

Holi Festival India - Significance of Holi Festival

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Holi festival, a popular Hindu spring festival, is also known as the Festival of Colors since it is celebrated by people throwing colored powder and water at each other. The Holi celebration starts with bonfires which represent the burning of Holika, part of a story about good overcoming evil in the Hindu religion. However the really fun part of Holi is the following day, Dhuleti where Indian people young and old from all walks of life come together to sing, dance and smear each other with color.



In spite of being such a colourful and gay festival, there are various aspects of Holi which makes it so significant for our lives. Though they might not be so apparent but a closer look and a little thought will reveal the significance of Holi in more ways than meets the eyes. Ranging from socio-cultural, religious to biological there is every reason why we must heartily enjoy the festival and cherish the reasons for its celebrations. So when, its time for Holi, please don't hold yourself back and enjoy the festival to the hilt by participating with full enthusiasm in every small tradition related to the festival.

Mythological Significance

Holi gets us close to our religion and our mythology as it is essentially the celebration of various legends associated with the festival. Foremost is the legend of Prahlad and Hiranyakshyap. The legend says there once lived a devil and powerful king, Hiranyakshyap who considered himself a god and wanted everybody to worship him. To his great ire, his son, Prahlad began to worship, Lord Vishnu. To get rid of his son, Hiranyakshyap asked his sister, Holika to enter a blazing fire with Prahlad in her lap, as she had a boon to enter fire unscathed. Legend has it that Prahlad was saved for his extreme devotion for the lord while Holika paid a price for her sinister desire. The tradition of burning Holika or the 'Holika dahan' comes mainly from this legend.

Holi also celebrates the legend of Radha and Krishna which describes the extreme delight, Krishna took in applying colour on Radha and other gopis. This prank of Krishna later, became a trend and a part of the Holi festivities. Mythology also states that Holi is the celebration of death of Ogress Pootana who tried to kill infant, Krishna by feeding poisonous milk to it. Another legend of Holi which is extremely popular in Southern India is that of Lord Shiva and Kaamadeva. According to the legend, people in south celebrate the sacrifice of Lord of Passion Kaamadeva who risked his life to revoke Lord Shiva from meditation and save the world.

Also, popular is the legend of Ogress Dhundhi who used to trouble children in the kingdom of Raghu and was ultimately chased away by the pranks of the children on the day of Holi. Showing their belief in the legend, children till date play pranks and hurl abuses at the time of Holika Dahan.

Cultural Significance

Celebration of the various legends associated with Holi reassure the people of the power of the truth as the moral of all these legends is the ultimate victory of good over evil. The legend of Hiranyakashyap and Prahlad also points to the fact that extreme devotion to god pays as god always takes his true devotee in his shelter.

All these legends help the people to follow a good conduct in their lives and believe in the virtue of being truthful. This is extremely important in the modern day society when so many people resort to evil practices for small gains and torture one who is honest. Holi helps the people to believe in the virtue of being truthful and honest and also to fight away the evil.

Besides, holi is celebrated at a time of the year when the fields are in full bloom and people are expecting a good harvest. This gives a people a good reason to rejoice, make

merry and submerge themselves in the spirit of Holi.

Social Significance

Holi helps to bring the society together and strengthen the secular fabric of our country. For, the festival is celebrated by non-Hindus also as everybody like to be a part of such a colourful and joyous festival. Also, the tradition of the Holi is that even the enemies turn friends on Holi and forget any feeling of hardship that may be present. Besides, on this day people do not differentiate between the rich and poor and everybody celebrate the festival together with a spirit of bonhomie and brotherhood.

In the evening people visit friends and relatives and exchange gifts, sweets and greetings. This helps in revitalising relationships and strengthening emotional bonds between people.

Biological Significance

It is interesting to note that the festival of Holi is significant for our lives and body in many other ways than providing joy and fun. We also need to thank our forefathers who started the trend of celebrating Holi at such a scientifically accurate time. And, also for incorporating so much fun in the festival.

As Holi comes at a time of the year when people have a tendency to feel sleepy and lazy. This is natural for the body to experiences some tardiness due to the change from the cold to the heat in the atmosphere. To counteract this tardiness of the body, people sing loudly or even speak loudly. Their movements are brisk and their music is loud. All of this helps to rejuvenate the system of the human body.

Besides, the colours when sprayed on the body have a great impact on it. Biologists believe the liquid dye or Abeer penetrates the body and enters into the pores. It has the effect of strengthening the ions in the body and adds health and beauty to it.

There is yet another scientific reason for celebrating the Holi, this however pertains to the tradition of Holika Dahan. The mutation period of winter and spring, induces the growth of bacteria in the atmosphere as well as in the body. When Holika is burnt, temperature rises to about 145 degrees Fahrenheit. Following the tradition when people perform Parikrama (circumambulation or going around) around the fire, the heat from the fire kills the bacteria in the body thus, cleansing it.

The way Holi is celebrated in south, the festival also promotes good health. For, the day after the burning of Holika people put ash (Vibhuti) on their forehead and they would mix Chandan (sandalpaste) with the young leaves and flowers of the Mango tree and consume it to promote good health.

Some also believe that play with colours help to promote good health as colours are said to have great impact on our body and our health. Western-Physicians and doctors believe that for a healthy body, colours too have an important place besides the other vital elements. Deficiency of a particular colour in our body causes ailment, which can be cured only after supplementing the body with that particular colour.

People also clean-up their houses on Holi which helps in clearing up the dust and mess in the house and get rid of mosquitoes and others pests. A clean house generally makes the residents feel good and generate positive energies.

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