

Why is Diwali Important To Sikhs?

The Third Sikh Teacher, Guru Amar Das institutionalized this as one of the special days when all Sikhs would gather to receive the Gurus blessings at Goindwal. In 1577 the foundation stone of The Golden Temple was laid on Diwali. The Diwali festival took place during the life of the sixth Sikh Guru Hargobind Sahib. The Muslim Emperor Jahangir, imprisoned the Guru and 52 Kings. The Emperor ruled India at this time. The Asian Indians begged the Emperor to release the Guru and the Emperor agreed but the Gurus said also release the kings. Guru Ji had a gown made with 52 string pieces for the Hindus to hold. The Guru and the Hindu kings were also freed at Diwali, Sikhs were very happy when their leader was released. Guru Hargobind Sahib went to the Golden Temple Amritsar in the Punjab. Sikh Diwali is recalled throughout India and in many countries; each year to remember Guru Ji's release. At Diwali we worship the religious freedom for Sikhs and this is why Diwali is called the Light Festival. As Guru's Mother was full of happiness that her son was released she ordered food and sweets and gave them to everyone. The worshippers float multi-coloured light candles on the water at the Golden Temple. The gurdwara, hold a grand fireworks display.

SACRIFICE ON DIWALI BHAI MANI SINGH

Bhai Mani Singh was a great Sikh scholar and martyr who was the scribe of the final version of the Guru Granth Sahib under the guidance of Guru Gobind Singh. In 1737 Bhai Mani Singh took permission from the muslim governor of Lahore for the Sikhs to celebrate Diwali at the Golden Temple on the payment of Rs. 5,000 as tax, a practice which had been banned. Not enough people attended Diwali that year because they were afraid of the muslim authorities and as a result not enough money was collected. The muslim authorities arrested Bhai Mani Singh and publicly executed him in Lahore. This great Martyr showed his courage as he recited Sukhmani Sahib while he was cut LIMB BY LIMB, JOINT BY JOINT and remained in high spirits through the torture.wahegurooo waheguroo wahegurooo waheguroooo..

How to Celebrate Bandi Chhorh Diwas / Diwali

Guru Hargobind Ji was released in 1619 AD from the Gwalior fort and He also helped other 52 rajas to be freed from the life imprisonment. The celebrations were held when he arrived at Amritsar.

Question is that why do we celebrate the day many hundred years after ?
Do we understand ?

Probably NOT. An attempt has been made to answer the above questions as follows :

Purpose of the Celebrations is to remember Guru Ji and pray for one's own release from the imprisonment like 52 rajas. One might think that he/she is not in prison and is free to do whatever ...

One might be wrong here. Most people are constantly being forced into the PRISON of pride, rat race, show off, peer pressure and one may go to the extent of turning morals against what Gurus

have laid down (smoking, using intoxicants, adultery, removing hair and so on). Most of us are prisoners of the culture & society.

Objective of the celebration is to pray for our liberation from the worldly bonds and act upon Guru's path of truthfulness to avail human life time (i.e. to be one with Waheguru / Lord). Rather than lighting a deeva of clay, oil & wick, one should light the mind with the divine knowledge contained in Gurbani.

Therefore, lighting a deeva in true sense is acquiring Divine knowledge & virtues (being kind, humble, meek, tolerant, selfless, sweet spoken) that leads one to become one with Waheguru / God.

Gurbani advises us which deeva to light and where in the following shabad ;

Aasaa Mahalaa 1, Deevaa meraa ek naam dukh vich paayeyaa t'ail || un chaanan oh sokheyaa chookaa jum seon mail ||

which means that God's Name (divine devotion) is my lamp (to be lighted in the mind); I have put the oil of suffering (ego, jealousy, anger, lust, greed) into it. Its flame has dried up this oil, and I have escaped meeting with the Messenger of Death i.e. attained union with Waheguru. (Guru Granth Sahib Ji, Page 35)

May our prayers be listened and Waheguru grant us freedom, like the 52 rajas, from the worldly bonds (ego, lust, anger, greed, jealousy, hatred and peer pressure etc.).

Awip mukqu mukqu krY sMswru] nwnk iqsu jn kau sdw nmskwru.

meaning that He (Guru) who Himself is liberated, liberates the universe (i.e. "Bandi Chhorh"). Nanak says, I bow (to the Guru) in reverence forever (Guru Granth Sahib Ji, Page 295).

Dhan Dhan (Great) Sri Guru Hargobind Ji

Bandi Chhorh Diwas (Diwali) of 1737

Bhai Mani Singh transcribed the final version of Guru Granth Sahib upon dictation from Guru Gobind Singh Ji in 1704 at Damdamma Sahib. After heavenly abode of Guru Sahib in 1708, he took charge of Harmandir Sahib's management. In 1737, invitations were sent to the Sikhs all over India to join Bandi Chhorh Diwas celebrations at Harmandir Sahib. A tax of 5000 rupees (some authors have mentioned 10,000 rupees) had to be paid to the Mogul governor of Punjab, Zakariya Khan. Bhai Mani Singh Ji later discovered the secret plan of Zakariya 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. 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 Bhai Mani Singh Ji is remembered on the Bandi Chhorh Diwas (Diwali) celebration