Diwali Festival: Traditions Of Celebration In Australia

Throughout history, religion has been an important force shaping beliefs about the purpose of life, the place in the world, and how society should be structured. Many Australians hold religious beliefs, and Australia's religious landscape has become increasingly diverse.

The festival of Diwali is a Hindu religion that celebrates the New Year and is important because it celebrates new beginnings and the triumph of good and evil and light over darkness. It also brings people from other religions and backgrounds together. The influence of Diwali makes Australia a religiously plural society.

Diwali is the Hindu New Year and is a festival of lights that celebrates the victory of light over darkness and good over evil and freedom and enlightenment. Diwali is a five-day celebration where the main celebration is on the third day. Diwali is mainly celebrated by Hindus, Sikh and Jain faiths however people of other background are allowed to celebrate as well. For Hindus Diwali is celebrated to honour Rama-Chandra who is the seventh avatar of the god of Vishnu. After 14 days of exile Rama returned to his people on the day of Diwali in which he fought and won the battle against the demon king, Ravana. To celebrate the victory people lit their houses which represents the light over darkness.

For Sikhs, Diwali is important because it celebrates the release of the sixth guru, Guru Hargobind and 52 princes from prison. The Sikh tradition embraces that Guru Hargobind and 52 princes were imprisoned by the Emperor Jahangir. The Emperor was asked to release Guru Hargobind. However, he requested that the princes be released as well. The Emperor accepted, but only those who could hold the tail of his robe would be allowed to leave the prison. This was to limit the number of prisoners leaving the prison. Guru Hargobind, however, had a cloak made of 52 string pieces, so each prince could hold on to one string and leave the prison. In memory of Guru Hargobind, Sikhs light up the Golden Temple to celebrate his actions.

For Jains, Diwali is important because it is the celebration of Lord Mahavir's teachings and contributions to not only the religion but to greater humanity. His teachings promote compassion and justice through non-violence and also advocates the importance of all living beings. Each year Jains light lamps on Diwali to symbolise and keep the light of Lord Mahavir's knowledge and contributions alive. Many Jains celebrate Diwali by fasting, singing hymns and chanting mantras to honour Lord Mahavir, while others participate in charity.

Diwali is significant because it unites people from every culture and religion. It is a time when people mingle about in joy and embrace one another. It is a time to reflect on one's life, past actions and fixing one's life with the right changes. It is significant because it is a celebration to forgive and give. It is a common ritual in Diwali for people to forget and forgive the wrongs and grudges. Most importantly, the lights of Diwali signifies a time to end all dark thoughts and self-reflect on one's own life.

In Australia, Diwali festivals have been privately celebrated between Indian families and in temples for many years. However, this changed in 1998 when the Hindu Council of Australia decided to start celebrating Diwali publicly. Twenty years later, Diwali in Australia has become a

turning point for Indian in Australia. People in Australia accepted Hindus and Indians and had accepted Diwali as a significant Australian celebration. This displays that Australians have accepted Indians and Hindus as their own which shows the major impact that Diwali has on Australia as it marks a significant change in Australia as a religiously plural society.

Diwali, the festival of lights and the Hindu New year is a significant celebration to the adherents of the faith and will be analysed using the Lovat's scholastic method, the Lovat's triangle. Diwali consists of a five-day celebration. The first day of Diwali which is the entry of the celebration is celebrated by cleaning and renovating homes and businesses. Indians also buy gold or silver items, and at least one or two kitchen utensils as it is considered good luck. The second day of Diwali which is the preparation stage is celebrated by decorating doorways and homes with Rangoli. This is considered good luck and welcomes in the Gods. People also use fireworks, bake traditional snacks and celebrate with friends and family. The third day of Diwali which is the climax stage of the celebration is the most significant as it is known as the new moon day. Families on this day gather together for the Lakshmi Puja which is a prayer to the goddess. The Lakshmi Puja is a celebration of three deities: Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth; Ganesh, the elephant headed god of wisdom; and Kuber, the lord of wealth. The prayer is followed by music, feasts and fireworks. The fourth day of Diwali which is the celebration stage of the festival is the first day of the new year. On this day friends and families exchange gifts, sweets and large tiers of food arranged in the shape of India's Mount Govardhan. The fifth and final day which is the concluding stage of the festival and is where brothers bless their sisters and provide gifts of love. It is believed that the goddess of happiness and good fortune, Lakshmi, visits the earth on this last day. If she finds a house that is pure, clean and bright, she will fulfil the wishes of the people.

Diwali has a major significance to the adherents of the faith. It not just for fun. It's for enlightening of self. It removes all darkness from not just homes but in people's hearts which is very significant to the adherents of the faith. Lights are used in Diwali to represent the struggle and to overcome issues that people have been faced with. Its significance of the victory of good over evil and truth over lies. Light over darkness. Diwali has become popular even among non-Indians and non-Hindus especially in Australia. Buddhists, Sikhs and everyday Australians have been part takers in the festival of lights. This showing that Diwali has a massive significance for all adherents in an individual and communal level.

Festivals are a good way to bring people together to share common values. Festivals are a good way to share cultural traditions and ideas with the rest of society in a multicultural society like Australia, home to more than 200 migrant cultural groups. Diwali has slowly become a major festival in Australia and is being celebrated by not just Indians but people from other cultures and backgrounds which shows the cultural diversity that Diwali brings to Australia making the festival a great fit in Australia in the 21st century.

A man named Sunil Badami who was raised his whole life in Australia but had an Indian background shared his experiences of Diwali in SBS. The article states that he grew up during the White Australian Policy meaning that he had to adapt to the way Australian's lived instead of being who he truly was, an Indian. As he grew up, he had almost forgotten about his own heritage however later when he became older and Australia had become more multicultural, he started to learn about his own background and created his own way of celebrating Diwali in a way that everyone can celebrate. It wasn't all about praying, it was more about cultural diversity and including people of other backgrounds and cultures. He stated that " I'll be glad that I can

call home a country that has changed so much so quickly that I can now not only celebrate one very important facet of my identity without relinquishing any other equally essential aspect, but that we can all celebrate with each other, creating our own very Aussie Diwali together. That's our community, and a community worth rejoicing in not one split by where we once came from but united by who we're with now." This shows that in the 21st century Indians have changed the way they celebrate Diwali. It's not all about praying anymore, its more about being united no matter what background or religion and celebrating good over evil.

Overall, the festival of Diwali is a Hindu religion that celebrates the New Year and is important because it celebrates new beginnings and the triumph of good and evil and light over darkness. It also brings people from other religions and backgrounds together as one united country of Australia.