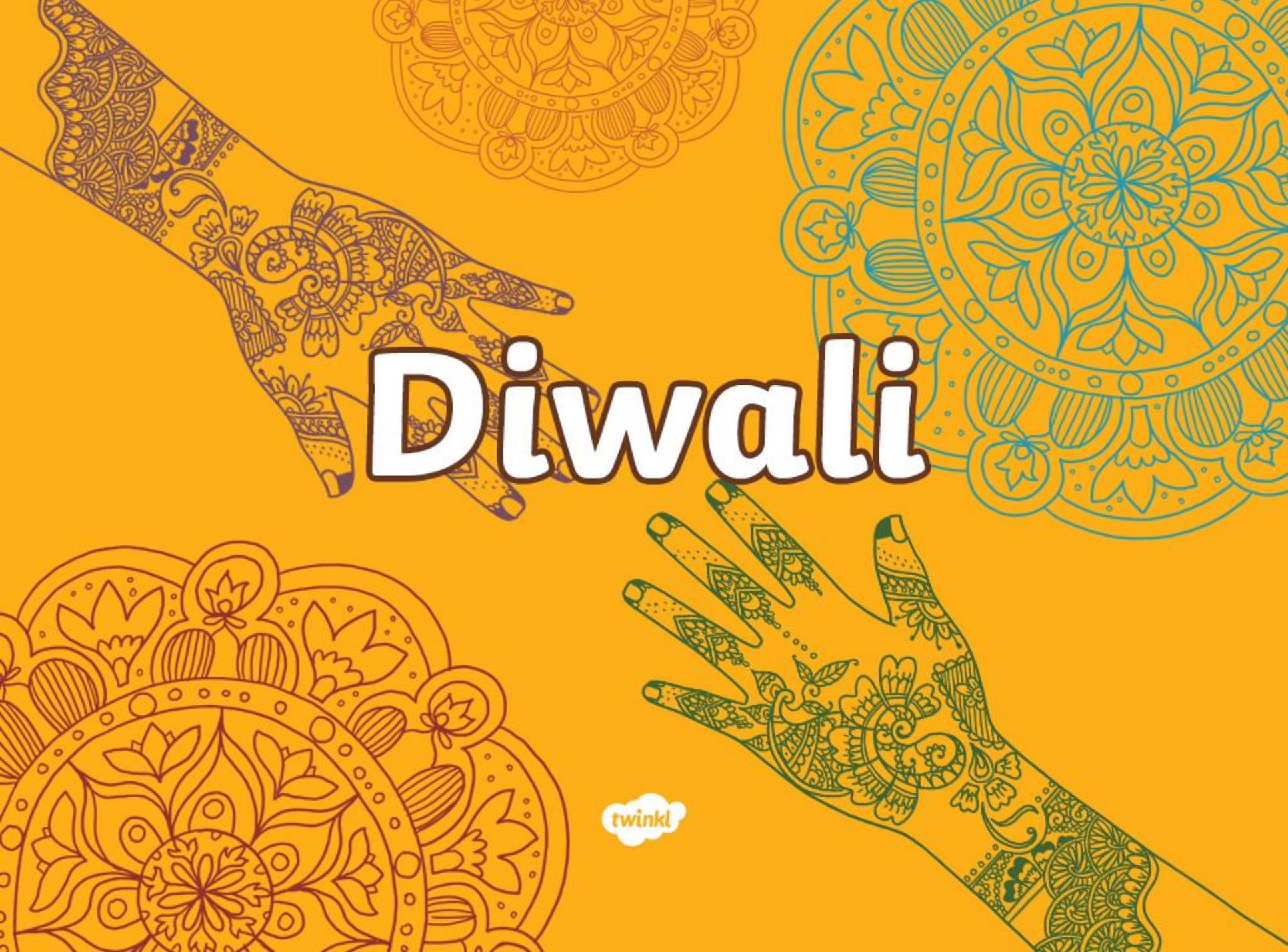


Diwali



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What is Diwali?

Diwali is a very important holiday in India.

It is a Hindu 'festival of lights' which celebrates the New Year.

The word Diwali means 'row of lighted lamps'.

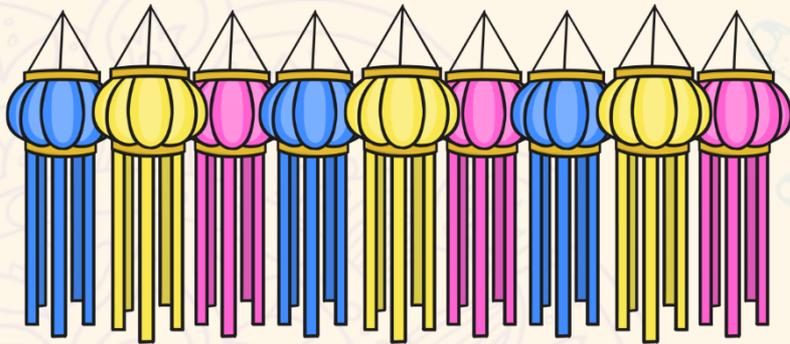




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Celebrating Diwali

The festival usually honours **Lakshmi**, the goddess of wealth.

Lamps are lit to help Lakshmi find her way into people's homes.



Diya
Lamp



Lakshmi

They also celebrate a Diwali legend, the story of the return of **Rama** and **Sita** to Rama's kingdom after fourteen years of exile.



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Celebrating Diwali

The festival is a time for:

- spring cleaning
- decorating the home with lots of lights
- wearing new clothes
- exchanging gifts
- preparing festival meals
- putting on huge

Hindu family
praying





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Celebrating Diwali

In India, Hindus leave the windows and doors of their houses open so that Lakshmi can come in.

Rangoli are drawn on the floors of the house. These are patterns and the most popular subject is the lotus flower.



Lotus
flower



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The Meaning of Diwali

The festival celebrates the victory of good over evil, light over darkness and knowledge over ignorance.

The legends that go with the festival differ depending on where you are:

- In northern India, Diwali celebrates Rama and Sita's return from exile.
- In Nepal, Diwali commemorates the victory of Lord Krishna over the demon king Narakaasura.
- In Bengal, it is associated with the goddess Kali.



Rama and
Sita



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