

Sudharsan College of Arts & Science, Pudukottai
4th Sem. - M.A English – Single Author Study – Rabindranath Tagore – P16ENE4

Important Questions for the External Examination.

I. Two Marks(Write one or two lines each)

1. What was the gift given to Tagore by God and how could he please Him?
2. For whom does the flower girl wait?
3. Define Gitanjali
4. How does Tagore define death?
5. Why should individual existence be essential in this universe?
6. How does God bring change with creative spirit?
7. Why does Raghupati call the God a mere stone?
8. Who is the human friend of Subha?
9. Who was loved by Gora?
10. How was Gora called by his professor in his college studies?

II Five Marks(Write paragraph answers)

11. Describe the religious consciousness of Tagore from his song “Where the mind without fear”.
12. Explain the importance of God’s Creativity in this universe, with reference to Tagore.
13. How were the devotees of Hindu religion exploited by the saints as revealed by Tagore in ‘Sacrifice’?
14. Explain the views of Tagore over the Kabuliwala as a father.
15. Sketch the character of Gora.

III Ten Marks(Write essays)

16. Write the salient features of Gitanjali by Tagore.
 17. How does Tagore explore the essence of God’s Creativity of Mankind in his prose? – Explain
 18. Describe the passion of Tagore for nationality exposed in The King and the Queen.
 19. Discuss the plight of women in ancient India narrated in Subha.
 20. How does Tagore prove the love for nation and belief in religion win the freedom for nation from his Gora.
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Sudharsan College of Arts and Science, Pudukkottai
II M.A. – SINGLE AUTHOR STUDY - TAGORE- P16ENE4
Model Question Paper - 1
PART – B (5*5=25)

Answer in 200 words each:

11.(a) & (b) Write note on Man's Universe (or) Theme of Man's Universe.

On the surface of our being we have the ever-changing phases of the individual self, but in the depth there dwells the Eternal Spirit of human unity beyond our direct knowledge. It very often contradicts the trivialities of our daily life, and upsets the arrangements made for securing our personal exclusiveness behind the walls of individual habits and superficial conventions. It inspires in us works that are the expressions of a Universal Spirit; it evokes unexpectedly in the midst of a self-centered life of supreme sacrifice. At its call, we hasten to dedicate our lives to the cause of truth and beauty, to unrewarded service of others, in spite of our lack of faith in the positive reality of the ideal values.

12.(a) & (b) Evaluate the key concepts of Tagore's Religion of Man

Some parts of the book "The Religion of Man" by Rabindranath Tagore. He quotes extensively from the Upanishads and the folk songs of the Bauls. The book further reinforced my observation that Hinduism is nothing but Spiritual Humanism packaged in a form that can be practiced by the masses.

Here are some quotations from the book, those are found interesting:

The divine principle of unity has ever been that of an inner relationship. This is revealed in some of its earliest stages in the evolution of multicellular life on this planet. The most perfect inward expression has been attained by man in his own body. But what is most important of all is the fact that man has also attained its realization in a more subtle body outside his physical system. He misses himself when he is isolated; he finds his own larger and truer self in his wide human relationship. His multicellular body is born and it dies; his multi-personal humanity is immortal. In this ideal of unity he realizes the eternal in his life and the boundless in his love. The unity becomes not a mere subjective idea, but an energizing truth. Whatever name may be given to it, and whatever form it

symbolizes, the consciousness of this unity is spiritual, and our effort to be true to it is our religion. It ever waits to be revealed in our history in a more and more perfect illumination. (p. 3,4)

The individual man must exist for Man the great, and must express him in disinterested works, in science and philosophy, in literature and arts, in service and worship. This is his religion, which is working in the heart of all his religions in various names and forms.

13.(a) & (b) Comment on the duties of the royal king. (or) Comment on the negligence of a King.

In the play *The King and The Queen*, king Vikram is totally attracted towards the physical charm of his queen Sumitra, the infatuated king neglects his royal duties towards the state. The theme of love in it is shown in a wider sense. He asks her to leave the house and its service alone, because his heart cannot spare her: “Alas, my darling, where have vanished those days of unalloyed joy when we first met in love, when our world awoke not only the flush of the early dawn of our union broke through our hearts in overflowing silence.”

Thus the husband, being an infatuated lover loses the wife’s respect and the confidence with which he vindicates his manhood. He is so passionately in love with her that he spends his time hovering round her. Taking advantage of his infatuation for the queen, her relatives from Kashmir manage to grab all important position in the state and fatten on their spoils. Complaints reached to the king but he has no ear and has no time to waste over vulgar concerns when life is short and love so sweet. Thus Tagore expresses the sensation both gay and melancholic under the dominating emotions of love and its allied sentiments. The transient psychological states under the stress of love, restlessness and curiosity are described with a highly developed sense of physical perception and intuitive awareness.

14.(a) & (b) Discuss the pathetic condition of a poor girl Subha.

