of the amavasya (new moon). According to the Kalpasutra by Acharya Bhadrabahu, 3rd century BC, many gods were present there, illuminating the darkness. The following night was pitch black without the light of the gods or the moon. To symbolically keep the light of their master's knowledge alive.

16 Gana-kings, 9 Malla and 9 Lichchhavi, of Kasi and Kosal, illuminated their doors. They said: "Since the light of knowledge is gone, we will make light of ordinary matter".

Deepavali was first mentioned in Jain books as the date of the nirvana of Lord Mahavira. In fact, the oldest reference to Diwali is a related word, dipalikaya or deepalikaya, which occurs in Harivamsha-Purana, written by Acharya Jinasena and composed in the Shaka Samvat era in the year 705.

tatastuh lokah prativarsham-aadarat  
prasiddha-deepalikaya-aatra bharate  
samudyatah poojayitum jineshvaram  
jinendra-nirvana vibhuti-bhaktibhak

Translation: The gods illuminated Pavanagari by lamps to mark the occasion. Since that time, the people of Bharat celebrate the famous festival of "Dipalika" to worship the Jinendra (i.e. Lord Mahavira) on the occasion of his nirvana.

Deepalikaya roughly translates as "light leaving the body". Dipalika, which can be roughly translated as "splendorous light of lamps", is used interchangeably with the word "Diwali".

The way Jains celebrate Diwali is different in many respects. There is a note of asceticism in whatever the Jains do, and the celebration of Diwali is not an exception. The Jains celebrate Diwali during the month of Kartik for three days. During this period, among the Shvetambaras, devoted Jains observe fasting and chant the Uttaradhyayan Sutra, which contain the final pravachans of Lord Mahavira, and meditate upon him. Some Jains visit Pavapuri in Bihar where he attained Nirvan. In many temples special laddus are offered particularly on this day.

**Vira Nirvana Samvat:** The Jain year starts with Pratipada following Diwali. Vira Nirvana Samvat 2534 starts with Diwali 2007. The Jain businesspeople traditionally started their accounting year from Diwali. The relationship between the Vir and Shaka era is given in

Titthogali Painnaya and Dhavalaa by Acharya Virasena: Thus the Nirvana occurred 605 years and 5 months before the Saka era.

On 21st October 1974 the 2500th Nirvana Mahotsava was celebrated by all the Jain throughout India.

### **Significance in Sikhism**

The story of Diwali for the Sikhs is a story of the Sikh struggle for freedom. From the time of Guru Nanak (1469 – 1539), the founder of Sikhism, popular seasonal or folk festivals like the harvest festival of Baisakhi, or previously ancient Hindu festivals such as Holi and Diwali began to take on a new significance for the Guru's students, the Sikhs. The Guru used these festivals and special days e.g. first day of each lunar month, as symbols or pegs for his teaching themes. The enlightened ideology of Guru Nanak gave new significance to ancient festivals like Diwali and Baisakhi

### **Bandi Chhorh Divas**

Shri Darbar Sahib, Amritsar being lit up for Diwali.

For Sikhs, Diwali is particularly important because it celebrates the release from prison of the sixth guru, Guru Hargobind Ji, (hence also called "**Bandi Chhorh Divas**" or "the day of release of detainees") and 52 other princes with him, from the Gwalior Fort in 1619.

The Sikh tradition holds that the Mughal Emperor Jahangir had imprisoned Guru Hargobind and 52 other rajas (princes). Emperor Jahangir had imprisoned the sixth Guru because he was afraid of the Guru's growing following and power. The Emperor was asked to release Guru Hargobind which he agreed to do. However, Guru Hargobind asked that the princes be released also. The Emperor agreed, but said only those who could hold onto his cloak tail would be allowed to leave the prison. This was in order to limit the number of prisoners who could leave.

However, Guru Hargobind had made a large cloak with 52 pieces of string and so each prince was able to hold onto one string and leave prison.

