

HOLI –

STORY OF GOD’S TRUE CHILDREN

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There was once a powerful king named Hiranyakashipu, who did a lot of penance and meditation and lived a very pious and virtuous life. God was very pleased with him for setting such a good example for others to follow. God offered to grant the king whatever blessings, wishes or boons he desired. **The king requested for a boon that “he should die neither during the day nor night, neither inside nor outside a house, he should be killed neither by any human being nor be destroyed by any beast, nor be annihilated by metallic or wooden weapons”.** The boon was granted to him for his exemplary glorification of and faith in God.

Absolute Power Corrupts Absolutely

After the boon was granted to him, the king was so confident of the security of sovereignty that his love for worship decreased, while his greed for power increased which changed his

humility into arrogance. The king thought that since the boon had made him invincible and invulnerable, he could rule forever and assume the role of God. The king, overcome by the lust for absolute power, decreed that everyone in the kingdom should praise and worship him as God. The subjects fearfully obeyed the king’s orders. The king had the thought that after a few generations, most people would forget about the existence of true God. His clever plans came to pass and eventually he himself forgot God and did, howsoever immoral, what pleased him.

Prahlad—witness to a miracle

The king had a son named Prahlad. Prahlad was passing through the city one day and saw a potter praying to Vishnu whom the potter referred to as God. The potter had inadvertently lit the furnace to bake his pots when he realized that a litter

of kittens was in one of the pots. He felt that it was too late to save the kittens. In tearful prayer, he was crying out to Lord Vishnu to save the kittens as he believed only Lord had the power to perform such an act of charity or miracle. When Prahlad heard this, he said to the potter, “but you should pray to my father, the king, who is God”.

Prahlad’s Realization of God

The potter then suggested to Prahlad that he would worship the king if he, the king, can save the kittens. Prahlad was taken aback and became confused as to whether the king was really God. The statement of the potter worried him all night and Prahlad returned to the potter’s home to satisfy his curiosity early next morning. When the furnace was eventually opened, the potter as well as Prahlad found that the fire had not reached that particular part of the furnace and the kittens were alive and safe. Prahlad was amazed to observe this miracle and he immediately had the realization that his father was not God, but an imposter and fake. Prahlad then openly defied his father’s decree to be

worshipped as God.

**Prahlad, a Child of God,
shows his divinity**

Prahlad began worshipping God Vishnu to the great annoyance of his father. The king realized that his son's determination could undermine and erode his absolute power. The king ordered capital punishment for his son as a deterrent to the people to see what could happen if they did not worship him. The king tried to get his son Prahlad killed by throwing him down from a hill, but as providence would intervene, Prahlad was saved. Prahlad was then made to sit into a fire but instead, the King's sister Holika was burnt to ashes. Next he was put before a lion, but the lion bowed playfully and played with Prahlad and would not harm him.

**Greed for Power kills a
Father's Conscience**

Finally, the king thought that his instructions to kill Prahlad were not carried out by his officers because they all loved him. So he decided to kill Prahlad himself to demonstrate to the entire kingdom what could befall them if they blindly followed Prahlad. The king had a huge

city gate constructed with iron spikes at the top. Huge hollow iron pillars were heated to glowing red hot temperatures. The king instructed Prahlad to embrace the fiery pillars if he had so much faith that Lord Vishnu would save him. Prahlad was determined and really had the faith that God would intervene and save him from this cruelty. His father, the king, bellowed in arrogance and dared Prahlad to embrace the red-hot pillars.

**Prahalad's Unshakable
Faith in God**

Prahlad with firm belief in God, thought that this was his moment of faith and that God would intervene. Prahlad saw an ant moving on the pillar and thought; if an ant could move on the hot pillar, so could he. He embraced the hot pillar and the pillar cracked open to reveal a living creature of half man and half lion. The creature had the head and feet of a lion and the body of a man. The king was overpowered as the creature clawed into the king's body killing the king by hurling him into the air where he fell on the spikes of the huge Iron Gate.

Flaws in the Boon

The big question is: how could God kill the king, whom He Himself had given an invincible boon? God never reneges on his blessings or boons. The answer to this is in the revelation of God as one who is beyond birth and death and this is the sovereign secret of the Gita and in particular c4v1-9.

Revelations of the Boon

Let us now examine the boon of the king and how he was killed. **The king asked for a boon that "he should never be killed either during the day or night, or by anyone born of woman, or by an animal or beast, or by metallic or wooden weapons as well as inside or outside a house.**

1st Boon – Neither in the Day nor during the Night

The period between the Iron-Age and Golden Age is called the **Auspicious Confluence Age** referred to in the Gita as **Purushottam Sangam Yug**, when God descends, as stated in Gita c4v7. The Golden Age and the Silver Age are called the 'day of Brahma'. The Copper Age and the Iron Age are called the 'night of Brahma'. This period of 100 years between the Iron Age and the Golden Age, is called the

Confluence Age. This period of **‘dawn or era of transformation’** is **considered neither day nor night**. This is when God Shiva descends to destroy the darkness of ignorance or the evils of the world at *Sangam Yug* or the Confluence Age. This descent of God Shiva is called “Shivratri”—*ratri* signifying the Dark Age or the period of **unrighteousness**, **irreligiousness** or **lawlessness**. When God descends, He protects the virtuous souls who become the instruments of God. Such instruments of God are symbolized by Prahlad. **‘The boon of neither day nor night’** points to the **‘dawn’** or the **‘era of transformation’**.