Refer the answer in Essay Question no. 19

15.(a) & (b) How does Tagore concludes the story *My Lord, The Baby*

The end of the story is also interesting as Raicharan thoroughly believes that he is doing the right thing. His son's reaction to his new life is also surprising as he disregards Raicharan though does suggest to Raicharan's master that he provide Raicharan with a monthly pension. It is as though Raicharan's son believes that he is finally home. Having never believed that Raicharan was his real father. Basing his opinion on the simplicity of Raicharan's life. If anything Raicharan's son has always looked down on his father because he was so different to himself. Raicharan's son has no understanding of all the sacrifices that Raicharan has made for him. Nor does he understand the final sacrifice that Raicharan has made. Giving his son away to somebody else under the guise that they are his real parents. The fact that Raicharan is never seen again at the end of the story is also interesting as he may have decided that he has no other option but to roam from village to village lonely and defeated. Still blaming himself for the death of his master's son. The real winners in the story are Raicharan's master, mistress and son. All who owe a debt of gratitude to Raicharan as he lives his life as though he is an outcast. Still blaming himself for an accident that he was not responsible for.

My Lord The Baby, and many of Tagore's other short stories, is a precursor to sprawling stories of Indian families such as Rohinton Mistry's *A Fine Balance* and many of the novels of Salman Rushdie. Its central themes are duty—particularly the duty to one's master and one's son and father—and sacrifice.

PART-C (3*10=30)

Answer any THREE in detail.

16 & 17 Discuss Tagore's view on Creative Spirit.

Rabindranath describes early Earth as a struggle for success mainly decided by size. The large seemed able to win in the struggle for survival, but slowly he describes a new tactic – wit, and the coming of humans as the most successful of beings.

“The physiological process in the progress of Life's evolution seems to have reached its finality in man.”

This seems very limited, perhaps even an unimaginative view. However, it is 1930, but great fictions, at least, have already been imagined, Jules Verne comes to mind. In only a

short 40 years the movies with give us “Hal” taking over the space ship in “2001.” And, now the micro technologies of our early 21st century point to more and more technologies which are approaching the nature of life, a life certainly created by humans, but seemingly running off on its own with humans, gratefully, limping along, thankfully, but less and less in control, more and more dependent.

However, he does make a fairly compelling argument that “physical” evolution in man, at least, is not likely the future. The direction he sees whether “humans” always remain in control or not, seems plausibly

“ . . . the spirit of life boldly declared for a further freedom, and decided to eat of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. This time her struggle was not against the Inert, but against the limitation of her own overburdened agents.”

Nonetheless his historical perspective seems quite plausible:

“It is the consciousness in Man of his own creative personality which has ushered in this new regime in Life’s Kingdom.”

At the same time man’s foolishness is now in our own time threatening the very existence of the environment which allows us to continue to exist.

He does make a strong case for the use of human intelligence (and feeling) as able to create a life of meaning for humans. However, it is also the case that these same humans have quite different views, even contradictory views, of what this future utopia is to be and for whom (all humans, some humans or even others).

18. Sacrifice as a mean for Superstition.

Gunavati, the queen in Rabindranath’s Tagore’s play *Sacrifice*, wonders whether she had offended the fearsome mother goddess, because even though she was a queen and the whole world was under her feet but still she was not fortunate enough to become a mother. Was it a curse upon her for the sin she might have committed in the past or

previous birth? Here the fearsome mother goddess is the Hindu goddess Kali (CPPR 513). Kali worship is more popular in Calcutta, the capital of Bengal. People were not educated and often led a very superstitious life without any reason or scientific approach during the period of Tagore.

The spiritual Gurus like the temple priest Ragupathy took advantage of the people's ignorance and maintained a superior authority over the King and his subjects. His words were authority and people must obey it blindly. Even the king was no exception to this law of the priest who was a symbol of vanity. He advises the queen to make an offering of a beast and flowers to please the Goddess. The queen brings the goat of the poor girl Aparna and flowers for offering to the temple. The king Govinda questions the servant Jaising about the offerings.

The servant advises the girl that it was the mother's (Goddess Kali) wish and Aparna need not repent for it. Aparna argues that she was like the goat's mother and took care of it as if it was her own child. The king bans all the sacrifices in the temple and an announcement was made to forbid sacrifice in the name of god to the priest and the courtiers. The king also instructed them to spread his order to all parts of his land. The priest argues and warns that the king's rule should be only outside the temple and not in the matters of age old traditions and religion. The priest condemns the king for disregarding the goddess Kali and not giving her due sacrifices. The queen was very upset since her offering too was turned by the order of the king. The King tried to convince her that it was mother kali's command and he must execute it against all odds. The priest decides to give an offering of a beast to the Goddess, but the King prevents it through his general Nayanrai and Chandpal, the second commander with their soldiers. But the general refuses to follow the order of the king and surrenders his royal sword to the king himself because his faith in religion and age old beliefs was dearer than the king's order.

The king's sanction was not required for religious rites because the power of the king rested outside the temple and within his territory. The priest makes a conspiracy to get rid of the King with the help of prince Nakshatra who was also the brother of king Govinda.

The priest tells Nakshatra that he would be the next King as per the wish of the goddess after offering the hot blood of King Govinda. The priest out of his vanity encourages a

brother to kill another brother in the name of faith and religion. People fear age old tradition and religious rite than anything else in India. The superstitious belief was responsible for many evils in the days of Rabindranath Tagore. People led a poor life due ignorance and poverty.

Faith in religion was strong and they would stoop to any level to restore their faith. They would disobey the Kings order and even kill others for the sake of faith. People like Ragupathy exploited the faith of the people to fulfill his vanity. Jaising ultimately promises to bring the blood of the king as an offering to goddess Kali. The king's love for a small boy Druva worries the Queen because he could be the next possible contender to the crown.

