

What is the meaning of Diwali?



One of the most significant festivals in Indian culture, Diwali, the festival of lights, sees millions attend firework displays, prayers and celebratory events across the world every autumn. The festival celebrates the triumph of light over darkness and good over evil. Houses are decorated with candles and colorful lights and huge firework displays are held while families' feast and share gifts.

The festival usually falls between the middle of October and the middle of November, although this is decided upon by the lunar calendar. While each observer has its own reason to celebrate the festival, one of the most popular stories told is the legend of Prince Rama and his wife Sita returning to their kingdom in northern India from exile after defeating the powerful king Ravana in the 15th century BC.

The festival is marked by large firework displays, to remember the celebrations, which, according to the legend, took place upon Rama's return as locals set off their own version of fireworks. Those celebrating the festival also light traditional earthen diyas (candles) and decorate their houses with colorful rangoli artworks-patterns created on the floor using colored rice or powder. During Diwali, families and friends share sweets and gifts and there is also a strong belief in giving food and goods to those in need. It is also traditional for homes to be cleaned and new clothes to be worn at the time of the festival.

Surati's Lights of Diwali is about celebrating this joyous occasion with our diverse communities and neighbors. Though this festival originates in India, Surati's Diwali celebrations focuses on an Indian cultural experience with influences by world cultures, enlightenment of the mind, brotherhood, peace and unity. This event is marked by performances from community as well as professional artists, delicious food and snacks, DJ, dancing. This year we are bringing this event to Exchange Place in Jersey City so that Diwali is even more accessible to the community. The event is free to attend and will be held from 12 noon to 9 pm.