

# The Festival of Raksha Bandhan

*Symbolises the brother-sister attitude  
In worldly relationships*

**Many of man's actions are based on his inner sight' and many others are based on 'outer sight'. His behaviour towards other members of his family depends on how he is related to them in the worldly sense. As a son he pays filial respect to his mother, while, as a father he accepts, with love, the respects from his son. He shows respect in the office to his boss as such, while he meets a fellow employee on terms of equality and friendship. In short, he determines and moulds his conduct and actions in terms of a code laid down by morality, custom and convention based on his various relations and his outer sight'.**

**The 'inner sight' or inner thinking is also termed 'viewpoint' or 'angle of vision'. It is based on man's beliefs or his acceptance of certain philosophic notions etc. A person, for instance, may believe, like an epicurean, that this is a materialistic world and human life is transitory and that he should, therefore make the best of it in sensuous enjoyment it offers. In other words, he does not believe in an after-life and simply follows the epicurean tenet—"eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow you may die". Another person, on the contrary believes that life has a moral purpose and a spiritual meaning and that he has to account for his actions—good or bad – not only in this life, but also in the lives to come. In short, he believes in 're-incarnation' and 'the other world' etc. And tries to regulate his life in terms of this spiritual belief. A third, although holding this religious belief is liable to waver under the impact of skeptics, agnostics and atheists. His belief in the existence of the soul, the Supreme Soul, the life after death and the good life, etc. becomes shaky when he sees the weeds thriving and the beautiful flowers choked up by the cold and frost of this neglected garden of a world, i.e. when he finds the wicked people in the world flourishing and the righteous driven to the wall. His faith in the inexorability of the law of action—causes and consequence—keeps wavering and changing his viewpoint and thereby rendering his actions inconsistent with that belief. Thus, there are, in this world, all sorts of people with all kinds of view-points leading to a vast variety of actions.**

## **FURTHER CLARIFICATION**

**We have spoken above of the outer sight' and the inner sight, of a person. The interaction between the two may be explained, for instance, in the case of two persons related to each other as brother and sister. This notional relationship between them precludes any sense of physical difference both outwardly and inwardly and keeps their, minds un-polluted by any sexual thoughts and feelings towards each other. This may perhaps be better illustrated by citing a practice which is common in our country of inviting a group of little girls on a particular day, named Navratri, when they are respected and revered by elders. Their feet are washed by the elders and sweets and other offerings are made to them outwardly. Of course, they are little innocent children, but, notionally speaking, i.e. speaking on the basis of inner sight, they are worshipped like the goddesses, Durga and Amba, simply to demonstrate the sanctity and power of 'motherhood' that they represent.**

## **OUR RELATIONSHIP AS DETERMINED BY THE INNER SIGHT**

**This example should make it clear that although, according to our ordinary or outer vision, as individuals, we are bound to one another by various worldly relationships, from inner, philosophic, or spiritual point of view we are simply souls and, as such, the spiritual children of the Supreme Soul who is the one Father of us all. Looked at from that angle, we are related to one another only as brother to brother or, if we combine the outer view and the inner view, we are related to each other either as sister to sister' or 'brother to sister'**

**Some people dismiss this notion of ours as simply ridiculous in that it nullifies the marital relationship between man and wife. Before we answer this question, we would respectfully ask them to tell us the basis on which they speak to-day of 'world brotherhood', 'Hindu-Muslim Bhai-Bhai' or 'Hindi-Rusi are brothers', etc. Do they mean to suggest that all Hindus and Muslims are brothers in the sense that they are born of the same worldly parents? The answer is obviously No'. Similarly, when speaking of collaboration between two institutions in two different countries or two concerns in an industry, we refer to them as sister institutions, or sister concerns', It does not necessarily mean that they have been established by the same founder. In so doing, however, we simply point out to the pure, unadulterated respect and affection that exists between two brothers, two sisters or between a brother and sister which, in our view, characterises the relationship between those two institutions or those two concerns. And this concept of pure love is a notion derived from our inner sight', Thus, the slogan of world brotherhood', is all-inclusive and not exclusive of persons who are married: it does not exclude husband and wife.**