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

### **Martyrdom of Bhai Mani Singh Ji**

Another important Sikh event associated with Diwali is the martyrdom in 1734 of the elderly Sikh scholar and strategist Bhai Mani Singh, the Granthi (priest) of Harmandir Sahib (Golden Temple). He had refused to pay a special tax on a religious meeting of the Khalsa on the Diwali day. This and other Sikh martyrdoms gave further momentum to the Khalsa struggle for freedom and eventually success in establishing the Khalsa rule north of Delhi

Bhai Mani Singh was a great scholar and he transcribed the final version of Guru Granth Sahib upon dictation from Guru Gobind Singh Ji in 1704. He took charge of Harmandir Sahib's management on 1708. In 1737, he received permission from Mughal governor of Punjab, Zakarya Khan for celebrating Diwali at Golden Temple for a massive tax of Rs. 5,000 (some authors say it

was Rs 10,000). Invitations were sent to the Sikhs all over India to join Bandi Chhorh Diwas celebrations at Harmandir Sahib. Bhai Mani Singh thought he would collect the tax-money from the Sikhs as subscriptions who would assemble for the purpose of Diwali Celebrations. But Bhai Mani Singh Ji later discovered the secret plan of Zakarya Khan to kill the Sikhs during the gathering. Bhai Mani Singh Ji immediately sent message to all the Sikhs not to turn up for celebrations. Bhai Mani Singh could not manage to arrange the money to be paid for tax. Zakariya Khan was not happy about the situation and he ordered Bhai Mani Singh's assassination at Lahore by ruthlessly cutting him limb-by-limb to death. Ever since, the great sacrifice & devotion of martyr Bhai Mani Singh Ji is remembered on the Bandi Chhorh Diwas (Diwali) celebration.

### **Uprising against the Mughal Empire**

The festival of Diwali became the second most important day after the Baisakhi, when Khalsa was formally established by the Tenth Guru Gobind Singh in 1699.

The Sikh struggle for freedom, which intensified in the 18th century, came to be centered around this day. After the execution of Banda Bahadur in 1716, who had led the agrarian uprising in Punjab, the Sikhs started the tradition of deciding matters concerning the community at the biennial meetings which took place at Amritsar on the first of Baisakh and at Diwali. These assemblies were known as the "*Sarbat Khalsa*" and a resolution passed by it became a "*gurmata*" (decree of the Guru).

### **Diwali in different regions of India**

The celebrations vary in different regions:

#### **In South India**

- In Southern India, *naraka chaturdashi* is the main day, with celebration with firecrackers at dawn after lakshmi puja.
- The main festival in North India is on *Amavasya* (No moon) evening with *Lakshmi Puja* which is followed by lighting of oil lamps around the house.

#### **In Maharashtra**

In Maharashtra, Diwali starts from *Vasubaras* which is the 12th day of the 2nd half of the month of *Ashwin*. This day is celebrated by performing an *Aarti* of the cow and its calf- which is a symbol of love between mother and her baby.

The next day is *Dhanatrayodashi* (tra-3 dashi-10 i.e. 10+3=13th day) or *Dhanteras*. This day is of special importance for traders and business people.

The 14th day of *Ashwin* is *Narakchaturdashi*. On this day before sunrise, people wake up and bathe after rubbing scented oil on their body (they also bathe using *Utna*). After this the entire family visits a temple and offers prayers to their God. After this visit, everyone feasts on *Faral* which is a special Diwali preparation consisting of delectable sweets such as "*karanji*", "*ladoo*", "*shankarpale*" and "*mithai*" as well as some spicy eatables like "*chakli*", "*sev*" and "*chivda*".

Then comes *Laxmi-poojan*. It occurs on *Amavasya* i.e. no moon day. The dark night is illuminated by lamps and at dusk crackers are burst. New account books are opened after a *pooja*. The stock exchange performs a token bidding called *Muhurta* bidding. Generally the traders do not make any payments on that day (according to their belief *Laxmi* should not be given away but must come home). In every household, cash, jewelery and an idol of the goddess *Laxmi* is worshipped. Friends, neighbors and relatives are invited over and celebrations are in full swing. The broom used to clean one's house is also worshipped as a symbol of *laxmi* in some places .

*Padwa'* is the 1st day of the new month - *Kartik* in the *Hindu* calendar.

*Bhaubeej* - it is the time where in the bond of love between a brother and sister is further strengthened as the sister asks God for her brother/s long and successful life while she receives presents from her beloved brother/s.

