

Raksha Bandhan Message

The festival of Rakshabandhan, celebrated in the month of *Shravan* (August) on full moon day, commemorates the sacred loving relationship between brothers and sisters. How did this festival come to be celebrated as a promise for protection?

According to legends it is believed that Indra's wife Indrani tied Indra a *rakshasutra* as a symbol of protection and Indra won the battle against demons and the deities reclaimed their sovereignty over heaven. According to another legend, when Yamuna, the sister of Yama, the lord of death tied a *rakhi* to him he declared that whosoever would tie this bond of purity and eschew lust would be liberated from the fear of death and attain immortality. In earlier times Brahmin priests used to tie a sacred thread to all family members to protect them from harm and evil.

These stories highlight the fact that when purity is upheld in any relationship it turns into a power of protection. Today it is a sad truth that even though brothers vow to protect the honour of their sisters, many women fall prey to the lust of men. It is not possible for a brother to protect his sister all the time. If the brother is younger, physically ill or staying far away how can he protect his sister?

If we think about it – everyone, including males, needs protection in these times of fear and insecurity. Humans have limited resources and power. Nobody can ensure the safety of others. Only God is the Supreme Protector who can lead us to safety and security in the true sense. God is surely more mighty and loyal protector than a human being. In fact, the deadliest enemies of all human beings is the vices such as lust, anger, greed and ego. And it is God alone who shares the wisdom that helps humans attain victory over the vices.

The tilak applied by sisters on their brothers' forehead after tying the rakhi is a symbol of the soul, which is who we really are. Brahma Kumaris see every human as a spiritual being and make them aware of their spiritual identity in order to foster peace and universal brotherhood.

As long as the soul remains true to its innate values and connected to God the Supreme Protector, it remains safe. So let us celebrate this auspicious festival in its true spirit of purity and spiritual love. Let us strengthen our bond with God the Supreme Protector. *