

## “Holi” the Festival of Colours

“Holi” is one of the main festival of India which is known as the “ Land of festivals” as all the 365 days of the year one festival or the other is celebrated in different parts of the country. This festival used to be celebrated with great religious fervour in the olden days, but today this festival is devoid of any devotion, and so much of moral turpitude has crept into its celebrations that the festival has come to be detected by civilised persons. Hence it is important that we understand the spiritual significance of Holi Festival and celebrate it accordingly so that it given the right direction to the humanity once again.

Spiritual signifance of Holi : Holi festival is traditionally celebrated on the full moon day of Phalgun, the last month of Hindu calender after the “Shivaratri” festival which is celebrated on the darkest 14th night of the same month. Holi celebration trivolures different kinds of rituals such ar (i) burning of erodung cakes and twigs on the last day of the hear(“Holika dahan”)

(ii) application of “Gulal”(coloured powder) on the body especially on heasd and face.

(iii) greeting one another by embracing each other between known or unkonwn persons and offering sweets.

(iv) many people put up tableaux of Shri Krishna or Shri Narayan over the swings.

(v) men, women and children dancing and froloclking overn the streets in groups with the accompainment of drum beating.

Analysis of the timing of the festival and its rituals reveals the spiritual significance of Holi. Phalgun is the last month of the Hindu Calender and the month ends on the new moon day. Hence, the burning of “Holika” on the night of full moon day of Phalgun signifies the burning of the bitter or unpleasant experiences of the by gone year, forgetting past differences or offences and getting reconciles with the fellow geings so that the new year can be welcomed with joy and enthusisam. Diving deeper into the spiritual significance, we can reduce that this festival was orginally celebrated at the end of Iron Age or the Kalpa after which the new world of Goloden Age came into being where there was peace,purity and prosperity.

The burning of “Holika” is also symbolic of the annihilation of negativity in the old world where the five vices of lust, ego, anger, attachment and greed reigned over the human minds result in corruption, hoarding, violence, extortion, terrorism and war. It is evident that such a transformation is possible only through the subtle forces of spiritual knowledge and meditation (yoga). Hence, the burning of Holika using cowdung cakes and twigs inspire us to burn the negativity of vices within the self (soul) with the fire of yoga.

The meaning of the word “Holika”

According to some scholars, the word ‘holika’ means ‘roasted grain’. Since a roasted grain cannot yield new crop, there will be no harvest out of these grains. This meaning of ‘holika’ can be better appreciated if we remember that this ritual of “Holika Dahan” is practised merely a fortnight after the most important festival of “Shivratri” which signifies the advent of God

Shiva into the corporeal body of Prajapita Brahma at the end of the kalpa or Iron Age, and His Supreme act of transforming the old vicious world into the new virtuous world of Golden Age. The Supreme Teacher, God Shiva, on His incarnation into this world at the end of Iron Age teaches the human beings how to roast the seed of actions in the fire of yoga. IN OTHER WORDS, HE TAUGHT US TO BURN THE OLD VICIOUS ‘SANKARS’ (PROCLIVITIES) AND PERFORM POSITIVE ACTIONS AT THE LEVEL OF THOUGHT, WORD AND DEED BASED ON GODLY KNOWLEDGE. IN THIS WAY, ONES ACTIONS (KARMA) BECOME PURE, AND HENCE THEY DO NOT CREATE ANY FURTHER NEGATIVE KARMIC ACCOUNTS.

There are several anecdotes on holika, the most popular one is that of ‘Holika’, the sister of demon king Hiranyakashyap. It is believed that Prahlad, son of Hiranyakashyap was a staunch devotee of Lord Vishnu and his incarnation: Shri Narayan. The demon king was a self proclaimed God and forbid worship of deities in his kingdom. When he failed to reform his son Prahlad from devotion to Shri Narayan Hiranyakashyap decided to burn Prahlad alive. He asked his sister, Holika to sit on a burning pyre covering herself with the fireproof shawl which she had acquired as a boon, holding Prahlad on her lap. But through the magic of his Lord, Prahlad emerges out of the burnt pyre unharmed with that shawl protecting him, and Holika gets burned to ashes. The burning of Holika every year in the form of cowdung and twigs on the new moon day of Phalgun is said to be in memory of annihilation of evil forces and protection of the devotee by the Lord as in the above anecdote.

