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# Rabindranath Tagore's Gitanjali: A Critical Analysis of Faith and Devotion in Select Poems

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**ABSTRACT:** Gitanjali, an illustrious work penned by Rabindranath Tagore, stands as a timeless testament to the power of human emotions and spiritual contemplation. The poems within Gitanjali encapsulate the essence of Tagore's poetic genius representing his unique perspective on life's complexities and the yearning for a deeper connection with the divine. Tagore weaves a tapestry of emotions, effortlessly capturing the essence of love's joys and sorrows. His verses explore the delicate nuances of human relationships delving into themes of longing, separation, and reunion, all the while examining the intricacies of the human heart. This research paper deals with the analysis of faith in devotion in the poems of Rabindra Nath Tagore in his collection 'Gitanjali.'

**KEYWORDS:** Gitanjali, Rabindranath Tagore, Faith, Devotion

Gitanjali is an anthology of poems written by Rabindranath Tagore, the renowned Indian poet, philosopher, and Nobel laureate. Originally published in 1910 Gitanjali which translates to "Song Offerings" or "An Offering of Songs," is considered one of Tagore's most significant literary works and played a vital role in establishing his global reputation. Rabindranath Tagore was a multifaceted creative genius who contributed immensely to Bengali literature, music, art, and social reform born in 1861 in Calcutta (now Kolkata) India, Tagore grew up in a family deeply involved in the arts and cultural activities he went on to establish Santiniketan, an open-air school that later evolved into Visva-Bharati University, combining Western education with the rich traditions of India. Gitanjali consists of a collection of 103 poems which were originally written in Bengali and later translated into English by Tagore himself. These poems reflect the deep spiritual and philosophical insights of the poet, exploring themes of love, devotion, nature, and the human connection to the divine.

The poems in "Gitanjali" are characterized by their lyrical beauty, emotional intensity, and profound spirituality. They often draw upon the imagery of nature to evoke a sense of wonder, transcendence, and a mystical union with the divine the verses express a range of emotions, from longing and yearning to joy and celebration, as the poet describes the complexities of human existence and the eternal quest for truth and spiritual enlightenment. The publication, "Gitanjali" gathered widespread acclaim, both in India and abroad. The collection was well-received for its universal themes and lyrical language, capturing the essence of human emotions and aspirations. In 1913, Rabindranath Tagore became the first non-European to be awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature, due to the profound impact of "Gitanjali" on the literary world.

Tagore was a prolific writer who reshaped Bengali literature and played a significant role in the cultural and intellectual renaissance of Bengal in the later part of the 19th and early 20th centuries. Tagore's literary works span various genres, including poetry, songs, short stories, novels, plays, and essays.

Tagore's educational experiments at Shantiniketan his family estate led to the establishment of Visva-Bharati University which emphasized the integration of arts, humanities, and science, Tagore's compositions and music are an integral part of Bengali culture. He wrote over two thousand songs which are collectively known as Rabindra Sangeet. His songs reflect a deep connection with nature, human emotions, and philosophical thoughts. He wrote the national anthem of the Indian democracy. "Jana Gana Mana," is the national anthem of the Indian democracy. Tagore's legacy extends beyond literature and music. His philosophy emphasized universalism, humanism and the importance of freedom and individuality.

In his writings of Gitanjali, Rabindranath Tagore elaborates the nature of God and the connect with humans. At the start of the poem God is portrayed as the Master of Humans repairing their bodies and giving them new life. The poet assigns himself to a flute which is used to play God's breath creating an everlasting melody. The poet feels blessed to have received God's infinite gifts and is deeply moved by His's blessings. The poem tries to bring up a point that God is with the poorest and most excluded/segregated members of society. The writer thinks about the profundity of God's association with these individuals and how selfish people cannot completely comprehend or arrive at God.

The writer feels a feeling of discomfort and uneasiness as he battles to figure out how to interface with God and carry on with a prominent life. The most important subject of Gitanjali is commitment to God and the writers urge for a more profound description and connection with the heavenly. The poem tries to explore the pretext that God is omnipresent



and felt everywhere and all humans and all inhabitants of the earth can come into direct touch with the divine through selfless devotion only. Gitanjali by Tagore is a description of the relationship between humans and the divine that is influenced by Indian mentality. Tagore starts his poem with a delightful and wonderful description of the existence of human beings and that the human spirit is timeless though his body is mortal. Yet God wants it so, that man is truly eternal.

The book Gitanjali by Rabindranath Tagore titled Waiting is an anthology of poems that explore the theme of waiting and longing the chapter consists of several short poems that express the poet's emotions and reflections on various aspects of waiting in these poems, Tagore portrays the anticipation and yearning of a lover who is waiting for their beloved. The poet uses vivid imagery and metaphors to convey the depth of emotions experienced during the wait. He expresses the restlessness and longing that arise when separated from the object of affection. Throughout the chapter Tagore reflects on the nature of waiting itself. He delves into the philosophical aspects of waiting, contemplating its significance and the lessons it imparts.

