

CORE XV – INDIAN LITERATURE IN ENGLISH TRANSLATION

UNIT I : - Detailed: Poetry- Gitanjali by Tagore, Verses 1 to 30 (Macmillan)

An Introduction :

Gitanjali is the title of what is probably the best-known poetry collection by Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), for which he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913. Tagore was a native of Kolkata (Calcutta) and he wrote in Bengali. Gitanjali translates as “song offerings”, although the word “anjali” translates more closely as “offered prayers”, so the songs being offered should, in Western eyes, be seen rather more as devotions than as secular songs.

The collection was originally compiled in 1910 as a set of poems in Bengali, but Tagore, who had spent two years in England as a law student, translated these into English for a volume that was finally published in 1912. However, of the 103 poems in the English volume, only 52 came from the original Bengali collection. He added translations from three other collections, some of the poems of which had been written more than ten years previously. The translations were not necessarily made directly from a Bengali poem into an English one; considerable editing was done, with new material added and, on one occasion, two Bengali poems were fused together to make a single English poem.

Gitanjali Song Offerings is a collection of 103 prose poems, selected by Tagore from among his Bengali poems and translated by him into English. The collection brought Tagore international attention and won him the Nobel Prize in Literature. Although Tagore later published more than twenty additional volumes of his poetry in English translation, *Gitanjali* Song Offerings remained one of his most beloved works.

The word gitanjali is composed from "geet", song, and "anjali", offering, and thus means – "An offering of songs"; but the word for offering, anjali, has a strong devotional connotation, so the title may also be interpreted as "prayer offering of song". The major theme in *Gitanjali* is devotion to God. This paper focuses on the Indian philosophical aspects and the theme of devotion in *Gitanjali*. The poems focus on the all-pervading presence of God everywhere. It brings its readers into direct contact with the Infinite.

Poem : 1 : The 1st stanza starts mentioning the grace of God to human being. Tagore considers human body as a frail vessel. God intermittently repairs its damages and fills up it with fresh life. God is the all master of Human being, he take care of his subjects and solve all of their problems. In that way man is made endless with the pleasure from God.

2nd stanza says God is a great flute player or a musician and the poet is considered to a flute. The breath played through the flute comes as a melody and it is eternally new, it lasts forever. Tagore might have considered the poet as a flute and the poem comes out of his mouth as an eternal melody which is new forever.

Poet reaches in unspeakable about the characteristic of God. Every touch from the God touches poet's heart; this fills his heart with over joy and makes him in a state of pleasure extreme to be expressed.

Tagore says God's infinite gifts come only to him, to his little hands. God will save me, protect me, bless me. I will be the same person even when the ages pass. My special room is my heart to store all your blessings. God continues to pour his blessings to rooms of his hearts, but still there is room to fill. God is omnipotent and omnipresent.