The Queen orders Prince Nakshatra to get rid of the boy by sacrificing him to the Goddess Kali. The Prince informs the queen that the goddess wanted only the king's blood. The queen then orders Prince Nakshatra to sacrifice the boy instead of the King(CPPR 523). So, the priest wanted to sacrifice the king and the queen wanted to sacrifice the little boy. Hence this part of the play clearly indicates the practices of human sacrifice prevalent in the society during the period of Rabindranath Tagore. There was always a conflict in the minds of the people whether to follow the king or to follow the age old faith and religious rites by following the order of the priest to execute the king. Ultimately the boy was chosen for the sacrifice in lieu of the King.

The prince and the priest make every effort to sacrifice the boy to Goddess Kali but were prevented by the king. The priest and the prince were arrested and sent for eight years of exile by King Govinda. Jaising kills himself to offer his own blood to fulfill the promise made to the priest instead of the King as his blood too belonged to the royal lineage. The king believed in justice and righteousness which are the personification of God himself. This is also reiterated in the Srimad Ramayana (Sarma 31). The king prevented sacrifice and the priest disobeyed to establish his authority and age old superstitious beliefs over the King and his authority. Ultimately the priest fails in his endeavour.

Jaising was very dear to the priest because he brought him up like his own son and his loss was a great shock which shattered all the hopes of the priest. Raghupati calls the goddess as dumb deaf, blind and a mere stone. He throws away the image and declares that there is no Goddess. The Goddess is not in the Stone image but in the heart of the

woman. Thus the play ends with the destruction of falsehood through the unfortunate death of Jaising. The God is present in the heart as the soul of an individual.

19. Comment on the tradition way of marriage for a woman portrayed by Tagore in Subha.

In *Subha* by Rabindranath Tagore we have the theme of fear, isolation, loneliness, connection, selfishness, innocence, tradition and control. Taken from his Collected Stories collection the story is narrated in the first person by an unnamed narrator and after reading the story the reader realises that Tagore may be exploring the theme of fear. Subha's parents don't really know what to do with Subha. Her mother looks upon her with scorn while her father knows that it will be difficult to find Subha a husband because of the fact that she is dumb. If anything both parents are afraid and rather than embracing Subha's uniqueness worry about her future. It is as though Subha is a burden to her parents. Something that Subha herself understands. Subha also lives a very isolated life apart from Pratap she has no other human friends. All her friends are the animals that her father owns particularly the two cows. This may be important as Tagore may be suggesting that Subha identifies with the cows because they too are dumb. It is also interesting that the only affection that Subha receives is not from any of her family but from the two cows. Along with Nature they are her connection to her emotions.

It might also be a case that Tagore is suggesting that Subha's parents are selfish. Though they are following tradition and marrying Subha off to a total stranger. There is no sense that Subha is in agreement. She is doing as she is told to do not what she wants to do. It is also interesting that while Subha's mother is getting Subha ready for her bridegroom that Tagore uses words like 'imprisoned', 'hung' and 'kill.' It is as though Subha knows that the world she wants to live back in the village is over. Her life is to change dramatically again without her consent. Which might be the point that Tagore is making. He may be suggesting that the tradition of marrying of daughters to complete strangers and providing the stranger with a dowry is not suitable to everyone. Subha's life is to change dramatically. From living an innocent and simple life she has been thrown into a complicated world in which she has no way of expressing her feelings. Apart from crying. Which Subha's bridegroom misinterprets. If anything Subha's parents are not

acting responsibly and are following a tradition that they are afraid to go against. In case they themselves become outcasts like Subha.

What is also interesting about the story is the feelings that Subha has for Pratap. She obviously likes him and there is a sense that she would be happy to marry Pratap rather than being brought to Calcutta where she is to marry a complete stranger. However Pratap is as much an outcast as Subha is and as such Subha's father does not consider him to be a suitable bridegroom for Subha. It is as though Subha's whole life is being controlled by her father and mother. She has no say in any matter that directly involves her. Even her tears do not register as sadness with her parents. Which would play on the theme of selfishness again. Despite it being obvious that Subha is sad because she is marrying a stranger who she does not love. Her parents do not take Subha's feelings into consideration. Subha is not being treated as the individual she is. She has become a problem for her parents and as such they consider that the best thing to do is to marry Subha off.

The end of the story is also interesting as Tagore appears to be further exploring the theme of isolation. Not only has Subha been taken away from her village but she is to live her life with not only a man she does not know but also she is to live in a city in whereby she knows no one. It is as though the pain the Subha feels is even more internalized. Not only can she not tell anyone she is sad but she will know no one after she has been married off. If Subha felt isolated by her inability to communicate with others while living in her village things will be much worse for her living with a strange man in a strange city. Life is going to be more complicated for Subha. Any happiness that she had felt while living in her village is gone due to the fact that her parents are following a tradition of marrying Subha off in order that they themselves will not be viewed as outcasts. At no stage in the story has Subha's feelings been put to the forefront by her parents. Though Subha cannot talk her tears speak louder than words yet her parents do not realise this. A young innocent girl who longs for the simple things in life has had her life destroyed because of her parent's fears and selfishness.

