

Raksha Bandhan

A Bonding that frees from all Bondages

The festival of Raksha Bandhan or Rakhi is celebrated in India on the day of Sravan Purnima every year from time in memorial. India is one of the richest nations in respect of cultural and spiritual perspective, and the festivals of this land form the most important link that sustains the cultural heritage. More over, every festival of India, the land of deities is linked to some anecdotes in the scriptures which when analysed critically reveals some deep meaning and scientific truth behind them.

Raksha Bandhan is considered symbolic of purity within the human relations as in the case of relations between a brother and sister. This festival is described in scriptures as 'Punyapradayak' or bestower of good fortune and 'Vishtodak' or vice demolishing. These descriptions show that this festival is related to abstinence from vices and practicing purity in life to become a virtuous person. That is why the sacred string of Rakhi used to be tied both by Brahmins as well as sisters. It was customary for Brahmins to visit each house and tie this sacred string of protection to each individual. This custom signifies that rakhi can be tied only by those who observe purity in life, and every individual requires the divine protection. **By protection, we don't mean physical protection, but it is protection from vices and bad deeds.** It further signifies that God's message of purity be conveyed to each soul. In the light of this spiritual meaning Raksha Bandhan can be said to be a universal festival because it is not related to any particular religion, but it is related to universal human values. Its relevance for human welfare has not diminished, rather it has increased in today's situation as every individual today is under constant threat of the vices of lust, ego, greed, anger and attachment.



The pure love between brother and sister is acclaimed the world over. The customs and conventions of India, in fact engross a very deep philosophy. The pure love between brothers and sisters as glorified by Rakhi festival is symbolic of a great cultural tradition. **The magic effect of the words – 'Dear Brothers and Sisters' with which Swami Vivekananda addressed the World Conference on Religion at Geneva has been so dramatic that the gathering felt instantly a unique kind of spirituality, goodwill and closeness that helped to overcome all kinds of differences.** These words thus hoisted the flag of Indian culture so high in front of the world congregation of different religions.

To celebrate Raksha Bandhan in an appropriate way will be to take an appropriate step in the direction of making man perfect. Some of the spiritual aspects related to Raksha Bandhan are discussed below so that this important festival can be celebrated meaningfully:-

As we all know, **the relation** between a brother and sister is very pure. Hence, the custom of sisters tying the sacred string of Rakhi to the wrist of brothers enjoins the latter to take a vow of purity in thought, word and deed so as to treat every woman as his own sister. In ancient times, this prompting to observe purity used to be given by Brahmins who observe purity in life. Thus, **people are really bound (Bandhan) with the sacred string of Gods' selfless love and protection (Raksha) when we pledge purity**, virtuosity, spiritual strength and righteousness in our outlook, attitude and action, and when we resolve to endeavour for the establishment of a peaceful, nonviolent, healthy and harmonious society by remaining in loveful communion with the Almighty Supreme soul, the eternal fountain of truth, peace, purity and power.

The application of 'tilak' using sandal or kesar paste on the forehead in between the eyebrows by a sister should remind the brother of the **true identity and image of his inner self as a point of light.**

The **sharing of sweets** after Raksha Bandhan induces us to be soft **and sweet in our speech, manners and interactions.**

The **practice of presenting a gift** in return for the rakhi enjoins on us the task of self transformation by surrendering and **sublimating our innate vices** of lust, anger, ego, greed, attachment etc. **in the subtle fire of** communion with the Supreme, self introspection, divine contemplation and spiritual fellowship with others (universal brotherhood).

If universal brother hood, the basic tenet of Indian culture is adopted in our practical lives, the universe will be transformed positively re-establishing one religion, one nation and one language, eliminating all kinds of discriminations based on caste, creed, colour, economic status, race, nationality etc. Let us all absorb this message of Raksha Bandhan in our lives. We should contemplate deeply introspecting on the self as the sentient point of light, bringing the fragrance of purity in our relations, expanding the horizon of our outlook to universal brotherhood based on fatherhood of one God, respecting all lives on this planet, and promoting the culture of love and peace. Then, and then only we would be celebrating the real Rakhsa Bandan.
