



## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FESTIVAL HOLI

Sweekriti Sethi

Phd Research Scholar, D.E.I. Agra.

## KEYWORDS :

Every country has a cultural wealth of stories, folk tales and epics and one such most famous Indian mythological story of the festival Holi its importance, significance and sanctity. Holi is a very special festival not just because of its colourful appeal and diverse sweet treats. The playing with various colours and merrymaking is a mandatory part in the festival of colours that is Holi. But it has a religious and a mythological reference as well. That is the main reason why this festival is celebrated with full zeal and zest in all over India and also in other parts of the country where the Indians are residing.

The mythological story related to the festivity of Holi once again depicts the core theme in many Indian tales such as the triumph of good over the evil and here the evil reflects the arrogance and ill psychology of mankind and the human side which considers themselves as invincible and above the power of *Karma* and the omnipresent *Almighty*. There lived a cruel and a powerful demon known as *Hiranyakashipu* who is a dedicated and ardent *asura*. *Hiranyakashipu*, an evil daitya/demon king who had been granted a boon that he could not be killed of anything born from a living womb, neither be killed by a man nor an animal, neither during the day nor at night, neither indoors nor outdoors, neither on land, nor in the air nor in water and of no man made weapon. He is so arrogant that he has considered himself to be the supreme God and wanted his son *Prahlada* the son of *Hiranyakashipu* and *Kayadu*, to worship him instead of worshipping Lord *Vishnu*. Due to *Prahlada's* ardent devotion towards Lord *Vishnu* and his never-ending faith in the miraculous and merciful almighty *Hiranyakashipu* grows envious of his own son and tries to kill him for his choice of worshipping the almighty Lord *Vishnu*.

*Hiranyakashipu*, an evil daitya king who had been granted a boon that he could not be killed of anything born from a living womb, neither be killed by a man nor an animal, neither during the day nor at night, neither indoors nor outdoors, neither on land, nor in the air nor in water and of no man made weapon. However, after repeated attempts of filicide by *Hiranyakashipu* unto *Prahlada*, he didn't die due to spiritual love towards the almighty Lord *Vishnu*. *Hiranyakashipu* hatched a new plan to teach *Bhakt Prahlada* a lesson has a boon to never get burned with fire. As she has the boon to never be affected with fire so she obeyed her brother's instruction of sitting with *Bhakt Prahalad* on a bonfire. She knows that nothing will happen to her involving the burning fire but soon the baby boy *Prahalad* will burn into ashes with the effect of the burning fire.

The boy is unaffected by the prolonging heat and burning coming out of the fire as he continuously keeps praying to the lord and immersed completely in the devotion of Lord *Vishnu*. Seeing him getting completely engrossed in the worship and devotion of the Lord, the conniving King *Hiranyakashipu* felt elated as he assumes that now his archfiend that is his own son *Prahalada* will die due to not obeying his father's instruction of not worshipping him instead of Lord *Vishnu*. As they say "the one save by God cannot be killed by anyone", that proves to be evident in this situation as the boy *Prahalada* was rescued by none other than the Lord himself who granted him life and killed *Holika* instead by getting impressed and engrained by the devotion of *Bhakt Prahalada*. The death of *Holika* was celebrated widely in India as the triumph and victory of the good over the evil. This mythological incidence marks the significance related with the festival of Holi that is celebrated with

full swing and vigorous enthusiasm.

*Prahlada* was finally saved by Lord *Narasimha*, a prominent avatar of Lord *Vishnu* who descended to demonstrate the quality of divine rage and redemption by killing the demon king. The word "Narsimha" is derived from the Sanskrit word "nara" meaning Man and "si ha" meaning lion. However, after repeated attempts of filicide by *Hiranyakashipu* unto *Prahlada*, *Prahlada* was finally saved by Lord *Narasimha*, a prominent avatar of *Vishnu* who descended to demonstrate the quality of Divine rage and redemption by killing the demon king. The word "Narsimha" is derived from the Sanskrit word "nara" meaning Man and "si ha" meaning lion. This mythological tale teaches that the concept of faith shall never be shackled in any adverse or under any sticky wickets that is the difficult times. In the case of *Bhakt Prahalada* this thinking is proven accurate and once again the concept is proved right that the victory of good deeds over the bad and ill omen deeds.