20. Bring out the themes behind Tagore My Lord, the Baby.

In *My Lord, the Baby* by Rabindranath Tagore we have the theme of sacrifice, guilt, responsibility, gratitude, letting go, selflessness and shame. Taken from his *Collected Stories* collection the story is narrated in the first person by an unnamed narrator and after reading the story the reader realises that Tagore may be exploring the theme of sacrifice. Raicharan rather than living with the guilt of feeling responsible for his master's son's death gives his only son to his master. Believing that his son is in fact the reincarnation of his master's son. Raicharan's logic is questionable but he himself believes that his own son is really his master's son. It is as though God has returned his master's son to him and as such Raicharan has no right or at least he feels as though he has no right to keep what is his own son. It is also noticeable that Raicharan lives the life of a pauper in order that his son can have the best of everything. This may be important as it further suggests that Raicharan is willing to sacrifice his own needs for his son. A son who in reality shows very little if any gratitude to Raicharan. It is also possible that Raicharan is trying to wash away any sense of responsibility that he may feel he has for the death of his master's son. Raicharan is a kind-hearted man who would rather do the right thing than the wrong thing. He is prepared to sacrifice his own happiness with his son in order that his master and mistress are happy.

What is also interesting about the story is the fact that Raicharan never really lets go of his master's son. Something that is noticeable when he buys his own son a go-kart and some gold ornaments that are similar to those that his master's son had. It is as though Raicharan longs for the guilt he feels to dissipate. Though it never does despite the passing of time. Some readers will also notice that Raicharan is selfless. He puts everybody in front of himself. Whether it be his master, his master's son or his own son. Raicharan thinks of others before he thinks about himself. There is also a sense that Raicharan feels shame over what has happened his master's son. A shame that has driven him to create a mirror image of his master's son by way of his own son. At no stage of the story does the reader feel that Raicharan has let go of the incident with his master's son. He has carried the burden and punished himself since his master's son died.

The mistress is also an interesting character though she does not play much of a role in the story. However just like Raicharan she has been unable to let go of the death of her son and longs for another baby. Which may be important as Tagore may be suggesting

that the mistress may feel incomplete having lost one child and not have had another. Children bring joy to parents and since her son's death the mistress does not appear to have lived a happy life. Something that is to be expected. The loss of a child can linger with a parent for life. So overwhelmed with grief when her son first went missing the mistress offered Raicharan all the money that she had. Hoping that this would entice the return of her baby. At no stage could the mistress accept that her son might be dead. Again something that would be very normal for a parent on discovery that their child is either missing or dead.

The end of the story is also interesting as Raicharan thoroughly believes that he is doing the right thing. His son's reaction to his new life is also surprising as he disregards Raicharan though does suggest to Raicharan's master that he provide Raicharan with a monthly pension. It is as though Raicharan's son believes that he is finally home. Having never believed that Raicharan was his real father. Basing his opinion on the simplicity of Raicharan's life. If anything Raicharan's son has always looked down on his father because he was so different to himself. Raicharan's son has no understanding of all the sacrifices that Raicharan has made for him. Nor does he understand the final sacrifice that Raicharan has made. Giving his son away to somebody else under the guise that they are his real parents. The fact that Raicharan is never seen again at the end of the story is also interesting as he may have decided that he has no other option but to roam from village to village lonely and defeated. Still blaming himself for the death of his master's son. The real winners in the story are Raicharan's master, mistress and son. All who owe a debt of gratitude to Raicharan as he lives his life as though he is an outcast. Still blaming himself for an accident that he was not responsible for.

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Model Question Paper – 2

PART – B (5*5=25)

Answer in 200 words each:

11.(a) & (b) Write a note on the theme of Man's Universe (OR) How did man change the course of evolution?

The divine principle of unity has ever been that of an inner relationship. This is revealed in some of its earliest stages in the evolution of multicellular life on this planet. The most perfect inward expression has been attained by man in his own body. But what is most important of all is the fact that man has also attained its realization in a more subtle body outside his physical system. He misses himself when he is isolated; he finds his own larger and truer self in his wide human relationship. His multicellular body is born and it dies; his multi-personal humanity is immortal. In this ideal of unity he realizes the eternal in his life and the boundless in his love. The unity becomes not a mere subjective idea, but an energizing truth. Whatever name may be given to it, and whatever form it symbolizes, the consciousness of this unity is spiritual, and our effort to be true to it is our religion. It ever waits to be revealed in our history in a more and more perfect illumination. (p. 3,4)

The individual man must exist for Man the great, and must express him in disinterested works, in science and philosophy, in literature and arts, in service and worship. This is his religion, which is working in the heart of all his religions in various names and forms. (p. 4,5)

Creation has been made possible through the continual self-surrender of the unit to the universe. And the spiritual universe of Man is also ever claiming self-renunciation from the individual unit.

12.(a) & (b) Write a brief note on Tagore's The Creative Spirit (or) Why does Tagore say human mind is qualitative?

Rabindranath describes early Earth as a struggle for success mainly decided by size. The large seemed able to win in the struggle for survival, but slowly he describes a new tactic – wit, and the coming of humans as the most successful of beings.

“The physiological process in the progress of Life’s evolution seems to have reached its finality in man.”

“. . . the spirit of life boldly declared for a further freedom, and decided to eat of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. This time her struggle was not against the Inert, but against the limitation of her own overburdened agents.”

