

What do Hindus celebrate?

Today we will be...

Finding out about the Hindu festival of Divali.

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As well as celebrating special events in their lives, like births and marriages, Hindus also celebrate special events to worship gods or remember important stories.

One of the most popular Hindu festivals is Divali. Divali takes place in October or November and is the start of the Hindu New Year.

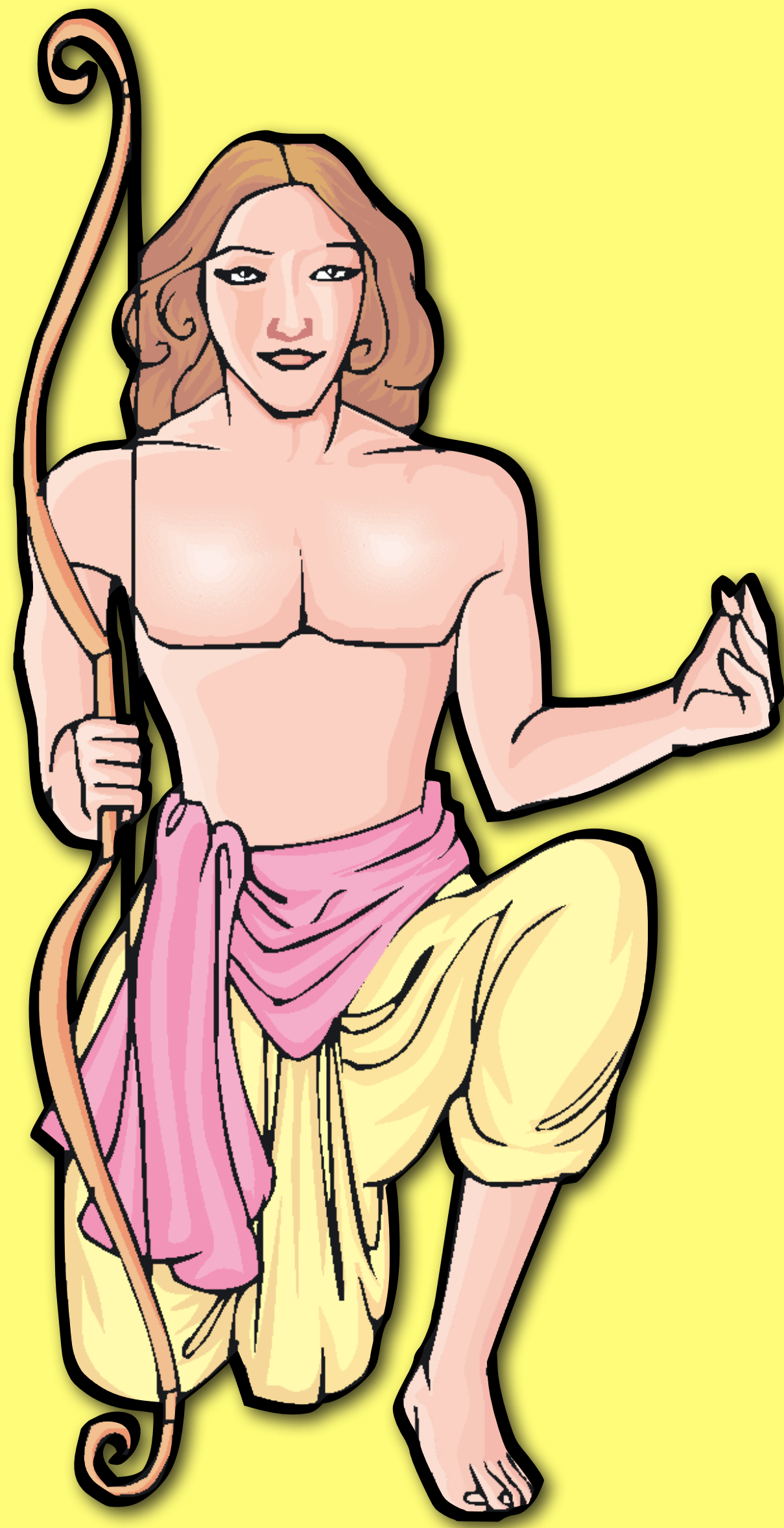
It is sometimes known as the Festival of Lights. Divali celebrates the story of a prince called Rama.

Let's read the story together. Are you ready?



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Prince Rama was the son of a great king. He lived with his beautiful wife Sita in a grand palace. He was supposed to be king himself one day but he had an evil stepmother who didn't like him.

