

## Hawan

## It's holy good

Mondays to Fridays, 7 pm, Colors

RATING: ★★☆☆

By Kshama Rao

India and god-men have had an interesting relationship. We have never been short of men and women with a supposedly divine halo around them and large fan following. From the late Sathya Sai Baba to the assorted *Matas*, Sri Sri's and sundry *Bapujis*, their lives have been intriguing and mesmerising. The unwavering faith their followers have in them, the mysteries around them and unsavoury details of their lives take up enough space in the news columns.

Colors' new offering, *Hawan* is about a certain Baapji who runs an empire and is God's favourite child according to thousands of his believers. They are willing to kiss the ground he walks on and his wish is their command. He has a solution for every problem as he points his hands heavenwards and solemnly says it's Hari Om who does it all, and that he just follows his orders. Once, when he sees one of his young devotees, Aastha, sitting in his camp where thousands have flocked to see him, he handpicks her to be his youngest *bahu*. That she had made lots of *diyas* to light up the venue makes

him feel she has a certain divinity about her and it's God's "aadesh" to make her his *bahu*. While Janakpur, the village Aastha belongs to and her poor family of three (parents and younger sister) can't contain their happiness, the girl doesn't feel right enough to be Baapji's *ghar ki shobha*. Also the fact that his eldest daughter-in-law, who is also his closest associate, has intimidated Aastha, has escaped everyone, including Baapji.

At the time of writing, Baapji's younger son is visiting Janakpur to check out his father's choice.

Just by choosing a godman as a protagonist, *Hawan* makes for an interesting premise. We read so much about them in newspapers that it would be great if the makers (producer Rajan Shahi and team) get into the internal dynamics and the various levels at which these so-called powerful messengers of

Cast: Narendra Jha, Shubhangi Atre, Shrenu Parikh

God work. It would be interesting to see the

actual relationship Baapji shares with his elder daughter-in-law, considering his wife almost looks up to him as God and doesn't let anyone come near him. It would be nicer to see the real Baapji behind the ever-smiling, calm and composed façade he projects so successfully to his devotees. There are expectations aplenty from this show and we only hope it doesn't fall into a predictable pattern.

The bunch of actors, led by Narendra Jha as Baapji, is good. He sure has the personality to carry off the character. Now only if we get to see his true colours. Shrenu Parikh as Aastha is easy on the eye and a decent actress. She pulls off her part of a true-blue devotee with great ease. Shubhangi Atre, as the calculative elder *bahu*, is an interesting choice considering she has always played the simpering, good girl. Her backless *cholis* are to die for. We hope her character has depth too.

All said and done, *Hawan* is for those who blindly follow people like Baapji. Maybe, the show has a few surprises for them.

Verdict: Go for it. It's different.