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Raksha Bandhan Celebrations



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Hon'ble Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi.



Hon'ble President of Nepal Bidhya Devi Bhandari.



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NGO OF UNITED NATIONS IN CONSULTATIVE STATUS WITH ECOSOC & UNICEF. OVER 4500 ASSOCIATE CENTRES IN 137 COUNTRIES.

Raksha Bandhan Promotes Pure Love

Raksha Bandhan, which literally means 'knot of protection', is celebrated on the full moon day in the month of Shravan in the Hindu calendar, during the monsoon season, in July-August.

Hindus, Sikhs, Jains and people of other faiths also celebrate this festival. Priests tie rakhis (sacred thread) around the wrists of congregation members, rakhis are shared between friends and, in some parts of India, people offer prayers to deities and men change the sacred thread they wear.

The most common way of celebrating this festival is for sisters to tie the sacred thread around the wrist of their brothers and pray for their well-being. The brothers, in turn, promise to protect the sister's dignity and honour.

There are also public celebrations, with ceremonies held to tie rakhis around the wrists of soldiers, and women and schoolgirls visit political and social leaders, and other public figures to carry out this symbolic ritual. Such gestures help bring people from different walks of life together, but our celebration of this festival needs to go further.

At a time when frequent incidents of sexual assault have brought to the fore the issue of women's safety, Raksha Bandhan can be celebrated in a more meaningful way. India has several festivals in which goddesses, the feminine incarnation of power, are



New Delhi: Rajyogini Dadi Hirdaya Mohini, Adl. Chief of Brahma Kumaris, greeting Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi after tying sacred thread of Rakhi. Also in pic are BK Brij Mohan, BK Asha and BK Sarla Didi. (File Photo)

worshipped, but Raksha Bandhan is different in that it encourages respect for ordinary women.

The power of the humble rakhi is illustrated by legends related to this festival. There are stories of enemy kings turning protectors after having a change of heart on receiving a rakhi sent by the queen of a rival kingdom. If the rakhi could change political fortunes in the past, it can also help create a safer environment for women today. The onus of protecting women's dignity and honour rests not only on their brothers but on every member of society. No single individual can protect another person all the time.

Raksha Bandhan shows us what relationships should be like: characterised by love, respect, and empathy. Our attitude and approach even towards people we do not know personally should be

governed by these qualities, which are, in fact, intrinsic to the human soul. That is why even a person who has committed crimes against women wishes for his sister to be treated with respect by others. Such a person only needs to be reminded that every woman deserves the same respect.

Like all criminal acts, crimes against women begin in the mind, and it is there that the remedy must be applied. The antidote to lust, the root cause, is pure feelings. On the day of Raksha Bandhan, we can decide to extend pure love to everyone. More than a change in laws, it is this change in attitude that will better ensure the safety of women.

Positive change can happen with spiritual training and empowerment. Practice of meditation enables one to channel one's thoughts in a positive direction. The Gita

says, "All the lower impulses of the body, mind and senses must be controlled by the power of the higher Self. Then the higher Self becomes one's friend." Purity of mind, the Gita tells us, brings happiness, wisdom and illumination. This year, we can begin to illumine the lives of all women by celebrating Raksha Bandhan in a more elevated way. ■

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FESTIVE
SPIRIT

*Lift your
consciousness
into God's
World.*

What is Rajyoga?

To rejuvenate the body,
Soul power is needed
To rejuvenate the soul,
God's power is needed
through mental
lovely communion.



Are you in the Queue?



We see them everywhere. In schools, bus stands, hospitals, airports, temples, petrol pumps, billing counters, public events and many more places. Queues signify order, an organised way of doing things, coordinated movement and a civilised way of engaging in life. If queues were not there, there would be chaos and mayhem.

Standing in a queue requires patience and cooperation. In today's time, when most people are living life in the fast lane, it is common to find them avoiding or jumping queues. Everyone wants to get to their destination fast. So queues are seen as an unwanted necessity. But most public services would break down completely if queues were not in order. For smooth and hassle-free operations of all services, queues are a necessity.

