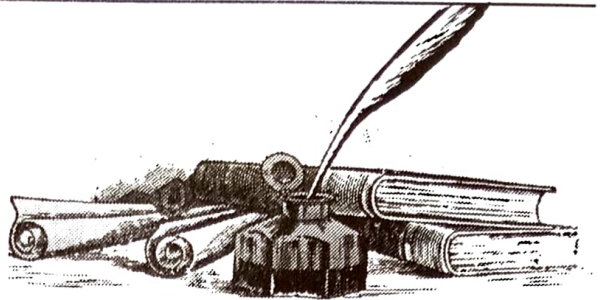


WHERE THE MIND IS WITHOUT FEAR

Rabindranath Tagore



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.

📖 Life of the poet :

RABINDRANATH TAGORE (7 May 1861-7 August 1941)

Rabindranath Tagore was a versatile Indian poet, novelist, short story writer, essayist, critic, dramatist, painter, musician, actor-director-producer of theatre, educationist and social reformer. Any word of praise about him would always remain incomplete to represent his true worth. However, while discussing about Rabindranath Tagore as a poet, it would be better to quote what he himself did consider when he was nearly 70, "I have, it is true, engaged myself in a series of activities. But the innermost me is not to be found in any of these. At the end of the journey I am able to see, a little more clearly, the orb of my life. Looking back, the only thing of which I feel certain is that I am a poet (*ami kavi*)."

His magnitude of his contribution not only to the Nation of India but also to the entire human civilisation is unfathomable. Being the first Nobel laureate in literature from Asia

he had shown to the world the true essence of Oriental philosophy which has its roots in the spirituality connecting man and Nature together. While the mainstream European modern poets focused on their heights of frustration in their poetry, Rabindranath offered a solution and solace by his representation of Indian philosophy into his poems.

Gitanjali, which is a massive collection of poetry and won him the Nobel Prize in literature in 1913 by virtue of its translation by himself in the name of *Song Offerings* and it, can thus be considered his magnum opus. Besides this other notable poetic works by Rabindranath include *Sonar Tori*, *Balaka*, *Manasi*, etc. in vernacular Bengali language.

Summary :

Where the Mind is Without Fear is one of the most celebrated poems in *Gitanjali* by Rabindranath Tagore. In this poem he talks about an imaginary place where human passion and conviction would be at its highest without any fear of any adversary. In fact, this is something that the poet wishes his countrymen to attain for their own country. In this context it is important to remember that Rabindranath Tagore was a great supporter of the Indian freedom fighting movements. He understood the need of an inspiring piece of writing that would boost up the motivation of all the countrymen to be united together in order to obtain independence from the British colonialism. However, it is also to note that not only becoming independent, but also becoming self dependent is what the poet wishes for them. In order to attain such strength of character some essential disciplines need to be incorporated into all of us; this poem acts as a guideline to such disciplines. The mind has to be fearless and head should be held high. Aspiration for knowledge should also be very high and there should not be any barrier to knowledge. There has to be enough broadmindedness that prevents narrow compartmentalization of communities. Truth and perfection should be the motto behind all sincere endeavour. Superstition and lack of education should not be given chance to come in the way of reason and judgment. And overall the supreme source of inspiration has to be the inner soul of every man; all of us should be guided by the power of within. This is, in a spiritual manner, referred to as 'thee'.

**MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS [MCQ]**

Marks

2

1. Around which year was original Bengali poem composed?

- (A) 1909
(B) 1010
(C) 1911
(D) 1912

2. Around which year was the poem translated into English?

- (A) 1910
(B) 1911
(C) 1912
(D) 1913

3. Who had translated this poem from Bengali to English?

- (A) W. B. Yeats
(B) William Rothenstein
(C) Rabindranath Tagore
(D) Abanindranath Tagore

4. In which book does this poem appear?

- (A) Sanchayita
(B) Natyosashtra
(C) Gitanjali
(D) Galpoguchha

5. What is the main essence of the poem?

- (A) Devotional
(B) Spiritual
(C) Cultural
(D) Inspirational

6. What is the primary wish of the poet in this poem?

- (A) to distinguish between fearless citizens and coward citizens of India
(B) to encourage the spirit of fearlessness in the minds of the citizens of India
(C) to wake up with a happy holiday mode
(D) to expel the British rulers from India

7. Why does the poet wish to encourage his countrymen into a spirit of positivity?

- (A) Under the British rule the moral of Indian citizens was going down
(B) The freedom fighting movements in India needed psychological support
(C) All of the above
(D) None of the above

