

MAINTAIN ENVIRONMENTAL BALANCE

Pollution is an undesirable change; By exerting adverse effects on the physical, chemical and biological properties of air, water, food and land, they make them harmful and unusable for humans and other living beings. Which is harmful to living beings in one way or the other. This is called pollution. Water, air and the entire environment of the earth gets polluted by nuclear power generation centers and nuclear tests and it has proved harmful not only for the present generation but also for future generations. Due to this the metals melt and they spread in the air and with its gusts spread all over the world and make people suffer from different diseases. Today the hearing power of man is decreasing due to noise pollution. His sleep is being interrupted, due to which the diseases of sleeplessness are arising. Motorcars, buses, jet planes, tractors, loudspeakers, sirens and machines are polluting the entire environment with their sound. Small germs are being destroyed by this and the natural form of many substances is also being destroyed. Today, farmers are using many types of chemical fertilizers, pesticides and insecticides to increase the yield of their agriculture. Therefore, food grains, fruits, vegetables, fodder for animals, etc. produced by it have a fatal effect on humans and different organisms and have adverse effects on their physical development as well. Maintaining environmental balance is very important for living life on earth. It is our duty to protect the gift that nature has given us. For this we should take all kinds of measures and plant more and more trees. So that pollution can be controlled. Some poet has written good lines on this subject.

Raksha Bandhan: A Thread to Strengthen Bonds of Unity

■ **DR. ASHAQ HUSSAIN**

Raksha Bandhan is a reminder that the threads of unity are stronger than any divisions, and together we can create a world full of communal harmony and Peace.

India is a land of diverse cultures, traditions, and religions, and one of the most beautiful aspects of this diversity is the way different communities come together to celebrate each other's festivals. Raksha Bandhan, a Hindu festival that celebrates the bond between brothers and sisters, is a prime example of how festivals can transcend religious boundaries to foster unity and harmony. In recent years, Raksha Bandhan has gained recognition as a festival that strengthens the bonds between peoples irrespective of region or religion, showcasing the true spirit of India's pluralism.

Raksha Bandhan, often simply called Rakhi, is a celebration of the love and protection between brothers and sisters. On this day, sisters tie a sacred thread called a "Rakhi" around their brothers' wrists, and in return, brothers promise to protect their sisters and give them gifts. This simple yet profound ritual symbolizes the strong and unbreakable bond between siblings.

