

Fiesta of Lights

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FIRECRACKERS ARE BURST all over India during the festival of Diwali which celebrates the triumph of Good over Evil and the return of Lord Ram from Lanka after defeating Ravan.

However if we look at the ancient roots of this festival, we find that Diwali is a festival of lights. Traditionally earthen diyas and oil lamps adorn homes and streets glowing like a thousand bright stars. Sharing sweets and gifts bring joy and make Diwali a special festival for all. Yet we find ourselves sitting indoors with tightly shut doors and windows to avoid the toxic fumes and deafening noise of fire crackers. These cause breathing problems and affect our lungs. Young children and older people are extremely vulnerable to the harmful effects of these fumes. Cough, asthma and low immunity are some of the many health problems we face as a result.

Fire crackers are also dangerous and many people get injured or suffer serious burns every year while handling crackers. They also cause trauma to helpless animals that run in fear with the loud noise. I decided five years ago not to burst firecrackers. **Join me today and resolve to light lamps and diyas in every home in Sarvodaya for a safe and pollution free Diwali.**

Say **No** To Firecrackers



DEEPAVALI-the day that Rama, Sita and Lakshman came back from a 14 year long exile. The villagers lit diyas to light up the city for their arrival and celebrate their return. Since then, Deepavali or Diwali now has become the Festival of Lights and has become a symbol of driving away the darkness in our lives and the harbinger of happiness and prosperity. Diwali is a festival that brings good luck to one and all. The lit diya should not just light up our homes but also shed the darkness of the various evils such as illiteracy, foeticide and gender inequality in society.

Amidst all the fervour of shopping, beautifying our homes etc. are we able to perceive the fact that we're moving away from the real essence of the fiesta of light? This festival has become an issue for the environment causing hazardous levels of pollution and endangering lives. We exchange sweets and gifts with friends and family who really do not need it. Can we not light up the lives of the poor and needy by distributing sweets and clothes amongst them instead. The elderly, small children and animals suffer the most due to the noise and pollution of crackers.

We have all grown up in the lap of the wonderful Mother Nature and are blessed with its gifts. Thus, it is our primary and most important duty to understand the significance and spirit of the traditional Diwali celebrations. **So this year, let's celebrate Diwali in the most eco-friendly manner we can;** Not burst crackers, light diyas instead, and donate generously to the poor and needy and just enjoy the festival happily with our families.

She walks the talk

A dog lover

DR. RASHMI WADHWA resident of B 29, is a dog lover who believes in walking the talk. A few days ago, we had posted a photo of 7 puppies that had been born in B-block. The Whatsapp group discussed who would have them adopted, or taken away and which government agency should be called, or whether the MLA should do anything about it..... Rashmiji quietly messaged on a side chat to ask where these puppies are located.

The very next day, she came and picked them up in her car and took them to her home. It seems that the dog adoption group does not like to take them in until they are at least a month old but that would have been too late. The puppies would have either been run over or injured in the meantime.

Their mother spent the night wondering where they had gone but the next morning Rashmiji found her in the lane next to their home. The mother had sniffed her way to them and was happily reunited. Through videos we have watched them being fed, playing mischievously and sleeping peacefully.

We thank Rashmiji for her noble deed and look forward to the beautiful puppies being adopted by loving families.