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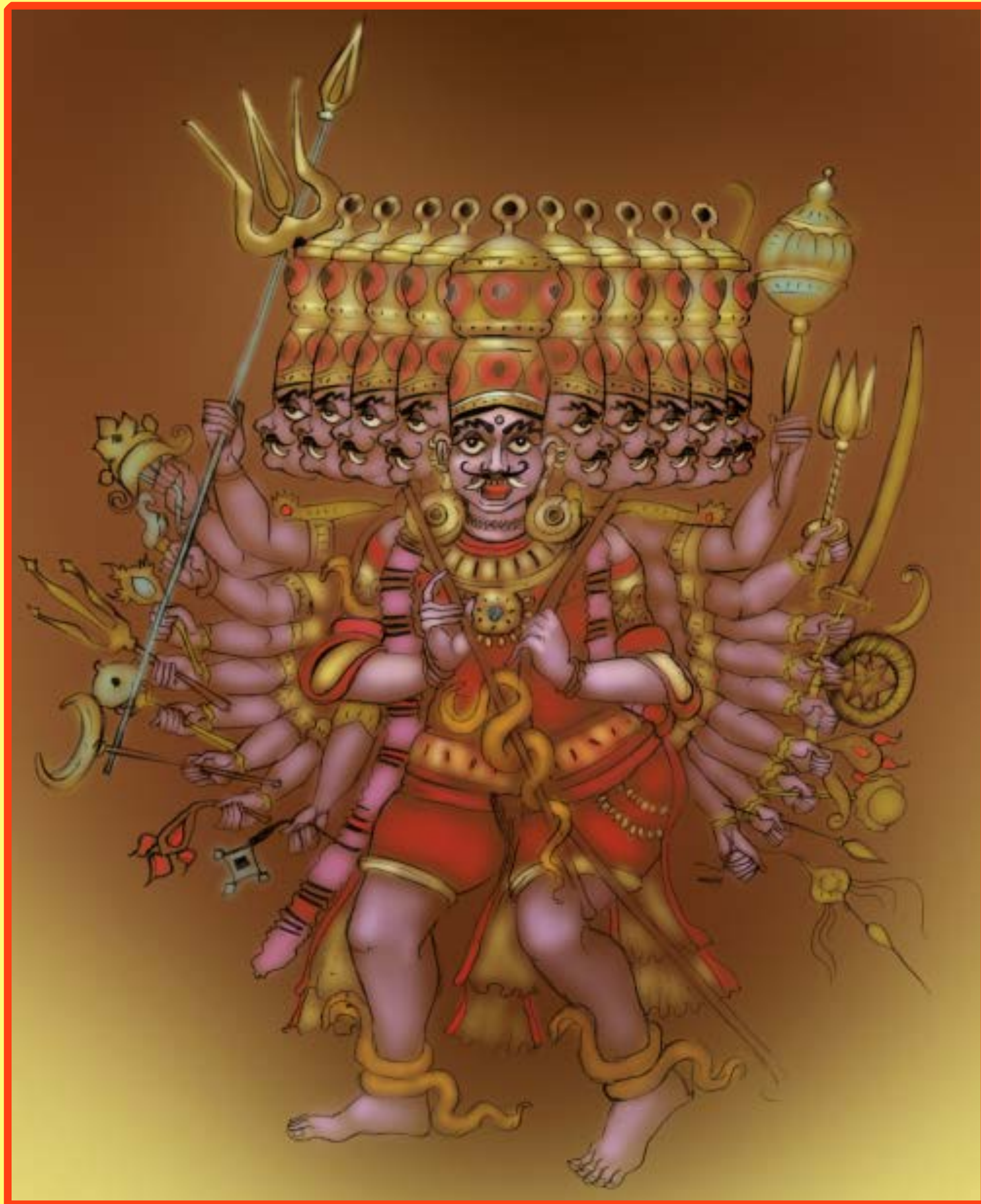
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One day, the stepmother tricked Rama and forced him into leaving the palace forever. Rama and Sita went to live in a forest. They had to live a simple life without the luxury of the palace, but they were happy because they had each other.

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In the forest, there lived an evil demon called Ravana. He had ten heads and twenty arms. When he saw Sita, he fell in love with her. “I want her for myself,” he said and starting planning how he could kidnap her.

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Ravana put a beautiful deer into the forest. When Sita saw it, she begged Rama to catch it for her, so Rama went off with his bow and arrow. While he was gone, Ravana swooped down in a chariot pulled by monsters and grabbed Sita. Sita was terrified but she was also very clever. She dropped pieces of her jewellery so that Rama would have a trail to follow.