Nonetheless his historical perspective seems quite plausible:

“It is the consciousness in Man of his own creative personality which has ushered in this new regime in Life’s Kingdom.”

At the same time man’s foolishness is now in our own time threatening the very existence of the environment which allows us to continue to exist.

He does make a strong case for the use of human intelligence (and feeling) as able to create a life of meaning for humans. However, it is also the case that these same humans have quite different views, even contradictory views, of what this future utopia is to be and for whom (all humans, some humans or even others).

13.(a) Comment on Aparna in Sacrifice. (or) (b)Why does Govinda ban sacrificing?

Gunavati, the queen in Rabindranath’s Tagore’s play *Sacrifice*, wonders whether she had offended the fearsome mother goddess, because even though she was a queen and the whole world was under her feet but still she was not fortunate enough to become a mother. Was it a curse upon her for the sin she might have committed in the past or previous birth? Here the fearsome mother goddess is the Hindu goddess Kali (CPPR 513). Kali worship is more popular in Calcutta, the capital of Bengal. People were not

educated and often led a very superstitious life without any reason or scientific approach during the period of Tagore.

The spiritual Gurus like the temple priest Ragupathy took advantage of the people's ignorance and maintained a superior authority over the King and his subjects. His words were authority and people must obey it blindly. Even the king was no exception to this law of the priest who was a symbol of vanity. He advises the queen to make an offering of a beast and flowers to please the Goddess. The queen brings the goat of the poor girl Aparna and flowers for offering to the temple. The king Govinda questions the servant Jaising about the offerings.

The servant advises the girl that it was the mother's (Goddess Kali) wish and Aparna need not repent for it. Aparna argues that she was like the goat's mother and took care of it as if it was her own child. The king bans all the sacrifices in the temple and an announcement was made to forbid sacrifice in the name of god to the priest and the courtiers.

14(a)How does Tagore describe the poor in The King and The Queen. (or) (b) Describe Kumarsen's care for the subjects towards King's harshness.

Kumarsen like his sister Sumitra is aware of the situation, the harsh reality where the poor subjects are starving. Kumarsen and Sumitra are not only the King and the queen of their states, living a secluded life of luxury in the fortified palace, they both represent the humanitarian self of Rabindranath also. The conversation between Queen Sumitra and the Devadatta lays emphasis upon the critical conditions of the king's poor subjects.

After seeing the whirlpool of oppression and exploitation of the poor subjects, Queen Sumitra comes out of her luxurious cocoon to fight heroically. Tagore portrayed the king as an embodiment of romantic world which is totally alienated from reality. But through Sumitra's protest, reality intervenes and lays bare the futility of the king's romantic appeals for love making. King Vikram's negligence of his royal duties left his poor subjects brutally oppressed under the hordes of officials who constitute the bureaucracy.

The king becomes totally blind due to his revenge. The conversation between the king and his Minister highlights the pathetic condition of poor subjects by the foreign robbers.

15.(a) Describe Tagore's realization over Suba

"Subha" is near heartbreaking tale of the isolation of a deaf and mute girl. Subha is born into a financially comfortable family. She is the youngest of three daughters. Her mother feels a sense of shame she never overcomes when the family realizes that Subha will never be able to speak or hear. In the culture of the time congenital impairments of children were seen as sign of a moral defect or depravity in the mother. Her mother tries to love her but she can barely force the emotion. Her father loves and accepts her. In due time her older two sisters are married to proper men and given a proper dowry. Finding a husband for Subha is not so simple. Future mother in laws fear she will give birth to children with the same impairments she has. Subha has learned to cope as best she can within the context of her family by communicating with gestures understood only within the family. Her only friends are the two family cows.

One day Subha meets a fisherman. It happens that the man is somehow viewed as simple. His only interest in life is casting his fishing net. His family has long ago accepted that he will never amount to anything. The man appreciates her silence as talking might frighten the fish. She comes to enjoy seeing him cast his net. She begins to feel romantic about him. I will quote a bit from the story to convey a feel for the prose.

With her large eyes wide open, she scanned their faces as though she wished to learn something. But. One afternoon in the midst of all this, as Pratap was fishing, he laughed: 'So then, Su, they have caught your bridegroom, and you are going to be married! Mind you don't forget me altogether!' Then he turned his mind again to his fishing. As a stricken doe looks in the hunter's face, asking in silent agony: 'What have ned I done to harm you?' so Subha looked at Pratap. That day she sat no longer beneath her tree. Banikantha, having finished his nap, was smoking in his bedroom when Subha dropped at his feet and burst out weeping as she gazed towards him. Banikantha tried to comfort her and his own cheek grew wet with tears.

It was settled that on the morrow they should go to Calcutta. Subha went to the cowshed to bid farewell to the comrades of her childhood. She fed them from her hand; she clasped their necks; she looked into their faces, and tears fell fast from the eyes which spoke for her. That night was the tenth of the new moon. Subha left her room, and flung herself down on her grassy couch beside the river she loved so much. It was as if she threw her arms about the Earth, her strong, silent mother, and tried to say: 'Do not let me leave you, mother. Put your arms about me, as I have put mine about you, and hold me fast.'

15(b) Describe the attitude of Raicharan.

