

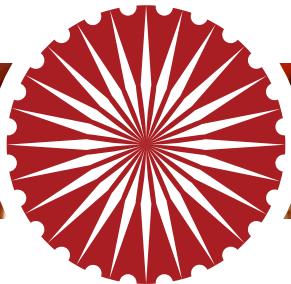


Diwali

SHRAMAN
SOUTH ASIAN MUSEUM

ACTIVITY WORKBOOK

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Diwali Facts

Diwali is a festival of illumination with many themes: light over darkness, good over evil, hope over despair, knowledge over ignorance, and the renewal of life.

Diwali comes from the Sanskrit word *Dipavali*, meaning “row of lamps.”

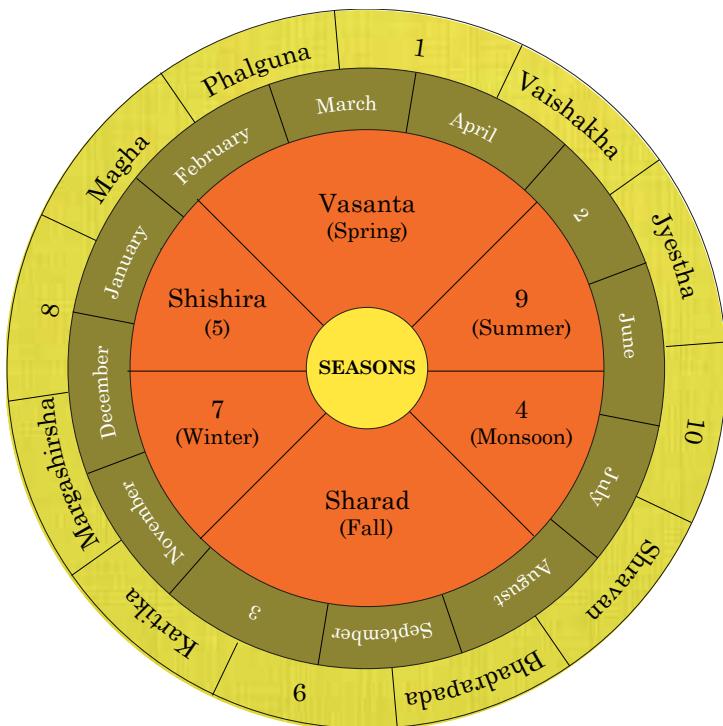
Diwali falls on the new moon between the months of *Ashvina* (September-October) and *Kartika* (October-November) and the celebration lasts for 3 to 5 days. Diwali is the darkest night of the year and yet it is a celebration of light!

Diwali holds religious meaning for Hindus, Jains, and Sikhs but is celebrated by many regardless of faith.

For many people, Diwali marks the end of the year. It is also a celebration of the end of the summer harvest and the planting of the winter seed, the changing of seasons, a new business cycle, and the coming year.

Diwali is celebrated differently depending on the region in India, but there are many common practices: houses, shops, and public places are decorated with diyas—small earthen oil lamps; fire works are set off; it is an opportunity to clean, paint, and decorate the house; sweets are eaten, gifts are given, and new clothes are worn.





Complete the calendar by filling in the missing names in the spaces below.

1. _____
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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 Waning crescent Visible: 18% ↓ Age: 25 days	 Waning crescent Visible: 12% ↓ Age: 26 days	 Waning crescent Visible: 5% ↓ Age: 27 days	 New Visible: 3% ↓ Age: 28 days	 New Visible: 1% ↓ Age: 29 days	 New Visible: 1% ↑ Age: 1 day	 Waxing crescent Visible: 3% ↑ Age: 2 days
 Waxing crescent Visible: 8% ↑ Age: 3 days	 Waxing crescent Visible: 14% ↑ Age: 4 days	 Waxing crescent Visible: 23% ↑ Age: 5 days	 Waxing crescent Visible: 33% ↑ Age: 6 days	 First quarter Visible: 43% ↑ Age: 7 days	 First quarter Visible: 55% ↑ Age: 8 days	

During which phase of the moon does Diwali occur?

On which date was Diwali celebrated this year?



