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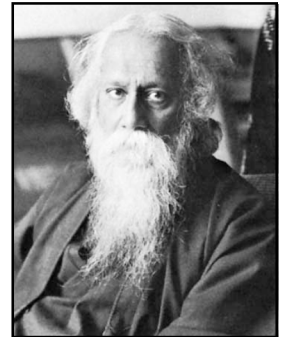
CHAPTER

My Heaven

Rabindra Nath Tagore (1861-1941)

➡ About the Poet

Rabindra Nath Tagore was born on May 7, 1861 in Calcutta (Kolkata). He was one of the distinguished novelists and poets. His father's name was Devendra Nath Tagore. He was educated mostly at home. He was sent to England to study law and there he joined the University College of London. In 1901, he founded 'Shantiniketan', the famous University of India. He won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913. He was also knighted in 1915. But he resigned his 'Knighthood' in 1919 as a protest against the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre. He was famous as 'Gurudev'. He died in 1941.



He wrote both in English and Bengali. His famous poetic works are 'The Gitanjali', 'The Crescent Moon', 'The Gardener', 'Fruit Gathering' and 'Lover's Gift', 'Chitra', 'The King of the Dark Chamber', and 'The Post Office' are his well known plays. Some of his novels are 'Gora', 'The Home' and 'The Wreck'. 'The Home Coming' and 'The Kabuli Wallah' are his fine short stories. 'Jan Gan Mana', our National Anthem, was composed by Tagore.

➡ About the Poem

The poem, 'My Heaven', draws the picture of an ideal country where people are literate and enjoy all types of freedom, they are liberal and broad minded. There is no distinction among them on the basis of caste, colour or creed. They are industrious and progressive. Under divine inspiration, they march on towards new thoughts and actions. The poet prays to God that his country, India, should be one such country of his dream.



*Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;
Where knowledge is free;
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments
by narrow domestic walls;*

*Where words come out from the depth of truth;
 Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;
 Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way
 into the dreary desert sand of dead habit;
 Where the mind is led forward by Thee into ever-widening thought and action—
 Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.*

—Rabindra Nath Tagore

➔ Appreciation of the Poem

'My Heaven' is one of the best known poems of Tagore. It is an extract from his famous book 'The Gitanjali'. The book won for the poem, the famous Nobel Prize for literature in 1913. It is an inspiring poem, which draws the picture of an ideal country, such as the poet would like his India to be. The poem was written much before the independence of India. The poem is an expression of the poet's lofty concept of freedom — freedom not only political, but also economic, social and intellectual. It is a prose poem. However, its language and rhythm are so melodious that it can be called a very fine specimen of poetic composition.

The poem contains a number of beautiful metaphors such as '*narrow domestic walls, tireless striving stretches its arms, dreary desert, sand of dead habit and heaven of freedom.*'

||Glossary||

Head is held high	: man can live in dignity without fear (मनुष्य बिना भय के प्रतिष्ठापूर्वक रह सकता है)
knowledge is free	: everybody is entitled to free education (सब लोग निःशुल्क शिक्षा के अधिकारी हैं)
world	: human society. (मानव समाज)
fragments	: small pieces (छोटे-छोटे टुकड़े)
narrow domestic walls	: internal divisions on account of colour, caste, creed and language (समाज का रंग, जाति, धर्म और भाषा के आधार पर आन्तरिक विभाजन)
depth of truth	: sincerity and truthfulness (निष्कपटता और सच्चाई)
tireless striving	: constant effort (निरन्तर प्रयास)
stretches its arms	: is always directed towards (हमेशा आगे की ओर)
perfection	: highest point of achievement (उपलब्धि का शिखर)
stream of reason	: rational thinking (तार्किक सोच)

dreary desert sand of dead habit	:	conservation which makes people unprogressive (लोगों को अप्रगतिशील बनाने वाली बातें)
Thee ever-widening thought and action	:	God (ईश्वर) constant dynamism and progressiveness (सदैव विकास की ओर जाने वाले विचार)
heaven of freedom	:	where freedom and happiness exist together. (जहाँ स्वतन्त्रता और प्रसन्नता साथ-साथ रहते हैं)
father	:	God (ईश्वर)
awake	:	rise after a long sleep of slavery (दासता की लम्बी नींद से जागना)

||Exercise||

➡ Answer the following questions :

1. Write the central idea of the poem 'My Heaven'.
2. Write an appreciation of the poem.

➡ Explain the following lines with reference to the context :

1. Where the clear stream country awake.
2. Where the mind walls.