A sister's love, so pure and so sweet, A brother's protection, in every heartbeat. However, what makes Raksha Bandhan unique is that it transcends religious lines. While Raksha Bandhan has deep roots in Hinduism, it has transcended religious boundaries and has become an occasion where people from different faiths come together to celebrate the spirit of love and protection. This interfaith connection is a testament to the unity and harmony that can exist in India's diverse society as it has become a festival that resonates with people of various faiths, including Muslims. In some areas, entire neighbourhoods participate in Raksha Bandhan celebrations, where sisters from Hindu and Muslim families exchange Rakhis, sweets, and well-wishes. These communal celebrations showcase the unity and brotherhood that exist beyond religious lines. Raksha Bandhan is not limited to individual families but also extends to communities and society as a whole. Many organizations and NGOs organize special events where Rakhis are tied to the wrists of people from different faiths as a symbol of mutual respect and protection. This practice promotes peace and unity, emphasizing the importance of living harmoniously in a diverse society. In several cities across India, community organizations have started organizing interfaith Raksha Bandhan celebrations. These events bring together people from different religious backgrounds to tie Rakhis and celebrate the spirit of brotherhood. Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, and people of all faiths come together to exchange Rakhis and sweets, fostering a sense of unity and togetherness. A Raksha Bandhan bond of unity has its roots in various historical and mythological narratives. One well-known legend in context with Hindu-Muslim rakhi bonds is the tale of Rani Karnavati of Mewar, who sent a rakhi to the Mughal Emperor Humayun seeking protection for her kingdom. Touched by her gesture, Humayun swiftly responded to her call and protected her realm from external threats. This story underscores the idea that Rakhi transcends religious boundaries, showcasing the strong bond between a Hindu queen and a Muslim emperor. In today's world, where divisive forces often dominate headlines, Raksha Bandhan stands as a beacon of hope and love and has emerged as a symbol of harmony and unity. The festival sends a powerful message of unity, love, and protection that transcends religious and cultural boundaries. It reminds us all that we are bound together by the ties of humanity and that we should cherish and protect one another, regardless of our differences, particularly in the context of Hindu-Muslim relations. For example, in the bustling city of Mumbai, the Bhati sisters run a small sweet shop. One Raksha Bandhan, they decided to send Rakhis to their regular customers, which included many Muslim families. This simple gesture of goodwill touched the hearts of their Muslim customers, who reciprocated with sweets and gifts during Eid. This exchange of love and respect between the Bhati sisters and their Muslim friends is a shining example of how festivals can bridge religious divides. Similarly, Bilal, a Muslim auto-rickshaw driver, and Khushboo, a Hindu student, became friends during Khushboo's daily commute to college. One Raksha Bandhan, Khushboo tied a Rakhi on Bilal's wrist as a symbol of their friendship. Bilal, touched by the gesture, gifted Khushboo a box of sweets during Eid. Their bond grew stronger, and they often celebrated each other's festivals together, proving that humanity transcends religious differences. Some organizations and individuals have taken the initiative to use Raksha Bandhan as an opportunity to promote communal harmony. They distribute Rakhis with messages of peace and unity to people of all religions, encouraging them to tie Rakhis to those from different faiths. This act of brotherhood extends beyond blood relations, emphasizing that we are all connected by the thread of humanity. Today, the digital age has amplified the reach of heart warming stories that emerge during Raksha Bandhan. Social media platforms are flooded with pictures and stories of Hindu-Muslim camaraderie, showcasing how this festival serves as a bridge between communities. These stories not only warm hearts but also break down stereotypes and promote the idea that peaceful coexistence is not just a possibility but a reality. To conclude with, Raksha Bandhan has evolved from being a purely Hindu festival to a celebration of unity, love, and brotherhood among people of different religions. These heart warming examples of Hindu-Muslim relations through Rakhi serve as a reminder that India's diversity is its strength. As we celebrate this beautiful festival, let us all strive to build stronger bonds of friendship and understanding across religious lines, just like the sacred thread that unites brothers and sisters on Raksha Bandhan. Let us remember the message of love and unity it carries and strive to build a society where such bonds of love and protection extend to all, regardless of their faith or background.

So on this special day, I want to say,
Happy Raksha Bandhan, in every way
May our bond grow stronger with time,
Forever and always, you'll be mine.
(The writer is Associate Professor Chemistry at GDC Chatroo).

Raksha Bandhan, a Solemn and Sweet Pledge

■ **CAPTAIN PURUSHOTTAM SHARMA (RETD)**

Our is the land of festivals and celebrations based on spiritual significance and moral values. Every dawn brings us a sacred day and we pray to the Owner of the Universe to bless the humanity for all-round well-being. We feel deeply indebted to our ancestors who introduced such days to us to spread the message of love, peace, happiness and mutual trust. Festivals and celebrations delight us and are meant to seek Divine Grace for useful and fruitful living dedicated to serve good causes in life. These promote fraternity, unity and purity.