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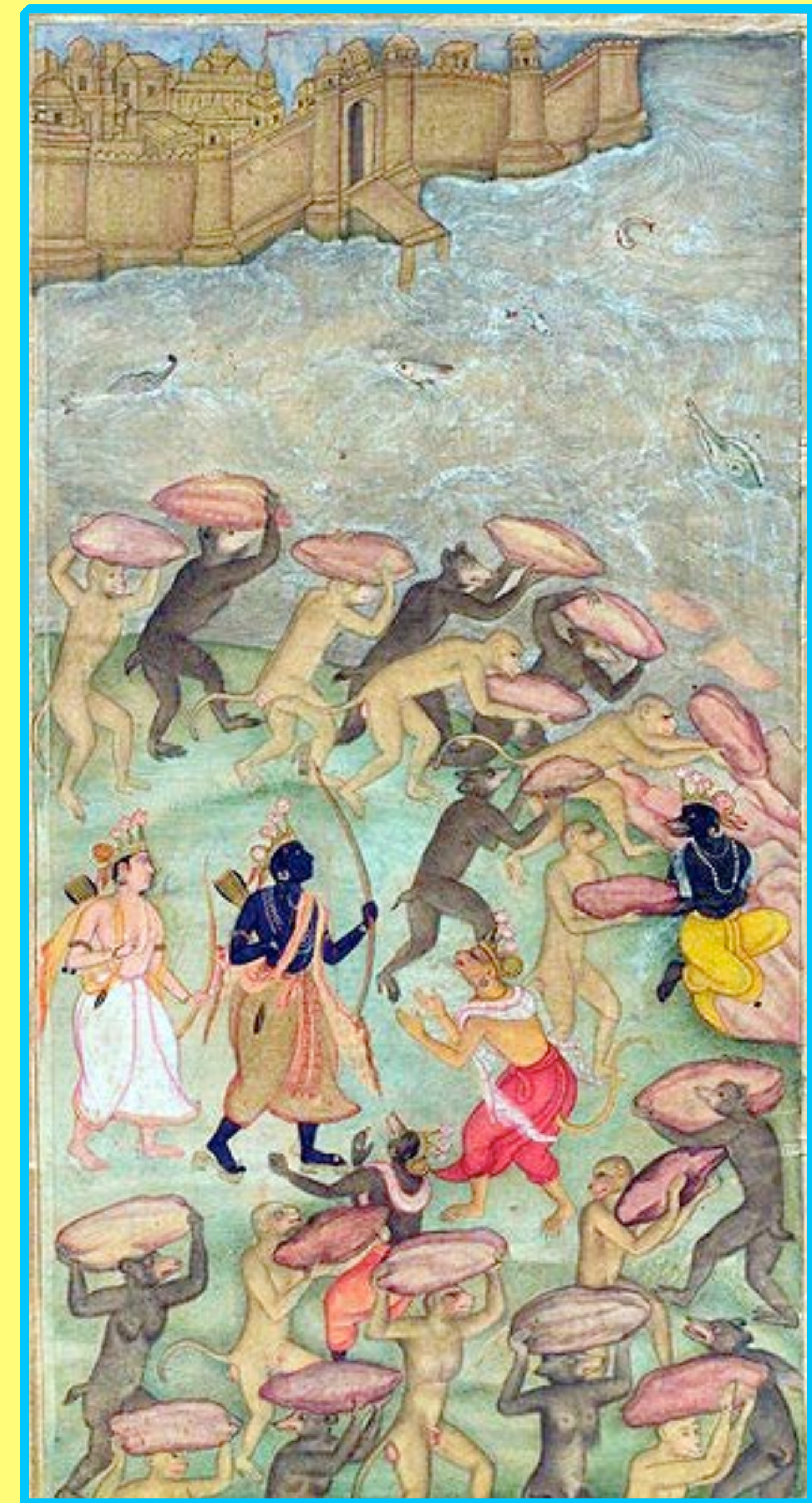
When Rama found that Sita was missing he was frantic. He looked around and saw her jewellery. He started to follow the trail. On the way he met Hanuman, the monkey king. Hanuman asked all the monkeys in the world to help him look.



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They searched and searched. Finally, Hanuman found the island where Sita was being held captive but the island was impossible to get to because there were fierce waves crashing against its shores. The monkeys helped Rama by throwing rocks down to make a bridge to the island.



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Once they were over the bridge, they had to battle all the demons on the island to get to Sita. They fought bravely and then Rama found Ravana. He used a special bow and arrow from the sky god, said a prayer and shot an arrow into Ravana's heart. The evil demon was dead.



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With all the demons gone, Rama and Sita were free to return to the palace and take their rightful places as King and Queen and the whole world rejoiced. On their journey home, the gods showered garlands of flowers from the sky and every household lit a row of candles in their window to welcome them home. They ruled happily for many years.

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It is this story that
Hindus celebrate at Divali.
They remember that good
won over evil.