In *My Lord, the Baby* by Rabindranath Tagore we have the theme of sacrifice, guilt, responsibility, gratitude, letting go, selflessness and shame. Taken from his *Collected Stories* collection the story is narrated in the first person by an unnamed narrator and after reading the story the reader realises that Tagore may be exploring the theme of sacrifice. Raicharan rather than living with the guilt of feeling responsible for his master's son's death gives his only son to his master. Believing that his son is in fact the reincarnation of his master's son.

Raicharan's logic is questionable but he himself believes that his own son is really his master's son. It is as though God has returned his master's son to him and as such Raicharan has no right or at least he feels as though he has no right to keep what is his own son. It is also noticeable that Raicharan lives the life of a pauper in order that his son can have the best of everything. This may be important as it further suggests that Raicharan is willing to sacrifice his own needs for his son. A son who in reality shows very little if any gratitude to Raicharan. It is also possible that Raicharan is trying to wash away any sense of responsibility that he may feel he has for the death of his master's son. Raicharan is a kind-hearted man who would rather do the right thing than the wrong thing. He is prepared to sacrifice his own happiness with his son in order that his master and mistress are happy.

PART-C (3*10=30)

Answer any THREE in detail.

16. & 17. Bring out the significance of Tagore's prose works.

Many of Tagore's Philosophical and creative writings express his ideas about Religion. The present study is a critical overview of Tagore's text *The Religion of Man* originally delivered as the Hibbert Lectures for 1930 in Manchester College Oxford. Tagore's earlier books *Personality* (1917) and *Creative Unity* (1922) reveal a natural progression of his Philosophy towards religion. Tagore's family was members of the Bramho Samaj, a composite Religion founded by Raja Ram Mohan Roy in 1828. However, Tagore never blindly followed the dogma of Bramhoism. As a great scholar he was well aware of the great Hindu religious tradition. Tagore made attempt to bring about a union between the Hindu Tradition and the Bramho belief. Moreover, Tagore wanted to bring out the unity between different religions. Philip Novak aptly comments in the foreword to *The Religion of Man*, "His concern is to help us see what he sees so clearly that the various religions of humanity are evolving expressions of the one Religion of Humanity, an eternal essence that lies beyond humanity's historical religions, drawing the human family steadily forward toward greater and richer realizations of unity, love and freedom"(Tagore 3).

As a 20th century human being well conversant developments in science, Tagore approaches the concept of religion from scientific view point. In the initial chapters he argues that the process of evolution finds its full meaning only in humanity, accepting the truth of the Darwinian theory of natural selection and using it to promote a theistic rather than atheistic view of life. He says that there is a shaping spirit of life that introduces more and more complex and interrelated forms of life in the evolutionary process, which culminates in the creation of some truth or inner value that is not limited by space and time and the vehicle of this revelation is humanity, through which the eternal comes to realize itself in history. Which is accomplished people's continual efforts to develop truth and active love, where active love is achieved when people realize themselves in others, making up a great societal and cosmic wholeness that frees all human from their consciousness of separateness.

Tagore's visionary and optimistic philosophy pointed the way to the recovery of a faith in the limitless potential of humanity, in the time when there was disillusionment with

conventional religion and growth in materialism. Tagore's belief that the function of civilization was to keep alive the faith in the possibility of ideal perfection, that human culture should be understood as an unfolding discovery of a new level of humanity, beyond individual self was fresh for western ears. Along with 'the Religion of Man' and other philosophies along with other eastern philosophies gained respect in the West, this earlier looked at eastern philosophies with a disdainful eye.

18. Consider Sacrifice as a social satire.

Hindu belief is based on the assumption that everyone reaps the fruits of one's own Karma (Weeraperuma 11). Karma means the consequence of good or bad acts of a person in his or her previous birth. This explains the reason, why someone is wealthy, blessed with good health and life whereas others suffer from poverty, disease and calamities in life. If your action is for good, then you will enjoy its fruit in the next birth. According to the law of karma, we are actually the product of our acts and thoughts during the previous birth. As per this law of karma, Gunavati is the queen because of her previous good deeds but she does not have a child because of the wrongs (sin), she might have committed in her previous birth. Gunavati might suffer either because of wrong deeds committed or because mother Kali wanted to test her for some obvious reason only known to Kali, as her ways and actions are secret and unknown to the mortals. But all that happens for the spiritual elevation of the person tested.

As per Hinduism Goddess Kali has four arms with a sword in one hand and the head of the demon in another and the other two hands for blessing her devotees. She has two dead heads as her earring, garland of skulls necklace and a girdle made of human hands as her clothing. She has a protruding tongue, red eyes, her face and breasts are smeared with blood. She stands with one foot on the thigh and other resting on the chest of her husband, the Lord Shiva (Harshananda 113). Thus, animal sacrifice was very common and killing of animals and human beings was justified in the name of religion by the priests and his followers in the temples across India during the period of Rabindranath Tagore.

The king questioned whether the goddess was really happy to have her creation killed. Religions, by and large, may teach love, compassion and tolerance, but the followers may misinterpret such teaching to fulfill their own selfish means and maintain a sway over the society. This was the case also with the priest of Kali temple in the play *Sacrifice*.

The faith of Rabindranath Tagore based on universal approach of oneness teach mankind to develop love for all living things, as all are the creations of God which is also mentioned in the Upanishads (Rajagopalachari 38).