Homes are cleaned and decorated before *Diwali*. Offices perform *pooja*. Bonuses and holidays are granted to employees on these auspicious days. People buy property and gold on these days too. Children build replica forts in memory of the founder of Maratha empire, *Shivaji Maharaj*. For children, Fireworks, new clothes and sweets make *Deepavali* the most eagerly awaited festival of the year.

### **In Goa**

*Diwali* in goa is a little different from that in rest of india. In goa it is celebrated with great pomp and joy and according to the *shastra*. a night before *Diwali* potrais of *narkasur* are made in every house. *narkasur* is considered to be a sign of evil things. It is believed that on the day of *Diwali* lord *krishna* had killed *narkasur* and saved people from his terror. Various competitions are held like the *narkasur* competition, *rangoli* competition etc. The portrait is then burnt at 4.00 a.m. early in the morning. then people have bath and break a bitter fruit called *tendli* (in *konkani*). and then some religious activities are performed. The same evening or the next evening *laxmi pooja* is celebrated in all shops and houses, seeking goddess *laxmi's* blessings.

### **In Bengal (Dipavali)**

**Kali Puja** is light-up night for Kolkata, corresponding to the festival of *Diwali* (pronounced *Dipabali* in *Bengali*), where people light candles in memory of the souls of departed ancestors. The Goddess *Kali* is worshipped at night on one night during this festival. This is also a night of fireworks, with local youth burning sparklers and crackers throughout the night. Kolkata had to pass legislature a few years back to ban fireworks which break the 65 decibel sound limit, as ambient noise levels were going up to 90 decibels or more in parts of the city.

### **In other parts of the world**

*Diwali* is celebrated in various parts of the world, in countries such as the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Suriname, Canada, Guyana, Mauritius, Fiji, Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Singapore, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Trinidad and Tobago, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, Australia, much of Africa, and the United States. With more and more Indians and Sri Lankans now migrating to various parts of the world, the number of countries where *Diwali* is celebrated has been gradually increasing. While in some countries it is celebrated mainly by Indian expatriates, in others it has become part of the general local culture. In most of

these countries Diwali is celebrated on the same lines as described in this article with some minor variations. Some important variations are worth mentioning.

In Nepal, Diwali is known as "Tihar" or "Swanti". It is celebrated during the October/November period. Here the festival is celebrated for five days and the traditions vary from those followed in India. On the first day (Kaag tihar), crows are given offerings, considering them to be divine messengers. On the second day (Kukur tihar), dogs are worshipped for their honesty. On the third day, Laxmi puja and worship of cow is performed. This is the last day according to Nepal Sambat, so many of the businessmen clear their accounts on this day and on finishing it, worship goddess Laxmi, the goddess of wealth. The fourth day is celebrated as New Year. Cultural processions and other celebrations are observed in this day. The Newars celebrate it as "Mha Puja", a special ritual in which the body is worshipped to keep it fit and healthy for the year ahead on this day. On the fifth and final day called "Bhai Tika", brothers and sisters meet and exchange pleasantries.

In Trinidad and Tobago, communities all over the islands get together and celebrate the festival. One major celebration that stands out is the Diwali Nagar, or Village of the Festival of Lights. It features stage performances by the east Indian cultural practitioners, a folk theatre featuring skits and plays, an exhibition on some aspect of Hinduism, displays by various Hindu religious sects and social organizations, nightly worship of Goddess Lakshmi, lighting of deeyas, performances by various schools related to Indian culture, and a food court with Indian and non-Indian vegetarian delicacies. The festival culminates with magnificent fireworks displays ushering in Diwali. Thousands of people participate in an atmosphere devoid of alcohol and in a true family environment.

In Malaysia, Diwali is known as "Hari Deepavali," and is celebrated during the seventh month of the Hindu solar calendar. It is a federal public holiday throughout Malaysia. In many respects it resembles the traditions followed in the Indian subcontinent. 'Open houses' are held where Hindu Malaysians welcome fellow Malaysians of different races and religions to their house for a sumptuous meal. 'Open house' or 'rumah terbuka' is a practice very much unique to Malaysia and shows the goodwill and friendly ties practiced by all Malaysians during any festive occasion.

In Sri Lanka, this festival is also called "Deepavali" and is celebrated by the Tamil community. On this day, it is traditional for people to wear new clothes and exchange pleasantries.