Rama and Sita

The *Ramayana*, one of the two great Sanskrit epics, is the story of Lord Rama, his wife Sita, his brother Lakshmana, and the great monkey hero Hanuman. After 12 years of a happy marriage, Rama is about to be crowned king of Ayodhya when he is forced into exile for 14 years. Sita and Lakshmana followed Rama into the forest. During their wanderings, the demon king Ravana kidnapped Sita and took her to his beautiful island called Lanka. With help from Hanuman and his army of monkeys, Rama and Lakshmana were able to travel to Lanka, defeat Ravana, and rescue Sita. On their return to the city of Ayodhya, villagers lit lamps so the heroes would not lose their way home. Upon their arrival on the day of the new moon, between the months of *Ashvina* and *Kartika*, the people of the city lit oil lamps and decorated the city in celebration of their homecoming.

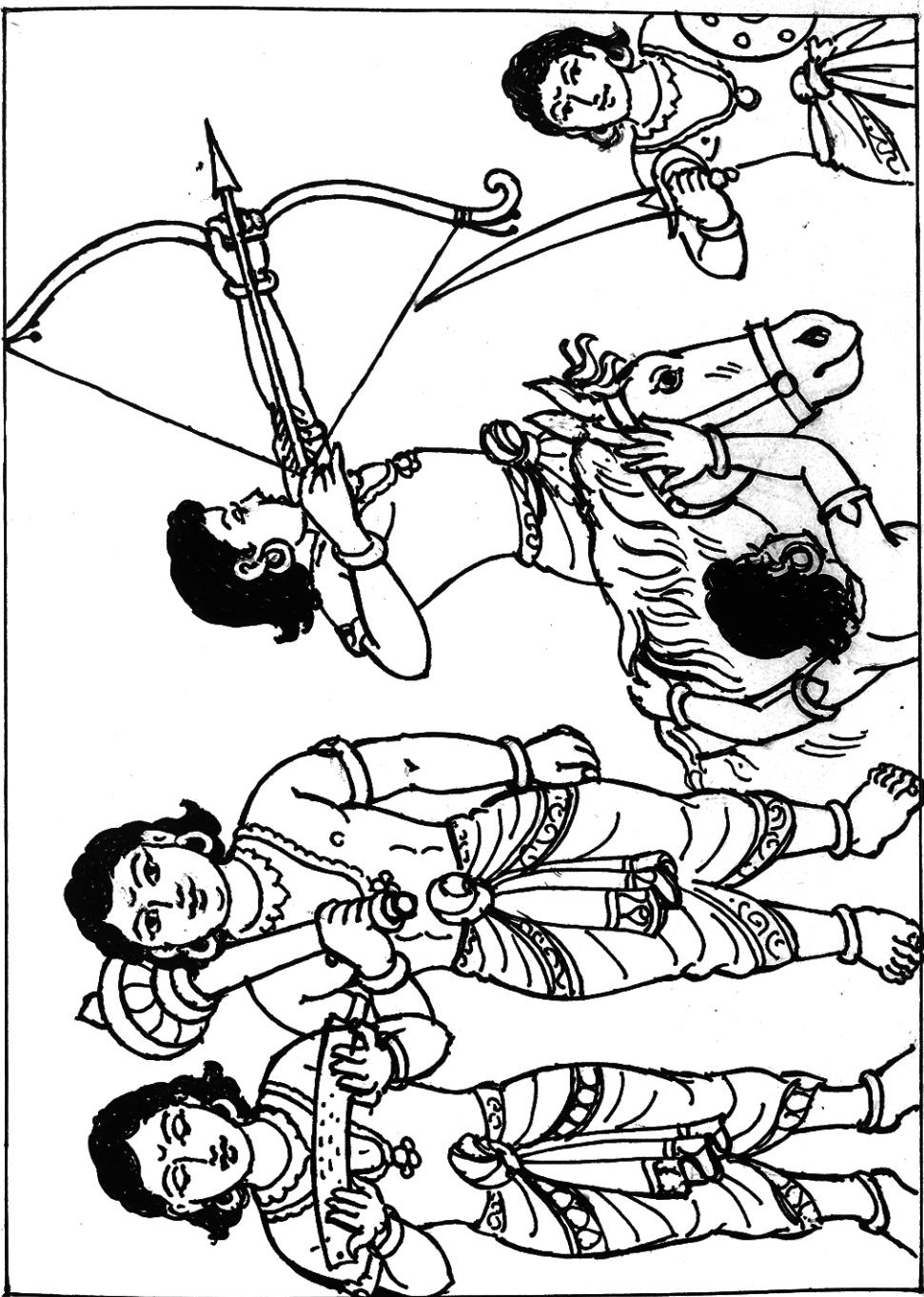
What do the oil lamps symbolize? _____



The Pandava Brothers

The *Mahabharata*, one of the two great Sanskrit epics and the longest poem ever written, tells the heroic tale of the five Pandava brothers and their wife Draupadi. The brothers were kind, honest, and caring. They had a splendid palace in Hastinapura and ruled their kingdom justly. One day, the Kauravas, the Pandava brothers' jealous cousins, cheated them out of their kingdom in a dice match and forced the brothers and Draupadi into exile. After 13 years and many adventures, they returned to Hastinapura on the day of the new moon between the months of *Ashvina* and *Kartika*. The people welcomed them home by lighting oil lamps.

What do the oil lamps symbolize? _____



Lakshmi

Lakshmi is the goddess of wealth, prosperity, love, and beauty. She is also the wife of Lord Vishnu. Once upon a time, gods (*devas*) and demigods (*asuras*) were searching for *amrita*, the nectar of immortality, and started churning the great Ocean of Milk. Each wanted the *amrita* for themselves. As they churned, various herbs were tossed into the ocean, which produced 14 divine treasures. Lakshmi emerged sitting on a lotus flower on the day of the new moon between the months of *Ashvina* and *Kartika*. That evening she accepted Lord Vishnu as her eternal husband and a celebration filled with light was held. Worship of Lakshmi (or *Lakshmi puja*) is an important part of Diwali. The season is appropriate: the rains have passed, summer crops have been harvested, and winter seed is being sown. Many families draw Lakshmi's footprints in rangoli in front of their houses to welcome her to bless them with prosperity. The business community also starts a new financial year hoping the worship of Lakshmi will make them prosperous.

Which Diwali themes does Lakshmi symbolize?