The poems delve into themes such as patience, hope, and the transformative power of waiting, Tagore also explores the spiritual dimension of waiting suggesting that waiting can be a form of devotion or a path towards enlightenment he emphasizes the importance of surrendering oneself to the process of waiting and finding solace and meaning in the waiting itself overall, of Gitanjali presents a collection of heartfelt poems that capture the essence of waiting and the profound emotions it evokes it offers insights into the human condition, love, longing, and the deeper meanings that can be found in the act of waiting.

'Where the mind is without fear' is a popular and famous poem written by Kabi Guru Rabindranath Tagore, a celebrated Indian Bengali poet, philosopher, and Nobel prize receiver. The poem reflects Tagore's vision of an ideal society where people are liberated from fear, ignorance, and narrow mindedness here is a summary of the poem in the poem, Tagore describes an envisioned world where the mind is free from fear and constraint he portrays a society where people have the freedom to express their thoughts and beliefs without any apprehension.

Tagore begins by describing the ideal world as a place where the mind is free from fear and the head is always held high. This signifies the absence of fear, shame, or inferiority complexes that can hinder one's growth and self-expression. He emphasizes the importance of knowledge stating that it should be free and accessible to all flowing like a clear stream in this society. People are encouraged to seek knowledge, question, and challenge the status quo. Ignorance and blind faith are seen as obstacles that need to be overcome. Tagore envisions a world where individuals are truthful and have integrity. He emphasizes the need for people to have strong moral values and to stand up for what they believe in. In this society individuals are not swayed by empty rituals or superstitions but rather guided by their conscience furthermore.

Rabindranath Tagore's poem on the character of love explores its profound and complicated emotions that love evokes in human beings. The poem delves into the multifaceted aspects of love highlighting its transformative power and its ability to transcend boundaries, Tagore begins by describing love as a force that awakens and nourishes the soul. He portrays it as a gentle yet powerful current that flows through our lives breathing life into our existence. Love is depicted as an eternal energy that connects individuals transcending time and space. The poet emphasizes that love cannot be confined or controlled. It is a force that blossoms freely defying any attempts to restrain it. Love is not limited by societal norms, conventions, or expectations. It is an emotion that seeks expression and fulfillment unencumbered by external influences.

Tagore presents love as a profound union of hearts, a merging of souls that goes beyond physical attraction love binds individuals together in a deep emotional and spiritual connection. It is portrayed as a sanctuary where two souls find solace, understanding, and completeness. The poem also acknowledges that love is not without its challenges. It acknowledges the pain and longing that love can bring. Love's absence can create a void and its presence can sometimes be tumultuous. However, the poet suggests that the pain of love is an essential part of its journey contributing to personal growth and a deeper understanding of oneself.

"Leave This Chanting" is a poem from Rabindranath Tagore collection Gitanjali which was published in 1910. The poem reflects on the spiritual journey and the search for the divine. The speaker begins by addressing a person who is deeply engrossed in religious rituals and chanting. The speaker urges this person to leave behind the external practices and repetitive prayers. Instead, the speaker encourages them to embark on a more personal and introspective spiritual quest. The speaker believes that actual and pure spirituality lies in an individual's capacity to connect with the divine within their own being. They emphasize the importance of silence stating that in silence the seeker can hear the whispers of their soul and discover the true essence of existence.

The speaker questions the purpose of offering flowers, incense, and lighting candles. If these actions are mere superficial gestures devoid of genuine inner devotion, he suggests that one should abandon such external displays and focus on cultivating a deep sincere connection with the divine. In the latter part of the poem the speaker encourages the individual to detach themselves from the distractions of the world.



The poems often reflect Tagore's deep contemplation of life's meaning the search for God and the interplay between the human and the divine the collection carries a sense of longing and desire as the speaker expresses a desire to combine their individual self with a higher power using rich imagery, metaphor, and symbolism.

Tagore explores the beauty of nature and the universe, often portraying them as manifestations of the divine.

"Paper Boats" is a poignant poem written by Rabindranath Tagore which is included in his collection Gitanjali. The poem reflects on the versatile nature of life and the moments of joy and sorrow. In Paper Boats, Tagore uses the metaphor of paper boats to symbolize human existence and the passing of time he describes how he used to make paper boats as a child and set them afloat on the water the boats would sail for a short while braving the waves and currents only to eventually sink and disappear .

The poet compares the paper boats to the human journey where people embark on their individual paths facing the challenges and uncertainties of life just like the boats humans navigate through their experiences encountering moments of happiness and sadness. However, like the fate of the paper boats, their existence is ephemeral, and they succumb to the inevitability of time. Tagore's Paper Boats evokes a sense of transience and the impermanence of life. It encourages readers to cherish and appreciate the fleeting moments, the joys, and the sorrows, for they are all part of the human experience. The poem serves as a reminder to embrace the present and find beauty in the transient nature of existence.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Rabindranath Tagore's profound insights into spirituality, love, and the human condition are presented in "Gitanjali," a literary masterpiece. Tagore's poems continue to reverberate because they offer profound reflections on existence and the never-ending quest for truth and enlightenment through vivid imagery and reflective themes.

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