Rabindranath Tagore in his play 'Sacrifice' conveyed the message of kindness and love to prevent unwanted sacrifice of living beings in the name of religion. People were more superstitious and believed anything blindly without rational thought in those days (prior to independence) because of the lack of good moral and scientific education. Sacrifice of ego was necessary for prosperity and peaceful co-existence of all living things on this earth. So, Rabindranath Tagore wanted the people to sacrifice their ego instead of foolish sacrifices based on superstitious beliefs.

We see the Hindu Goddess Kali around which the whole play revolves. The priest makes futile effort to invoke the blessing of mother Kali to restore the faith of people in the Goddess. But the faith of the priest was shattered as he failed in his attempts to sacrifice either the king or the little boy but instead his dearest Jaising was killed. The priest ultimately declares that there was no goddess and it was only a mere stone image. The real goddess is in the heart of a woman.

19. Critically analyse the play *The King and the Queen*.

In the play, *The King and the Queen*, the conflict arises when Queen Sumitra takes the assistance of her brother, Prince Kumarsen of Kashmir. The King Vikram feels humiliated when he came to know that Queen Sumitra is taking the helping hand of her brother. The uxorious king thinks himself free from the self-ensnaring love, adopting an extremely belligerent stance. The uncontrolled passions and hate up-setting all balance in the king's life is consequent upon love's falling out in the world of humanity. These things turn king's frame of mind against Kumarsen.

Kumarsen presents the imposing figure who remains the soul of honour, zealously true to his sister, his motherland and to his betrothed. Kumarsen is an embodiment of sacrifice and new vision. Kumarsen represents the benevolent king in the play. In the *Vedas* and the *Puranas*, the character of a benevolent king used to take part in active reform. Here, Kumarsen feels humanity for the poor subjects. At the end, Kumarsen is ready to become the „random victim“, the *pharmakos*, whose single death saves the whole city and is important for the redemption of mankind. Kumarsen like his sister Sumitra is aware of the situation, the harsh reality where the poor subjects are starving. Kumarsen and Sumitra are not only the King and the queen of their states, living a secluded life of luxury in the fortified palace, they both represent the humanitarian self of Rabindranath also. The conversation between Queen Sumitra and the Devadatta lays emphasis upon the critical conditions of the king's poor subjects.

After seeing the whirlpool of oppression and exploitation of the poor subjects, Queen Sumitra comes out of her luxurious cocoon to fight heroically. Tagore portrayed the king as an embodiment of romantic world which is totally alienated from reality. But through Sumitra's protest, reality intervenes and lays bare the futility of the king's romantic appeals for love making. King Vikram's negligence of his royal duties left his poor subjects brutally oppressed under the hordes of officials who constitute the bureaucracy. The king becomes totally blind due to his revenge. The conversation between the king and his Minister highlights the pathetic condition of poor subjects by the foreign robbers.

Here, Tagore highlights the social reality more loudly and vociferously to depict the oppression and exploitation by the Britishers on the poor subjects in all the ugliest forms like poverty, hunger and homelessness.

In the play, Sumitra is depicted as a heroic lady and an ideal queen. Her heart moves to pity on seeing the people of Jalandhar suffering from hunger. She came to know that her own relatives coming from Kashmir had monopolised all the big posts and eaten up everything they could lay their hands on. The king was so much infatuated with her that he had no time to look to the administration of the country. Monarchy had thus been

reduced to anarchy, and to make things worse, it was a foreign bureaucracy at that time. Commenting on the inherent weakness of society.

The queen's mind is torn between love and sense of duty but she wishes to punish the high officers of his State with the help of her brother Kumarsen at any cost. The king burns down villages and towns, and causes so much havoc and consternation in Kashmir that Kumarsen prefers to sacrifice his life and becomes the "random victim" of the circumstance, only for the sake of saving his subjects.

Kumarsen is also depicted as a heroic and courageous king in the play. He inspires others through his idealism and selfless commitment to a cause- even at the cost of his own life. He depicts the fact that for him his country is more important than his life.

Kumarsen's sacrifice proves his loyalty and faithfulness for the community. Sumitra instils bravery and encourages Kumarsen which makes him emerge as a heroic figure. Sumitra declares herself as "the mother of the people" the poor people who were subjected to inhuman exploitation. The king however, is reduced to a name and serves the order of miscreants. That is why Devadatta belittles the king when he tells to Sumitra, "The king has become a piece of wild rumour, which they can believe, or not, as they like" (*The King*, 706). Queen Sumitra and Kumarsen describe those robbers as a "disgrace to Kashmir". They both wanted to crush those miscreants, who were responsible for so much havoc in the country.

Nothing can be more transparent than this depiction of social reality by the dramatist. The possibility of rebellion is so vivid that it recalls the fall of Bastille, the Bourbon dynasty cuddled in luxury and pomp at the cost of the people. The cry for bread is the cry for liberty, equality and fraternity. Tagore's depiction of the social reality of his times through this sheds light on the dreadful reality of famines taken poor subjects who are starving. Amidst the apathy of the ruler, the "random victim" succeeds in bringing the ruler to realization of his duties and responsibilities. Tagorean hero, Kumarsen sacrificed his life to save Kashmir from total devastation.

20. Comment on the womanhood in Subha.

Rabindranath Tagore, the only Indian to get Nobel Prize for Literature, is mainly acclaimed as a poet. But his short stories are world renowned and they are as brilliant and competent as his poetry. He is compared by critics to Chekhov. Tagore has written nearly one hundred short stories.