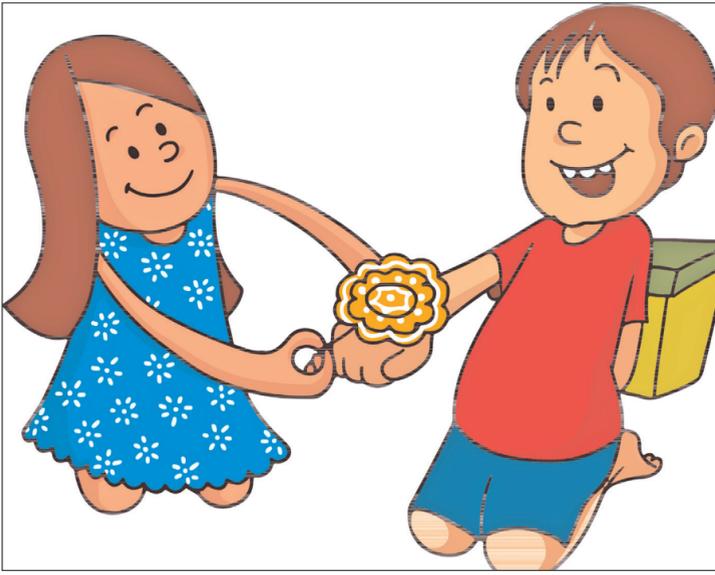
Raksha Bandhan is a long-awaited festival that falls on full moon night, that is, Poonima on which sisters tie Raakhi on the wrist of their brothers. Tying of the frail thread signifies affection between the two and also a solemn assurance of Raksha (protection) by the brother to his sister. The entire country and our people abroad bubble with enthusiasm of this Festival of love and joy.

The practice owes its origin to a belief that there was a long war between the Gods led by their King Indra and demons headed by Bali. The Gods were defeated and their Heavenly Kingdom fell to Bali. Sachi, Indra's consort, propitiated Lord Shiva for the restoration of her husband's lost kingdom. Pleased with her austerities, Lord Shiva gave her an amulet to be tied around the wrist of her husband before taking the field against Demon Bali. She did so and the lost kingdom was redeemed.

This festival is also celebrated in some parts of the country as the festival of cultivating virtues and shedding vices by observing austerities. The grace of Lord Shiva is sought through Shiva Linga worship during the month of Shrawan which culminates on the auspicious day of Raksha Bandhan. This Poonima is exceptionally auspicious for 'Darshan' of Shiva Linga formed of ice at the Holy Shrine of Amarnath.

There is also a tradition of 'Kul - Purohit' (well-wisher Brahmin held in high esteem by a particular family) tying the 'mouli' (frail thread known for its sacredness) on the wrist of his 'yajmaans' and on the doors of their houses wishing them all auspiciousness and protection from evil forces. Even some precious possessions are treated in this way to keep off the ill-effects.

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sisters tie Rakhi around the wrist of their brothers and also put 'tilak' (a sacred mark) on their forehead. Some people who do not have real sisters or some who do not have real brothers establish this relationship of brother and sister by word of mouth and keep it firm during their life-time. This bondage of love and affection is made through the instrument of Rakhi and has been most successful venture in our society. In fact, celestial beings would also love to observe it. When the sister ties Rakhi around the wrist of her brother, the emotional exchange of feel-

ings in silence is strong, sacred and eternal. Their hearts overflow with love for each other. Sister invariably wishes for her brother's longevity and happiness. Brother not only pledges for her protection, but also profusely presents her with gifts and cash wishing her prosperity and happiness in her family.

Brothers in far distances are sent Rakhi by their sisters. Defence services personnel guarding our Borders in far flung areas with treacherous climatic conditions are also reached by some social workers to tie Rakhi to them to give a feel of presence of their sisters on this occasion. A concubine of Alexander the Great, had sent a Rakhi to Porus and received an assurance from him that he will not kill Alexander.

Practice also prevailed among queens to send bracelets to neighboring mighty kings to seek fraternity. Those who accepted the offer were morally bound to save the honor of their sisters and also of her whole family and rescue them in difficult circumstances.

In the year 1905, Gurudev Rabinder Nath Tagore led his family members and others in procession and tied Rakhi on the wrists of both Hindus and Muslims to strength the bondage of fraternity and unity and defeated the evil designs of the then rulers who followed the policy of 'divide and rule'. Gurudev had shed his mortal coils on this Poonima day. The famous Onam Festival in Kerala is also observed on this day.