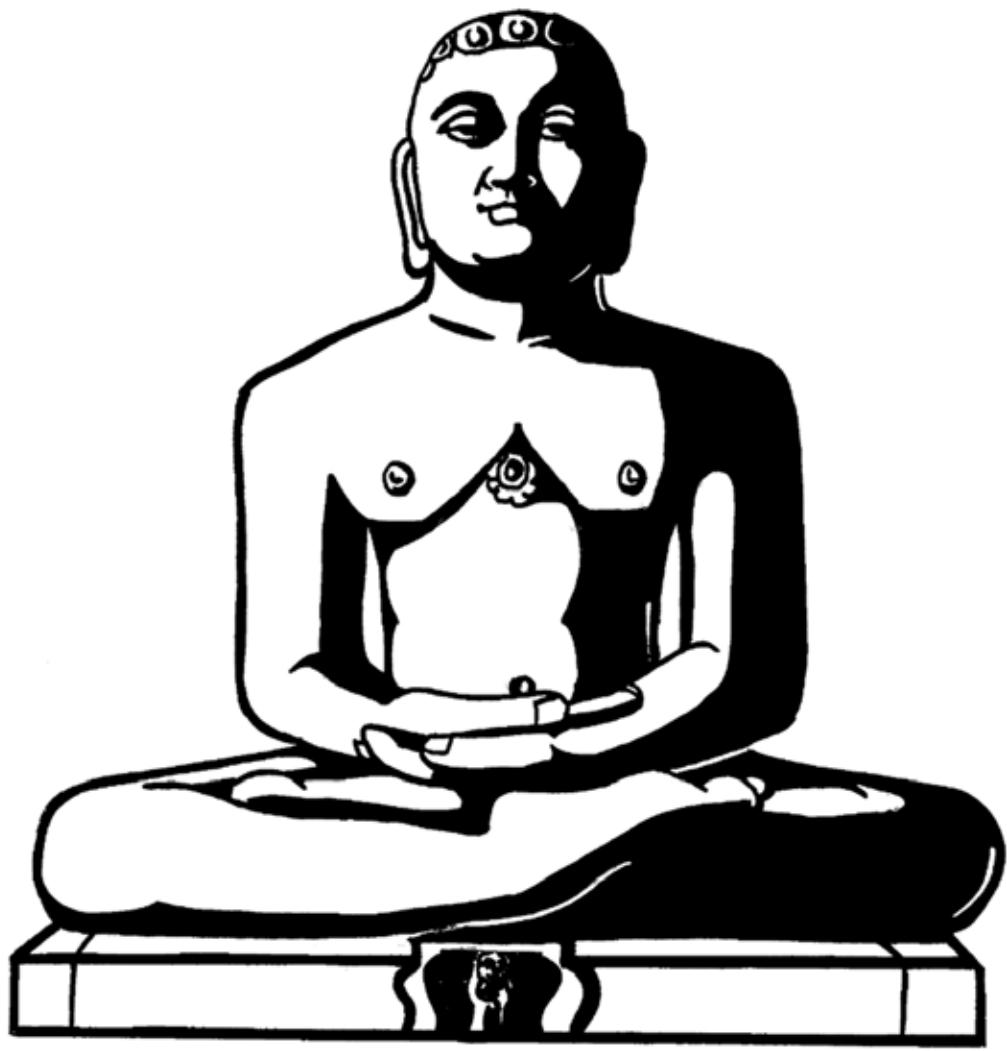


Mahavira

Mahavira (“Great Hero”) was the 24th and last of the Jain *Tirthankaras*. He was born to a king and queen in what is now Bihar, India and given the name Vardhamana (“He who causes increase”) because the city prospered after his birth. At the age of 30, he abandoned the comforts of royal life to have a spiritual awakening. For 12 years, Vardhamana meditated and wandered the countryside. He endured many hardships, but on the day of the new moon between the months of *Ashvina* and *Kartika*, the day of Diwali, he achieved perfect wisdom (*kevala-jñana*) and became the 24th *Tirthankara*. After this, he was called ‘Mahavira.’

Which Diwali themes are found in Mahavira’s story?





Guru Hargobind

Hargobind was the sixth of the ten Sikh *gurus* (“teacher” or “master”). He was born on July 5, 1595 in Amritsar. At the age of eleven, he became the guru and leader of the Sikh community after his father, Guru Arjan Dev. He strengthened the community by incorporating group prayers into worship and built a fort for protection near the Golden Temple in Amritsar. Thinking that the Sikhs were raising an army, the Mughal emperor Jahangir imprisoned Guru Hargobind in Gwalior in 1617. Under pressure from his advisors, Jahangir agreed to release him in 1619. Guru Hargobind refused unless the 52 Hindu princes also imprisoned in Gwalior were released. The Mughal emperor agreed, but would only release as many princes as could hold on to the tail of his cloak. Guru Hargobind then had a cloak made with 52 pieces of string. Each prince was able to hold on to the cloak and leave prison with Guru Hargobind. He returned to Amritsar on Diwali and the Sikh community lit candles and illuminated the Golden Temple to welcome him home.