2nd Boon – Not by anyone born of human-beings

The Gita c4vs7-8 says that when there is **unrighteousness**, **irreligiousness** and **lawlessness** in the world, God would descend to protect the virtuous, destroy the evil and to re-establish *dharma*. God himself says that He is *‘abhogta’*.

God is immune to Birth and Death

The Gita is very explicit that God is not subject to the

cycle of birth and rebirth. God is *‘abhogta’* means that He is above the bondage of karma, nature and matter. Therefore, if God is *‘abhogta’*, He surely does not have a mother or father. In the Gita c9v11, God tells Arjuna, **“Fools, not knowing my supreme nature, think low of Me, the Lord of creation who has put on the human body. That is, they take me, who has appeared in human garb through my Yogamaya (divine potency) for the deliverance of the world, to be an ordinary mortal”**.

God continues to advise in the Gita c10 v3, **“He who knows me in reality as without birth and without beginning, and as the supreme Lord of the universe, he, un-deluded among men, is purged of all the sins”**. The Gita continues to point out to the devotees that God is never in human form, quote the Gita c7v24, **“Not knowing My unsurpassable and un-decaying supreme nature, the unintelligent think Me, the Supreme Spirit beyond the reach of mind and senses, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss, to have assumed a visible human form”**.

C7V25 continues to expound on God’s form: **“Veiled by My**

Yogamaya, I am not manifest to all. Hence these ignorant folk do not recognize Me as the unborn and imperishable Supreme Spirit, that is, take Me to be subject to birth and death”. Therefore, all the epithets in the Gita that refer to Krishna are but the divine attributes of God Shiva who is the only One who can liberate mankind when trapped in the chains of Ravana.

3rd Boon–Not by Animal or by Beast

The creature was described as “half man and half lion” and was named “Narsingh”. The creature cannot fit in the category of either man or that of animal or beast. Narsingh, when spiritually interpreted means “the lion of mankind” which is a title symbolic of God alone.

4th Boon–Not inside or outside the House

The Iron Gate was constructed so that it might separate the inside from the outside of the palace. The king died on the spikes that pierced his body and holding in place on top of the gate. It was neither inside nor outside. Symbolically, this also describes the Confluence Age or the

“dawn” of transformation.

5th Boon – Neither by metallic nor by Wooden Weapons

The claws of the creature are not considered as metallic or wooden. The claws here represent the weapon of ‘*gyan* and *yoga*’, the teachings of the Gita. Recall how Rama killed Ravan with the ‘*Brahma Astra*’ when all other weapons simply made Ravan unconscious and could not destroy him. The ‘*Brahma Astra*’ is not a bow and arrow, but it is symbolic of the weapon of Gyan and Yoga. Recall the ‘*Sanjeevani Booti*,’ the herb, that Hanuman brought from the mountain to cure Lakshman. This herb is but the ‘herb of knowledge’ which can conquer the forces of anger, greed, ego, lust and attachment represented by Ravan. This is why the Gita is considered the ‘Mother of all Scriptures’.

Prahlad means ‘Child of God’

The secret of this story is that the name ‘**Prahlad**’ is the shortened version of ‘*Prabhu Ki Aulad*’ that means ‘**the child of God**’. The kittens in the oven represent God’s faithful and virtuous children who will be protected from the raging fire of the oven, symbolic of the ‘evil heat’, caused by the vices of anger, greed, ego, lust and attachment, the characteristics of king Hiranyakashipu.

The story of Prahlad is symbolic of the Iron Age when the greedy and evil rulers high-jack the world and its resources. They create chaos in religion, language, law, power and people, destroying evidence of the truth, and create mass confusion. This is why the scriptures say that in the end, false prophets would be honoured. It is only God who can save this world and this is the significance of Holi and Shivratri. The brofire of Holika is symbolic of the burning of the old, vicious things of this corrupt and promiscuous world. **Only God can fit the description of the One who possesses the divine power to destroy the vicious and malicious boon.**

HOLI OF VIRTUES

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Colours of Holi so mesmerizing,
Finishing enmity and revitalizing
Binding all in the bondage of unity,
Bathing the world in joy and beauty

Violet, Indigo, Blue and Green,
Make life purposeful and clean.
Yellow, orange and red complete
rainbow,

Inspire us: Be happy, spread joy now.

Knowledge, Peace, Love and Purity,
Make us healthy, wealthy sans disparity.

Happiness, bliss, peace and
equanimity,
Fill the soul with virtues and divinity

In the bonfire of intense Godly
remembrance,
Burn all impurities, spread sublime
fragrance.

The soul will emerge as real diamond,
Its shine will brighten the entire world.

Apply the *gula* of good wishes in tons,
Dance to the melody of Godly versions.
‘Be Yogi and Holy’ its true significance,
Play Holi of Virtues for divine existence.