Author of this Write-up in his 88th year is also eagerly waiting for the Rakhi Festival to renew the love and sweetness of this relationship. Leaving 'mouli' behind, there are many attractive varieties of Rakhi in the market.

Rakhi Ke Bandhan: Non-breakable Chain Of Protection

■ **ER. PRABHAT KISHORE**

Mere Rakhi Ki Dor, Kabhi Ho Na Kamjor; Bhaiya De Do Kalai, Bahan Aayi Hai. Kitna Rishita Hai Pavan, Mahina Bhi Savan; Bhaiya Kha Lo Mithai, Bahan Layi Hai.

Nata Bhai-Bahan, Jaise Dharti-Gagan; Dono Aise Khile, Sach Mein Ek Hi Chaman.

Mera Pyara Tu Bhaiya, Leti Hun Balaayi; Dekh Neh Ki Jalayi, BahanAayi Hai.

India is the most culturally enriched country in the world. It is the land of religions, faiths, fairs and festivals. Some festivals are common to the masses, whereas some reinforce the bond between two particular relations, such as Karva Chauth (Wife & Husband), Haritalika or Teej (Wife & Husband), Jivitputrika or Jivita (Mother & Child), Bhaiya Dooj (Brother & Sister), Guru Purnima (Teacher & Pupil) etc. One of such bond reinforcing festival between Brother and Sister is Raksha Bandhan, in which the sister tie the sacred thread called "Rakhi" on her brother's right wrist to pray for his prosperity & well-being and in return the brother offers to take responsibility for proper care of the sisters. The festival is celebrated every year on Purnima (Full Moon), the last day of Shrawan month of Vikram Samvat Panchang, traditionally used in the Indian sub-continent.

In broad sense, Raksha Bandhan festival is the symbol of seeking protection from powerful ones by weaker ones. The two Sanskrit words "Raksha" and "Bandhan" i.e. "Bond of protection", symbolizes sincere and lofty human emotions. The occasion also has a pledge for spiritual, cultural and moral values.

There are several mythological and religious stories regarding Raksha Bandhan. There was a battle between Devtas and Demons, in which Devraj Indra was in fear to lose. Then Indrani, the wife of Devraj, prepared a sacred thread with her religious power and tied it around Indra's right hand with a wish that it will protect him from demons. Her wish came true when later day Devtas defeated demons and Indra along with other Devtas returned safely.

Mahabharat narrates that once Bhagwan Krishna was flying a kite, during which his finger got cut with the thread. Seeing the blood, Draupadi immediately tore a piece of cloths from her Saree and tied it on Krishna's wounded finger. Krishna promised to protect her against all odds throughout his life-time which were fulfilled during Chirharan and various others occasions. As per another mythology, Yamraj, the god of death, has visited her twin sister Yami or Yamuna after a long time of 12 years on Shrawan Purnima. Yamuna tied the sacred thread on Yamraj's wrist and Yamraj announced that whoever promises to protect his sister on this occasion will stay immortal; thus following the tradition of Raksha Bandhan.

Raksha Bandhan is also based on several happenings in history as well as faiths. The Sikh Maharani Jindan, wife of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, used to tie Rakhi to Nepal Naresh Jung Bahadur. In 1849, when English conquered Sikh territories, Jindan was given shelter by Jung Bahadur. In 326 BCE, when the battle between Alexander and Raja Porus was at its peak, Roxana, the wife of Alexander, sent Rakhi to Porus with a

request to not harm her husband. Porus stopped attacking Alexander personally.

Around 1535 CE, Rani Karnavati, widowed queen of Rana Sanga, realized that she could not protect her territories Chittorgarh from invasion of Sultan of Gujrat, Bahadur Shah, and she sent a Rakhi to Humayun asking for his help. Humayun immediately set off, but by then the Sultan had already conquered the fortress and Rani had immolated herself as Jauhar. Humayun restored Karnavati's son, Vikramjit, to the throne. In 18th century, Sikh Khalsa armies initiated Rakhi system as a promise to protect peasant farmers from Afghan invaders.