- 8. What was the actual state of Indian people at the time of the composition of this poem?**
- (A) Scattered protests in the form of freedom fighting movements were taking place
 - (B) People in some places were not courageous enough to protest against the British colonial forces
 - (C) Some parts of India were indulging more and more into slavery under the British domination
 - (D) All of the above
- 9. Although set against a particular context of India's state of slavery, this poem has its universal appeal too, because**
- (A) The faculty of inspiring a nation is always relevant
 - (B) Rabindranath Tagore was a renowned poet throughout the world
 - (C) The treacherous acts of British colonialism was universally known to everyone
 - (D) None of the above
- 10. What was the role played by Rabindranath Tagore in patriotic movements?**
- (A) He had mainly focused on his writing career and was in good relation with the British authorities
 - (B) He had secretly supported the Indian patriotic movements with financial and informative resources
 - (C) He had thoroughly hated the British authorities
 - (D) He had relentlessly worked on composing texts to boost the spirit of patriotic movements from its very core
- 11. What is the meaning of the first line of the poem 'Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high'?**
- (A) To feel taller
 - (B) To feel charged up with fearlessness
 - (C) To be able to give a strong fight
 - (D) To be able to see a long distance
- 12. What is the significance of this first line?**
- (A) To drive away all elements of fear
 - (B) To induce self confidence
 - (C) To have conviction enough to stand straight
 - (D) All of the above

13. Why does the first line of the poem start with an adverb 'where'?

- (A) It is a wish of the poet to see his country in that domain
- (B) The poet is unaware about the location of his desired state
- (C) The poet is asking his readers about where the place is
- (D) The poet is searching for the secrets of fearlessness

14. What is meant by 'knowledge is free'?

- (A) There should not be any obstruction in attaining knowledge
- (B) Education should be made free for all
- (C) Knowledge has to be freed from British colonialism
- (D) It is an appeal for women education

15. What is the effect of the combination of knowledge and fearlessness?

- (A) As per the wish of the poet this combination can make all Indians happy
- (B) As per the wish of the poet this combination can earn fame and glory
- (C) The poet wishes that his countrymen should excel in all fields of knowledge fearlessly
- (D) As per the wish of the poet this combination is the very basic to start dreaming about an independent nation

16. What idea of the poem can be obtained from the first two lines?

- (A) The poet is dreaming about an impossible situation
- (B) The poet wants us to take a virtual tour to a world of positivity
- (C) The poet wants his readers to be a part of his dream and try to make it come true
- (D) The poet wants to make a list of happy imaginations

17. What is the possible interpretation of 'narrow domestic walls'?

- (A) It refers to various conservative mind sets of Indian society
- (B) It refers to the narrow boundary walls built by Indian citizen around their properties
- (C) It refers to the restrictions imposed upon us by the British power
- (D) None of the above

18. What do these 'narrow domestic walls' restrict?

- (A) Joining of the fragments of the broken up world
- (B) Free thinking and sense of unity
- (C) Free flow of air in the locality
- (D) Proper constructions works

19. What is the implication of the fragments that the world has been broken into?

- (A) It refers to the land mass and the islands scattered all around the world
- (B) It refers to the broken fragments of Indian civilisation in the hands of British forces
- (C) It refers to small pieces of land being separated by boundary walls
- (D) It refers to the overall human value and the progressive pace of human civilisation of the world as a whole

20. What is the 'narrow domestic walls' made with?

- (A) Brick and mud
- (B) Wood and mud
- (C) Social division of caste, class, race etc
- (D) Excess of education

21. Why are the walls mentioned as 'domestic'?

- (A) It is not an international affair
- (B) It relates to internal modes of man-made distinction in our society
- (C) They have domesticated some animals behind the walls
- (D) It talks about domestic affairs

22. Why are domestic walls mentioned as 'narrow'?

- (A) It signifies the narrow-mindedness of modern Indian society
- (B) It is constructed in very narrow lanes in the community
- (C) The raw material for this wall is made with narrow elements,
- (D) The domestic space is very narrow

23. In which way are the fragments of the broken world hostile to the growth of the nation?

- (A) Production of adhesive material was not adequate during that time
- (B) It would take a long time to join all the broken fragments of the world
- (C) Once the world is broken into pieces, it cannot be joined
- (D) The metaphorical meaning of the fragments is basic human value; it always needs to remain intact

24. What is meant by the 'depths of truth'?

- (A) A deep cellar in the ground to preserve vintage wine
- (B) The inner honest self of everyman
- (C) The depth of forest in India
- (D) A deep well in Rajasthan