## **THE IDEA VIEWED IN THE LIGHT OF HISTORY**

**History contains abundant material which throws light on many a question in our lives: let us therefore examine this question in the light of history. There are several golden pages in the history of India, i.e. Bharat, which lend glory to its culture and heighten our pride on it. Leaving aside any stray examples here and there, every Indian believes it to be his own proud story, because of which he goes about in the world with his head held high. There is certainly no dearth in Indian history of romantic and inspiring incidents. Even in the history of a single State, Rajasthan, we read of incidents relating how brave Rajput wives and noble mothers would cheerfully apply 'tilak' (sacred mark of victory) to the foreheads of their husbands and sons and tell them to go out and burst forth on the invading barbarians who, as reported by their intelligence agency, were advancing on their sacred land with naked swords held in their hands. The mother generally addressed her son in words such as these: 'Do not fail to honour the milk thou hast sucked from thy mother's breast; do not return to show me thy face in case thou lost', Can a mother in ordinary circumstances bear to see his child suffering even from a little wound? Can a mother who would sit lulling her child to sleep all night at the cost of her own and who protects and raises her off-spring with the tender and persistent care of a gardener, watering the young plant day after day so as to bring it to full bloom, ever bear to see her darling coming to any of the least harm while she is alive? And, yet this is the Indian mother who would not hesitate to sacrifice her son's life cheerfully for the sake of her patriotic ideal, viz. to save the country from foreign domination – when she told him to go forth and never**

to return to her vanquished like a coward. We would like to ask how the mother – who till then regarded her son as ‘the light not only of her nose but her very eyes’ or the ‘the crutch and support of her old age’ – throws aside all her natural (world- recognised), ‘love’, attachment and infatuation for her son and gets ready to cast him away from her eyes? Evidently, because her sense of patriotism and the dreadful consequences of slavery, i.e. a higher and nobler ideal awakened in her by her ‘inner sight’, gets the better of those natural instincts and thus transform her outlook and attitude immediately.

Indian history abounds in such episodes. The Sikh religious leader, Guru Gobind Singh, himself offered to his father, Guru Tegh Bahadur, in Kashmir, the sacrifice of his own life at the altar of religion; he even asked his beloved father to sacrifice his life for this cause. He did not lay down his arms before the invaders even to save the life of his own beloved sons who were being buried alive in a masonry wall. Again, in Maharashtra, it was Jija Bai, Shivaji’s mother, who even when fully aware of the might of the Mughal emperor and also that confrontation against him by Shivaji or anyone else was not free from risk, laid mother’s love aside and directed him like a commander by pointing to the fort so as to entice him to raise his flag on top of it. There are many more such examples to cite. The conclusion is that, on such occasions, even a young childless wife, goaded by patriotism or a noble idea would renounce even her natural desire for a son and direct her young husband to the battlefield, preparing to be a widow rather than a mother. In short, married couples would lie down, at the altar of patriotism, religion or some other high ideal, their ‘conjugal bliss’ i.e. sexual hunger, parents their attachment to son and young ward their sheltered lives. They would cheerfully sacrifice their husbands, sons and fathers and would put a tilak mark of victory – on their foreheads as a token of victory and their willing acceptance of the sacrifice.

Such accounts in the history of any country are worthy of being written in letters of gold. The characters of people, represented therein, are a source of inspirations; to the coming generations, their birth- days are celebrated as festivals and fairs and their memories are perpetuated in memorials and monuments. Their deeds, far from being a subject of ridicule, become a source of pride and a matter for admiration and emulation.

**Looking at things from this view- point, when in the present day world the sense of brotherhood is all but vanishing, revival of spiritual or mental attitudes represented by words like brotherly’, ‘sisterly’ and ‘brotherly-sisterly’ relation – ships is the urge of the time. In to-day’s world, with its population explosion, its impending nuclear holocaust, its social and economic problems like abduction, rape and eve teasing, robbery, dacoit, adulteration, hoarding and black-marketing, etc. the only remedy for all its evil lies in reinforcing the sense of ‘world brotherhood’. This objective, again, can be attained only through cultivation of the ‘brother-sister’ attitude in human relationships. This attitude towards fellow beings transcends all worldly relationships, be it the relationship of a wife to a husband, and is the panacea for ending sex-lust, greed, attachment, fear, etc. prevailing in the present – day world. In fact, it is the only basic means of revolutionising this world morally, socially and economically. It is this spiritual essence which is symbolised by our festival, named ‘Raksha Bandhan’.**

**:- Om Shanti :-**