The treatment of women and their position in society was of serious concern to Rabindranath Tagore. Being a sensitive man and the supreme romantic poet of Bengal, he understood women in all their joy and sorrow, hope and despair, their yearnings and their dreams. Tagore found in the women of his country an immense wealth—their courage against all odds, their power of survival under the worst possible conditions and oppression, their forbearance, their self-sacrifice and gentleness. It pained him to see such colossal waste of so much human treasure. Indian woman's rare quality of courage, piety, obedience, love and devotion are the themes of many of Tagore's stories. Tagore had the unique natural genius to read women's minds and he analysed their strange structure, through his stories. Even in cruel actions and base thoughts, Tagore brings out noble feelings. He tells the world that Indian women are highly sacrificing, loving, obedient, meek, religious and kind. They adore their husbands, love their children deeply, and give due reverence and consideration to their in-laws.

Women in Tagore's days were highly exploited by the feudal society. The out-dated, cruel, feudal customs enhanced the miseries and tortures of women. Through his stories Tagore pointed out those injustices. Tagore was never influenced by patriarchal views. That is why he depicted his heroines as more powerful and brighter than the spineless men. Tagore not only reveals the spirituality of his heroines but also shows their keen practical sense and determination. Tagore's stories confirm the fact that he believed in the progress of women and in their emancipation from feudal bondage. He also believed that, given equal rights and opportunities, they might occupy their rightful place in society side by side with men. Taking these views into consideration one can call Tagore a feminist writer.

When one analyses the Bengali women's fate, as depicted in Tagore's stories, he/she can find two kinds of intellectuals in Bengal society who played central roles in the stories. The first category of intelligentsia wanted to preserve feudal customs for their personal gains. They amassed wealth by exploiting the helpless poor. Some of them even held important positions like judge. The second category did not involve directly in the exploitation of women, but their passive attitude did not lessen the burden of Bengali women.

Tagore brought out the pathos of woman caused by various situations in the house. Women had to face several problems in their houses. Tagore treated these problems and created examples of womanhood who remained immortal in the minds of the readers.

The close affinity between man and Nature is the theme of the story "Subha" or "The Dumb Girl." Subha was the youngest of the three daughters of Banikantha. Her elder sisters had been married. Subha [Subhashini] was a dumb girl. She was a silent weight upon the heart of her parents. She, with her parents, lived in a small village called Chandipur. The little girl, when her work was done, crept quietly to the banks of the nearby river. She had realised from her earliest childhood that God had sent her like a curse to her father's house, so she kept away from ordinary people and tried to live in the company of nature. The sounds of nature joined with the trembling of her heart. Her only companions in the household were the two cows whom she loved, fondled and cared very much. Whenever she heard any words that hurt her, she would come to these dumb friends for consolation. Subha had also a comrade among the higher animals. He was the youngest boy of the Gosains, Pratap by name. He was a lazy fellow. His main ambition was to catch fish.

Subha was growing. The thought of her marriage filled her parents with anxious care. Her father decided that they should shift to Calcutta. It was heart-rending for her to leave the stream, the cows, the Nature and her friend, Pratap. Subha went out of her room and threw herself down on the grass beside the river. And throwing her arms about the Earth, her strong, silent mother, she requested her not to let her leave her.

Subha's marriage was fixed by her parents. Her defect was not disclosed, to the bridegroom's party. Her displeasure and tears made no negative effect on the proposer or her parents. The marriage took place on a day, which promised to bring good luck. The husband's work lay in the West, and shortly after the marriage he took her there. In less than ten days everyone in the locality knew that the girl was dumb. How her heart started to sob, only the Searcher of Hearts could hear. That marriage supplied Subha with everlasting miseries. She lost Nature but did not gain man. The tragedy of her life is made clear in a few short sentences and the reader is left to think over human suffering which cannot be explained or understood. One can guess what happened to Subha when her dumbness was disclosed.

There is something really pathetic in this dumb agony of the human heart that is denied all possibility of self-expression. It is a pity that a sweet and lovable nature [Subha] is denied the comfort and solace of pouring out its sorrows into sympathetic ears and receiving words of love, consolation and encouragement from loving lips. Tagore has expressed this pathetic situation with a poetic insight that is peculiarly his own. Sisirkumar Ghose is of view that "Subha has a rare Lucy-like rapport with Nature" (81). The close affinity between man and nature is wonderfully depicted in this story. The Nature, the stream, the cows are major characters here. A dumb girl sharing her joys, sorrows and other emotions with the dumb beasts is a touching sight. Here a human being becomes one with the nature and one with the animals. One does not find any difference between the dumb cows and dumb Subha and dumb Nature. The pity is that the physical deformities cast one out of the society. Isolated, one then makes company with Nature and animals. How heart-rending it is to Subha to leave her cows, the stream and the Nature! Stronger is her relation to animals and Nature than to human beings. The reason is obvious. Nature is her mother. She was plucked away from her mother when the family shifted to Calcutta. Her tragedy started there. One is simply wonder-struck at Tagore's insight into human minds. There is irony in the name 'Subha'. Subha, shortened form of Subhashini means one who speaks well. But Subha of the story is destined by fate to be a mute speaker.