Raksha Bandhan is celebrated in India, Nepal, Mauritius, Fiji, Pakistan, Bangala Desh and South Asian countries. Although it is said to be festival of Hindus along with its other originating sects Sikh, Buddhist, Jain; but in various parts of the country it can be seen to be celebrated among Muslims, Christians and Parsis too. The brother-sister bond in celebrating Raksha Bandhan do not mean just blood relation, but cousins, sisters, sister-in-laws, fraternal aunt, nephew, and other equivalent relations. A sister is the gift to the heart, a friend to the spirit and a golden thread to the meaning of life. The brother and sister try to visit each other in order to bring back the solidarity of the family and binding the family in emotional bond of love.

In addition to real life, the festival has been portrayed in reel-life of movies too. The big as well as small screens acted as a catalyst to spread the festival vibes among the people. The scenes and songs have connected the people to understand the brother-sister rela-

tion more prominently. Numerous melodious famous songs like" Bhaiya Mere RakhiKeBandhanKoNibhana ", " Bahna Ne Bhai Ki Kalai Pe Pyar Bandha Hai ", " Ek Hajaron Men Meri Bahna Hai", "Meri Bahna Jaisi Na Hogi Kisi Ki Bahna Re", " Ye Rakhi Bandhan Hai Aisa", "Rakhi Dhagon Ka Tyohar", " Mere Bhaiya Mere Chanda", " Rang Birangi Rakhi Le Ke Aayi Bahna", " Mere Rakhi Ki Dor Kabhi Ho Na Kamjor, Bhaiya De Do Kalai Bahan Aayi Hai ", etc. are powerful enough to make the people emotional.

As trees are the life supporting natural system for human beings by absorbing harmful gases like Carbon Di-oxide and releasing oxygen; so on this day, the environmentalists tied Rakhi around the trees with a messages to protect it and conserve the nature. In rural areas, the priests tie sacred Bandhan on their Yajman's wrist, give blessings and in return obtain Dakshina for their livelihood. In present era of globalisation, Raksha Bandhan could not be restricted to just bond between brother and sister; the relationship could be generalized in every sector of life, i.e. from bond of protection between privileged and under-privileged sections of society to developed and underdeveloped nations.

The thread of Rakhi is considered as non-breakable chains and it binds the pious relationship in an inseparable bond of love, trust and care. It has social significance as it underlines the notion that everybody should live in harmonious co-existence with each other.

(The Author is a technocrat and educationist).

Raksha Bandhan: A Promise of Support and Affection

■ **DR. SHIBEN KRISHEN RAINA**

Over the years, the festival of Raksha Bandhan has evolved as a festival adapting to the changing times, preserving its core values, though. While traditionally celebrated between blood-related brothers and sisters, the festival has expanded to include cousins, close friends, and even neighbors who share a brotherly or sisterly bond. This inclusivity reflects the universal message of love and protection that a festival suggests. And this is how festivals contribute to strengthening the concept of unity amongst the people in the country they live in).

Raksha Bandhan is a revered festival cherished throughout India, holding a special place in the hearts of relations. More specifically, this timeless occasion exemplifies the unparalleled bond shared between brothers and sisters. Rooted in tradition and steeped in symbolism, Raksha Bandhan is a festival that transcends religious and regional boundaries, epitomizing the essence of love, protection, and companionship.

The term "Raksha Bandhan" symbolizes "the bond of protection." Celebrated on the full

moon day of the Hindu month of Shrawana, typically falling in August, the festival revolves around the sacred ritual of sisters tying a thread, often ceremoniously adorned, referred to as a "Rakhi," around their brothers' wrists. This thread signifies the sister's love, her prayers for her brother's well-being, and her trust in him as her guardian, protector and saviour: Rooted in tradition and steeped in symbolism, Raksha Bandhan is a festival that transcends religious and regional boundaries, epitomizing the essence of love, protection, and companionship.