The urge to avoid a long queue and to get one's work done fast has given birth to many spin-offs. There are special queues, VIP queues, queues for women, senior citizens and handicapped persons. At some places, people pay extra money to avoid a long queue and get their work done without waiting for hours. Queues bring out many human facets. Some people show patience, kindness and cooperation

*Practice like you've never won.
Perform like you've never lost.*

God gives us the wisdom to avoid the long queue we will end up in if we are negligent about doing the right things in life.

to help others in the queue. At times queues can turn into ugly spats and brawls, with people resorting into mob violence.

Just as people make special efforts to be on time to be ahead in a queue so that they don't miss the deadline for the work they wish to get done, we have to make special efforts to avoid a more significant queue in the journey of life. It is when people waste their time due to laziness or distractions or become careless and negligent about doing right things at the right time that they have to stand in a long queue or wait long to get what they want.

God gives us the wisdom to avoid the long queue we will end up in if we are negligent about doing the right things at the right time in life. The first truth we have to realise is that we are all souls in an eternal spiritual journey. If we keep on making mistakes in life, by ignoring our innate values and indulging in vices and sensual pleasures, then the queue gets longer and longer for us. This queue is for 'jewanmukti' or liberation in life – for a life free

from all bondage and suffering; a life filled with long-lasting peace, joy and harmony.

In order to avoid this queue we need to let go of another word that begins with Q – questions, such as why is he doing this to me, why can't people be like we want them to be, what's wrong with him or her, why can't people respect me and why didn't I get a fair deal and so on. These questions arise due to ignorance of spiritual wisdom. When we are constantly complaining and finding fault with life situations and people, we miss the blessing and benevolence hidden in every moment. We forget to create positive thoughts and actions that will lead us to a better destiny.

If we miss a single moment of life which offers us the choice to think and act better, then we are left behind. Every day God offers us a new opportunity to let go of past regrets and habits and to live in the present with a pure awareness of our innate goodness. Whenever we are questioning and complaining, we are creating a negative karmic account that will end up in the queue of suffering and remorse. At the end of our life journey when we realise that we did not transform ourselves for the better and live life by higher values, time will teach us tough lessons and force us to change our negative traits.

On the other hand, those who have the wisdom to see the drama of life in a positive way and constantly be aware of being connected to God and His values and live a life of truth, compassion, simplicity and humility, will be rewarded by God and ushered by Him into a heavenly life of liberation and joy. ■

(Purity Features)



Shantivan, Abu Road : Paying homage at 'Prakash Stambh' memorial of Dadi Prakashmani on her 11th anniversary are Dadi Janki, Dadi Ratan Mohini, BK Lakshmi, BK Hansa, BK Leela, BK Sharda and others.

Pearls from Dadi Janki

Chief of Brahma Kumaris, Mount Abu

Vibrations created go beyond walls

Through our connection with God, we develop spiritual power, which brings us so much benefit. It allows us to care for the self and for one another. Then in our relationships, giving cooperation honestly becomes natural.

When we have spiritual awareness inside, our vision says everything. We catch each other's intentions and feelings. It is through our pure feelings that we invoke God's help. And it is our honesty and love that allow us to receive God's help.

When there is a gathering of people who are in a loving connection with God, vibrations are created that go beyond the walls of the room and spread into the world. These vibrations reach everyone, no matter where they're sitting.

Are you smiling?

Are you smiling? Always keep a smile on your face. One who stays in remembrance of God is able to smile. Such a soul accumulates the power of peace. By having the awareness of belonging to God, we experience infinite happiness.

This awareness is simple: "I am a soul and I belong to the Supreme Soul." When we have the strong inner faith that this truly is who we are, we find that we are able to uplift ourselves and others and change our lives.