The spiritual of ritual of Holika burning can be summed up as below;` the fire represents the fire of yoga. Thus the burning of holika, infact, is burning of our negativity with the fire of Godly knowledge and yoga. Naturally, such soul will then be filled with the virtues of bliss, wisdom, peace joy, love purity and

power of which God is an unending source like an ocean. That is why the Holi festival has come to be a festival of colour, joy and frolicking. By smearing of different bright colours on each other is supposed to spread the divine attributes mentioned above.

#### Application of colour in the form of powder or coloured water

Rubing of colourful powders or splashing coloured water on each other is symbolic of souls imbibing Godly knowledge, divine virtues and divine powers from God Shiva during the Confluence Age; and painting other soul with the colours of knowledge, virtues and powers received from God. The Supreme Father, God Shiva colours the souls with the colours of his own seven attributes such as; bliss, knowledge, peace, joy, love, purity and power which are represented in nature by the seven colours of the rainbow. The souls who are coloured with the colours of God apply these colours on other souls or the fellow beings without any discrimination based on caste, creed, educational or social status. When all the souls get themselves coloured with the colours (attributes) of the Supreme Father, all kinds of discriminations based on body-consciousness cease to be relevant.

#### Tableau of Shri Krishna on swing

It is believed that the person who gets a vision of Shri Krishna on the swing on this full moon day of Phalgun will be lucky to be in Vaikunt the kingdom of Shri Krishna and will attain close relation with him. The fact is that the person who has coloured himself with Godly attributes of bliss, knowledge, peace, joy, love, purity and power during the auspicious confluence age become eligible for the enjoyment of health, wealth and happiness in vaikunt or Golden Age Bharat. His eyes will be fixed on vaikunt. Further, he will be swinging on the swing of bliss and Godly knowledge. For such souls Holi is the festival of contemplation of the knowledge and becoming the embodiment of the same, he will not celebrate Holi as a festival of rubbing coloured powder.

#### Holi is the Festival of the Confluence Age

If the spiritual significance of Holi is taken into consideration, the timing and rituals of the festival are indicative of the auspicious meeting of souls and the Supreme Soul, and this can happen only during the Confluence Age, the period between the end of Iron Age and the beginning of the Golden Age. The legend of Hirenyakashyap, the demon king who was slayed by 'Narasimha' the incarnation of Lord Vishnu in spite of the boon that he "cannot be killed either by man or beast, either inside or outside the house and either during the day or during the night" also points to the Confluence Age because Iron Age and Copper Age together is known as Brahma's night, Golden Age and Silver Age together known as Brahma's day. The Confluence of this day and night is the only time when the demonic vices in man can be eliminated through Godly knowledge and power of yoga.

### The 'Holi' of the Iron Aged People

The people, today are largely ignorant of the spiritual significance of the Holi festival; neither are they aware about the auspicious confluence age. They believe that simply by rubbing the coloured powders all over the body on this day they are able to mitigate the prevailing social injustice perpetrated through discrimination based on caste, creed, educational and social status, wealth etc. The youngsters and gangsters consider this occasion as a licence for rowdy behaviour. They indulge in all sorts of coercion to rule the gull on others with scant regard to their liking or otherwise. They, with their erroneous belief that colouring the face and clothes will erase social inequalities, argue with those objecting to their unruly behaviour, such kinds of rude and coercive behaviour often causes friction, antagonism and aversion in place of harmony, love, brotherhood and cooperation which are expected to be fostered by this festival. Some people even use this occasion to settle their accounts with their neighbours and relatives by beating with sticks and stones. Many a time, the local administration is compelled to enforce prohibitive orders to control such wanton crowds.

### The appropriate way to celebrate Holi

1) Practise the axiom "Past is past: and start life afresh based on universal brotherhood of man and fatherhood of God.

2) Surrender all negativities including the five vices to the Supreme Father and Liberator, God Shiva and perform all actions as per Supreme directions of God Shiva.

3) Take a firm vow to lead a Rajyogi life throughout this Confluence Age.

4) We must colour ourselves with the seven hues of the basic attributes of the Supreme Soul viz: bliss, knowledge, peace, joy, love, purity and power.

5) Become sweet like the sweetest Supreme Father, God Shiva and transfer this sweetness to fellow beings.

6) Keep the forthcoming Golden Aged Bharat firmly imprinted over the screen of mind so that our journey from the Iron Aged hell to Golden Age heaven is not interrupted.