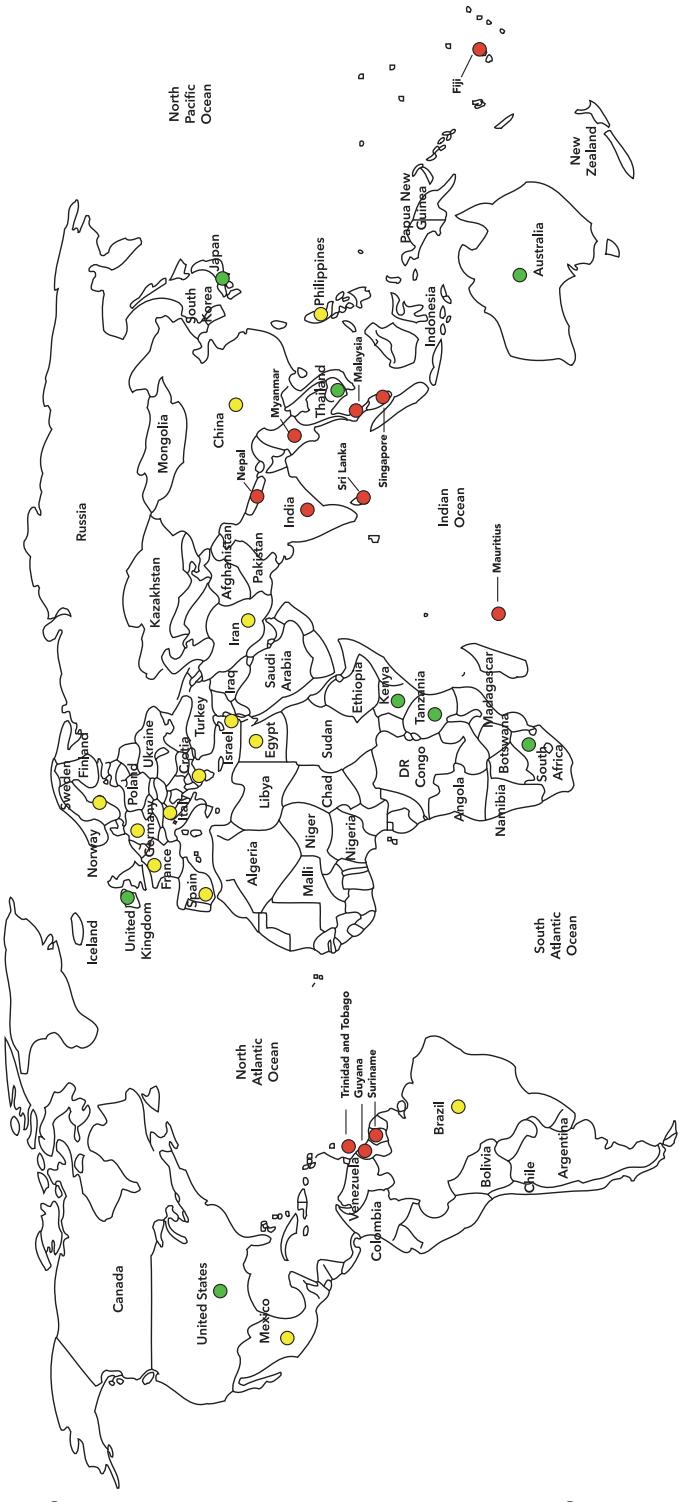
Which Diwali themes are found in Guru Hargobind's story? _____





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Countries that celebrate Diwali as an official holiday

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11. _____



Journeys to Greatness

Many of the stories of Diwali center around the journey of heroes. They overcome hardships, ignorance, and evil to promote goodness, knowledge, and hope. You've read about the journeys of Rama, Sita, Lakshmana, and Hanuman; the 5 Pandava brothers and Draupadi; Mahavira; and Guru Hargobind. Now it's your turn...

What do you think your journey might look like? As a hero today, where might life take you to show that hope can overcome despair or knowledge can overcome ignorance? Add a story, drawing, or map of your own journey.

'S JOURNEY

Where does your journey start?

Where does your journey end?

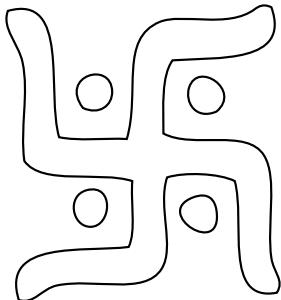


Symbols of Diwali

Match the picture of the symbol to the meaning of the symbol.

- A. holiness and auspiciousness
- B. wealth and prosperity
- C. wisdom and success
- D. hope
- E. purity and spiritual perfection
- F. good luck, fortune, and well-being

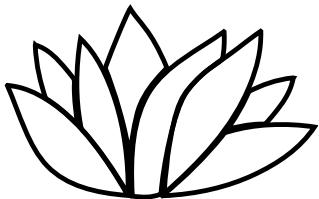




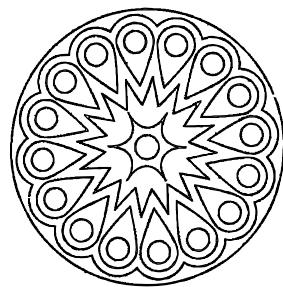
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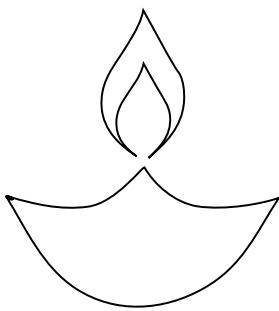
4. _____



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5. _____



3. _____



6. _____



SHRAMAN

SOUTH ASIAN MUSEUM

The purpose of the Shraman South Asian Museum and Learning Center Foundation is to collect, preserve, display, interpret, and facilitate the study and discussion of South Asian culture and history.

This mission will be fulfilled through the creation of a museum, learning center, and library, and through ongoing collaboration with members of academic, artistic, and cultural communities.

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