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As well as celebrating the story of Rama and Sita, Diwali is also a festival for worshipping the goddess Lakshmi. Lakshmi is the goddess of wealth and prosperity so during Diwali, Hindus pray that she will bless them in the coming year.



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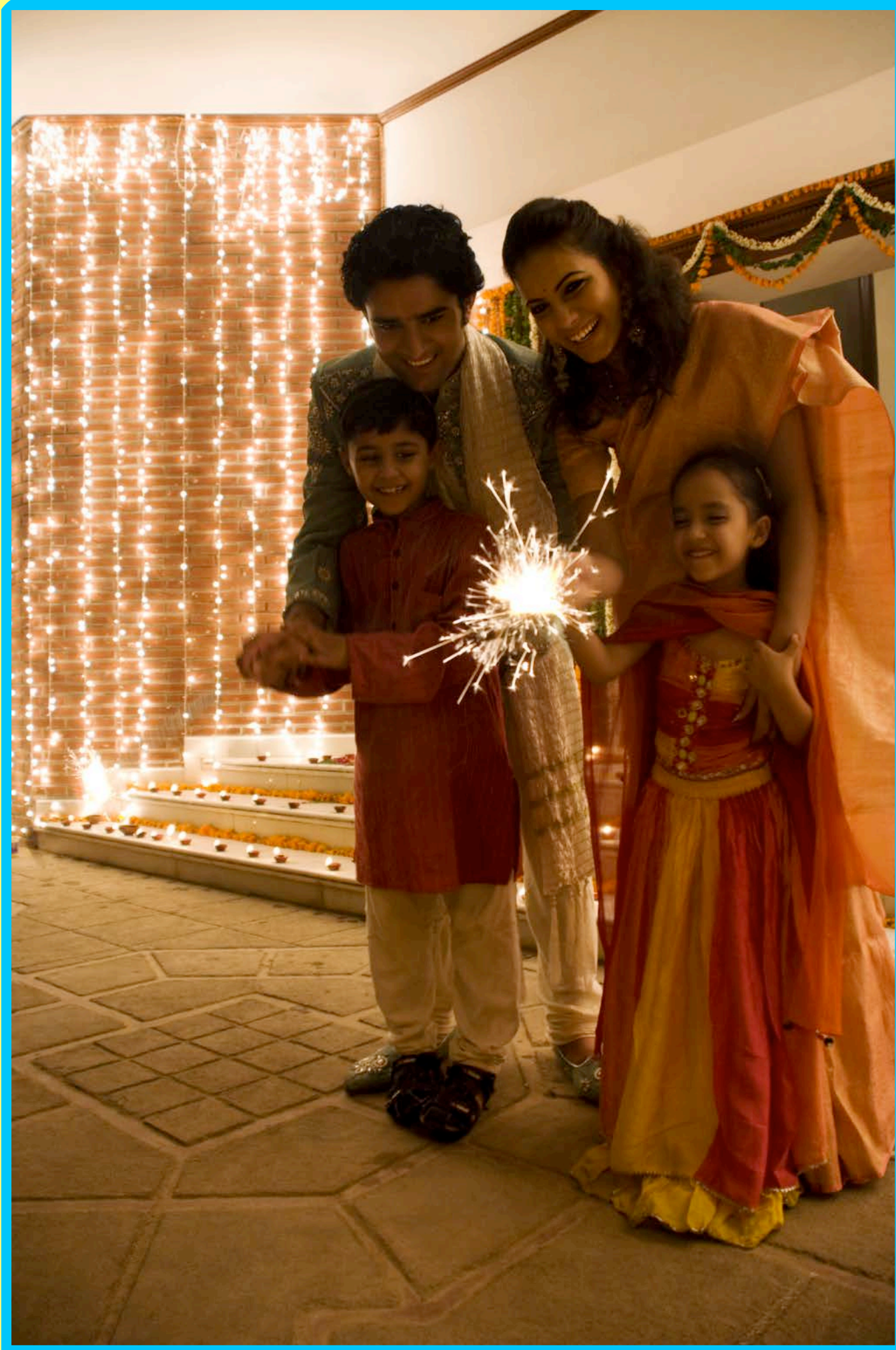
The festival of Diwali lasts for 5 days. Hindu families light divas and put them in their windows, just like the people in the story who celebrated when Rama and Sita came home.



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There are lots of other ways Hindus celebrate Diwali too, such as giving cards and presents to each other, eating special foods, wearing new clothes and having fireworks.



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Families also create rangoli patterns on the floor to welcome the goddess Lakshmi into their homes. The patterns are usually made from coloured flour, rice or powders. They can be very tricky to make!

Let's have a look at some rangoli patterns!



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