Lesson 3

5-5-13

Circle Time: Have students sit in circle and greet each other with a Namaste. Make sure students are all saying NAMASTE and using their hands in proper position.

Review on why we say Namaste to each other.

Review the 3 meanings of AUM (OM symbol)

Today’s Lesson (Meaning of lighting Diya)

Watch remainder of BalKrishna.

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Introduce today’s topic.

Ask the students: Why do we light a lamp when we do Puja or Pray (Diya)

First ask the students why they think we light a diya. Record answers on the chalkboard.

Review the topics below and explain to students

**Why Do We Light a Lamp (Diya)?**

In every Hindu home, a lamp is lit in the morning or evening or at both times. In some homes the lamp is kept going day and night - it is never allowed to burn out. Apart from daily prayers, religious ceremonies, celebrations and at opening ceremonies or events, the light of the lamp is considered auspicious. It is kept burning up to the end of the ceremony or event. Light represents knowledge and darkness represents ignorance. We believe that God almighty is complete in every way and He is the authority that reveals knowledge and dispels ignorance. Light represents His presence. All of mankind is in search of peace and this ultimately comes from the realization of ultimate truth and knowledge. Hindus use butter (Ghee) or oil to light a lamp as opposed to an electric lamp for the purpose of creating light. We believe that butter or oil represents the ego within us, and this needs to be removed or burnt off. Also the lighting of one oil lamp enables the lighting of countless number of lamps, just as one knowledgeable person can enlighten others with his knowledge. Every aspect of the lighting of a lamp as a logical and symbolic meaning in Hinduism.

**Why do we light a lamp?**

* In almost every Indian home a lamp is lit daily before the altar of the Lord. In some houses it is lit at dawn, in some, twice a day – at dawn and dusk – and in a few it is maintained continuously (akhanda deepa). All auspicious functions commence with the lighting of the lamp, which is often maintained right through the occasion.
* Light symbolizes knowledge, and darkness, ignorance. The Lord is the "Knowledge Principle" (chaitanya) who is the source, the enlivener and the illuminator of all knowledge. Hence light is worshiped as the Lord himself.
* Knowledge removes ignorance just as light removes darkness. Also knowledge is a lasting inner wealth by which all outer achievement can be accomplished. Hence we light the lamp to bow down to knowledge as the greatest of all forms of wealth
* Why not light a bulb or tube light? That too would remove darkness. But the traditional oil lamp has a further spiritual significance. The oil or ghee in the lamp symbolizes our vaasanas or negative tendencies and the wick, the ego. When lit by spiritual knowledge, the vaasanas get slowly exhausted and the ego too finally perishes. The flame of a lamp always burns upwards. Similarly we should acquire such knowledge as to take us towards higher ideals.
* Whilst lighting the lamp we thus pray:

*Deepajyothi parabrahma
Deepa Jyotir Janaardanah
Deepo harati paapaani
Sandhyaa deepa namostute ||*

I prostrate to the dawn/dusk lamp; whose light is the Knowledge Principle (the Supreme Lord), which removes the darkness of ignorance and by which all can be achieved in life.