Serving the world always begins with serving the self

Become a detached observer of your own self and see if you feel that God is happy with you. If you are thinking of others, then what will be the quality of your remembrance of God? When our thoughts are with God, our intellects are clear, and through our minds we spread vibrations to the whole world. Those vibrations give happiness to many souls. Serving the world always begins with serving the self in this way.



Dadi Janki tying 'Rakhi', the bond of spiritual love and God's protection, to BK Nirwair, Secretary General of Brahma Kumaris.

God is available to us when we turn our thoughts to Him

Sometimes I cannot sleep at night. When this happens, I remember God. It is remembrance of the Supreme that keeps the soul ever-happy, healthy and wealthy. Remembering God brings us into His awareness, and allows us to draw on His deep peace, unlimited love and bliss. We must make an effort to live in continuous happiness. He is constantly available to us when we turn our thoughts to Him.

Lost Divinity

The power we receive from God is the power of truth. In everyday life, through body-consciousness, most of us have acquired habits of self-deception. We pursue selfish desires whilst pretending that our actions are for the benefit of others. We hide from our mistakes, gradually killing our conscience, suppressing our highest nature of love and compassion. We justify our anger, dehumanize

our enemies, and give reasons and excuses for our weak and selfish behaviour.

To different degrees, all of us have lost our truth because of losing sight of our divinity. We are beings of consciousness; and when our consciousness became over-absorbed in the material world, we forgot that we are souls.

God does not condemn us for this. In His eyes, our state of ignorance is simply how things are, as of today. He has no more reason to criticise us than the sun to criticise the darkness before the dawn, or winter to wish it was spring.

The Brahma Kumaris gained the insight that God is not an entirely neutral observer of this play of existence. God is a living entity, and has a central role within the play. The most significant aspect of His role is to remind us who we are, and what He is, when ignorance and the suffering it brings are becoming extreme. The call of human beings at this time is to reawaken and restore truth in ourselves through remembering Him, and thereby to restore truth in the world. ■

Producing Spiritual Electricity

Our mind can produce as well as consume spiritual power depending on the way it works.

Everything is about energy. The whole world is a combination and permutation of energies vibrating at different wavelengths. It's a dynamic interplay of physical and spiritual energy.

We can feel this energy flux in all spheres of creation. Fresh and new things have a certain kind of energy while old and degraded things give off low energy.

In the human world, souls feel tired and burdened due to negative and waste thoughts and actions. They suffer from laziness and lethargy. Lack of self-control and connection to a positive source makes them weak. They are unable to come out of depression or feel enthusiastic about life. They cannot apply the brake or put a full stop to unwanted thoughts and emotions. As a result, the soul sinks into prolonged periods of depression.

How can we generate spiritual energy? Thoughts generated by the mind can act both ways. They can charge and discharge the energy of the soul. We generate thoughts and consume energy through our daily actions. New thoughts are created only in the conscious state. In sleep, the mind does

not generate new thoughts.

Negative thoughts include thoughts of worry, anger, jealousy and ego. Waste thoughts are thoughts of the past, worries about the future and useless thoughts about the self and others. Negative thoughts lead to negative actions that drain spiritual power. It is like a huge power leakage. Waste thoughts tire the soul or create excess heat i.e. worry and tension. A thought filled with determination, zeal and spiritual values is a high-voltage thought.

Positive thoughts are generated through righteous actions. When we help others and become a well-wisher of all we generate spiritual power - we feel happy. We can also increase this power by adopting a 'to give' approach rather than

having a 'to get' approach. Also, by living in the present we increase our power. By forgiving and forgetting wrong actions we put a full stop to negative thoughts. When we share happiness and love with others, we get blessings that further empower the soul.

The spiritual power of the soul can be charged to the full extent by practising soul consciousness, detachment from the body and God consciousness.

Rajyoga meditation is a loveful link between the soul and the Supreme Soul, who is the spiritual powerhouse. If a soul constantly remembers God, then the battery will remain fully charged. Such a soul will reflect constant lightness, joy, bliss and compassion. ■

(Purity Bureau)

*Life is a
journey not a
guided tour.*