



**HOLI**

**FREEDOM FROM BINDING DESIRES  
UNITY IN DIVERSITY**

## **FESTIVAL: HOLI**

- **From “Hindu Festivals and Celebrations” by Smt. Anasuya Sastry and other sources**
- **Holi is celebrated every spring on the full moon day of the month Phalguna**
- **Men, women and children, regardless of age or wealth, enjoy this festival of color (“unity in diversity”)**

# KĀMADAHANA

- It is also the day of Kāmadahana (legend from the purāṇas)
- A wicked demon named Tārakasura was tormenting the good people
- The Gods were hoping for the wedding between Parvati ( daughter of the king of the Himalayas) and Lord Siva because the divine son from this union was to kill the wicked demon

# KĀMADAHANA

- Parvati, daughter of the king of the Himalayas, was deeply immersed in penance to seek the hand of Lord Shiva in marriage
- Lord Shiva was oblivious of everything since He was immersed in deep meditation
- The Gods sent Kāma (Cupid) and his consort Rati to break Lord Shiva's meditation

# Om Namah Śivaya



Śiva means auspiciousness

# KĀMADAHANA

- Kāma's shot an arrow, to break Lord Shiva's meditation
- His meditation disturbed, Lord Shiva's third eye opened and burned Kāma to ashes
- Rati prayed to Lord Shiva to restore her husband's life and He graced her request
- Lord Shiva also saw Pārvati and granted her wish

# SIGNIFICANCE OF KĀMADAHANA

- Kāma represents binding desire
- Lord Shiva represents dispassion (vairagya)
- This puranic story of KĀMADAHANA shows that binding desires are neutralized by cultivation of dispassion

# HOLIKA AND PRAHLĀDA

- Prahlāda was a great devotee of Lord Nārāyana
- Prahlāda's wicked father, Hiraṇyakaṣipu wanted Prahlāda to denounce Lord Nārāyana and tried in vain to make him do so
- Frustrated, the demon Hiraṇyakaṣipu even asked his sister, the demon Holika, to destroy his own son Prahlāda!



# HOLIKA AND PRAḤLĀDA

- Holika had a boon that fire would not burn her; she took Praḥlāda on her lap and entered a blazing fire
- The Lord always protects his devotees and since Holika tried to intentionally harm one of the Lord's own devotees, Holika's boon that fire would not harm her was suddenly withdrawn
- Holika was destroyed in the fire but Praḥlāda came out unscathed!

# SIGNIFICANCE OF HOLIKA AND PRAHLĀDA

- Holika represents ignorance
- The fire represents self-knowledge
- Holika was destroyed in the fire signifying that ignorance is destroyed in the fire of self-knowledge
- The purāṇic story also assures us that Isvara always protects his devotees

# KAMSA AND KRṢṢṢA

- Kaṃsa, was a tyrant who tried to kill his nephew Kṛṣṇa because of a prophecy that the child would put an end to him and his bad deeds
- When Kṛṣṇa was still an infant, Kaṃsa sent a demon, Pūṭana, to kill Kṛṣṇa by feeding him poisoned milk from her breast
- Instead, Lord Kṛṣṇa sucked her blood out and the demon Puṭana was killed
- The religious element in Holi is the worship of Lord Kṛṣṇa
- People remember Lord Kṛṣṇa as a baby or as a young boy playing with the merry milkmaids of Brindavan

# SIGNIFICANCE OF HOLI

- The fire during the festival of Holi symbolizes the yajña (fire ritual) into which we offer our desires and tendencies, so that the **spiritual blaze of enlightenment illuminates our heart and mind**
- During this festival, men, women and children from all stations of society cast aside their individual differences and immerse themselves in the colors representing **unity in diversity!**



WISH YOU A  
HAPPY HOLI!