The act of tying the Rakhi goes beyond the simple physical gesture; it carries profound emotional and cultural significance. The brother, in turn, takes on the role of the protector and pledges to safeguard his sister from any harm that may come her way. This mutual exchange of promises forms the crux of Raksha Bandhan, strengthening the sibling relationship and emphasizing the unwavering support and affection they share.

The celebration of Raksha Bandhan is a colorful affair that begins with the preparation and purchase of the Rakhi itself. Sisters often

spend time crafting or selecting the perfect Rakhi for their brothers, while brothers contemplate on meaningful gifts or tokens of appreciation to give in return. On the day of the festival, families come together, dressed in traditional attire, to partake in rituals that foster unity and reinforce the family ties that bind them.

Amidst the joyous festivities, Raksha Bandhan transcends the realm of the physical, embodying emotional depth and cultural heritage. It symbolizes not only the bond between siblings but also the broader idea of unity, harmony, and mutual respect. The festival showcases the diversity of India, as people from various backgrounds and walks of life participate, reaffirming the nation's social fabric.

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versal message of love and protection that a festival suggests. And this is how festivals contribute to strengthen the concept of unity amongst the people in the country they live in. Festivals, by their nature, bring people together regardless of their differences, symbolizing shared values and connections. This collective spirit of celebration and togetherness contributes significantly to reinforcing the notion of unity among the inhabitants of a particular country. In other words, festivals have the power to unite people from diverse backgrounds under a common theme of festivity and mutual respect, ultimately fostering a sense of belonging and harmony within the nation.

In short, Raksha Bandhan stands as a testament to the enduring nature of sibling relationships. It is a celebration that summarizes the values of love, care, and commitment, and serves as a reminder of the essential role that family plays in our lives. As the sacred thread is tied and the promises are exchanged, Raksha Bandhan highlights the beauty of human relationships and the cherished ties that bind us all.

**YOUR COLUMN
Feminism is changing the way
the world perceives Strength**

Dear Editor,
Feminism isn't about making women stronger. Women are already strong. It's about changing the way the world perceives that strength." What is the first thing that comes to our mind when we hear the word Feminism? Women, rights and opportunities for women. Am I right, well certainly Feminism by definition is the advocacy of women's rights on the ground of the equality of the sexes. It supports the idea that men and women have different strengths, perspectives and roles while advocating for equal worth and dignity of both the sexes. There is nothing more in this world that is an absolute requirement then equality for all genders, all

races, all people.
Little girls with dreams become women with visions. Throughout most of Western history as far as we can remember women were confined to the domestic sphere, while public life was reserved for men. From centuries and Centuries women have been deprived from almost everything that the men had without any slightest inconvenience but they always put a sting fight and as challenging as it sounds they always try and win their rights over...the sense of feminism has been prevailing from the very beginning in the society who can be a better example than Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton who gave up their precious lives to guarantee rights for women. The struggles that millions and millions of women had made throughout decades to get what they deserve is really heart wrenching. Feminism does not only confine to the idea of rights and opportunities but also is somehow related to promoting body positivity. If all girls were taught how to love each other fiercely

instead of how to compete with each other and hate their own bodies, what a different and beautiful world we would live in every single women is beautiful in their very own way and no one absolutely no one should let their insecurities ruin their self esteem and confidence being a girl myself I know how it feels when even the tiniest insecurity takes over your mind and does not let you thinks anything else. Almost 92% of females around the world are unhappy with their bodies and 92% is a huge number so we have to let ourselves know that we are strong and empowered and we know how to overcome that with patience and grace and how to make ourselves feel beautiful and worthy at all times. Don't Let Yourself and the society label you. Do what makes you feel beautiful. A feminist can be a man or a woman and believe me it's always a pleasure to see a man sharing his perceptive and standing for what's right and supporting feminism. Lastly I would like to say you are your biggest cheerleader so don't let your insecurities take away your shine.

Ananya Mengi