25. Why does the word need to come out from the 'depths of truth'?

- (A) It would be the purest of hearts in that case
- (B) It would be fresh and ready to cook
- (C) It is a poetic expression; it does not have any direct relevance to the context
- (D) The words would be protected by the depth

26. What is the metaphorical implication of the phrase 'head is held high'?

- (A) The matter of being proud
- (B) The matter of being knowledgeable and therefore confident but humble
- (C) Showcasing of arrogance
- (D) Feeling taller among a group of shorter races

27. What is the normal relationship of words with truth?

- (A) They are very close to each other
- (B) They are commonly very far from each other
- (C) Words donot need any effect of truth for its function
- (D) The relationship is very relative

28. Is it that we generally donot attain perfection in our endeavour?

- (A) Perhaps yes, our relentless efforts do seldom pay us back
- (B) Perfection has to be attained by hard work and dedication
- (C) When we strive for something we become dependent
- (D) We always attain perfection with tireless striving

29. Why is reason compared to a 'clear stream'?

- (A) Reason is generated in the mountain regions
- (B) 'Clear stream' has become polluted in the cities
- (C) Reason has its motion as free and as beautiful as that of a 'clear stream'
- (D) Reason is generally drowned in stream water

- 30. Find a beautiful figure of speech in line no. 8 (Into the dreary desert sand of dead habit).**
- (A) The figure of a dead man in the desert is implied here
 - (B) Since habit is dead, there is very less chance of speech being alive
 - (C) It is a picture of negativity
 - (D) Alliteration
- 31. What does the phrase 'dead habit' express?**
- (A) Lost habit
 - (B) A habit of no use
 - (C) A well accepted habit which has become a practice
 - (D) The habit of seeing mirage in the deserts
- 32. Find an appropriate figure of speech from the phrase 'the clear stream of reason'.**
- (A) Transferred epithet,
 - (B) Irony,
 - (C) Personification,
 - (D) Metaphor.
- 33. What is the meaning of stretching arms by the tireless striving?**
- (A) It is a use of personification; signifying the goal towards perfection
 - (B) It is an act of relaxing the body after waking up from sleep
 - (C) It is trying to touch the object of perfection by stretching its arms
 - (D) Those who work tirelessly get so exhausted that they ask for help by stretching their arms
- 34. Is it possible in any way for the stream to lose its way?**
- (A) It is never possible
 - (B) In the mountain landscape a stream can easily lose its way
 - (C) The stream of reason can lose its way if it lacks inspiration and guidance
 - (D) As long as there is water supply in the stream it would find some or the other way for sure
- 35. What will happen if the stream loses its way in the desert?**
- (A) It will have to wait for any local person for guidance
 - (B) It will dry up by the effect of sand
 - (C) It will form an oasis
 - (D) The stream of reason will not be able to drive the nation towards a brighter day

36. How can reason be compared to stream?

- (A) Reason is soluble in stream water
- (B) It is a metaphorical use particularly respecting the dynamic emotion of the both
- (C) Reason is generally produced in the mountains and then flow with the stream to the plains
- (D) None of the above

37. Who is referred to as 'thee' in the 9th line "Where the mind is led forward by thee"?

- (A) William Shakespeare
- (B) John Keats
- (C) Jesus Christ
- (D) The Almighty God who resides within us

38. Why should our mind be 'led forward by thee'?

- (A) We cannot trust any other person as guide
- (B) Finding a proper guide is very expensive these days
- (C) This is a blend of European and Indian addressing and hence we can be better enlightened
- (D) None of the above

39. Throughout the first 9 lines in the poem, there is ample use of the word 'where'. It talks about the poet's utopian imagination of a land of happiness because

- (A) The contemporary world needed a vision of such utopian world
- (B) It is always a style in poetry to fly with fancy
- (C) The poet wanted to upgrade his lifestyle
- (D) The poet is not sure if such place ever existed; hence the interrogations through 'where'

40. What is the conclusion of the poet's repeated urge for a world of all good things?

- (A) It should be a world of fearlessness and truth
- (B) It should be a world of morality and wise judgment
- (C) It should be led by the inner wisdom of purest hearts
- (D) All of the above

41. What is meant by the phrase 'ever-widening thought and action'?
- (A) Thought and action that is very wide
 - (B) Thought and action that is very scattered
 - (C) Thought and action widely spreading
 - (D) Thought and action as limitless as the universe
42. To which place does the poet address as 'heaven' in the last line of this poem?
- (A) A place where all the dreams of the poet can meet
 - (B) A place where the poet can frequently travel to
 - (C) A place which is as beautiful as the heaven
 - (D) The real Heaven where we all wake up after completing our mortal journey of life in this world
43. Who is addressed as the 'Father' in the last line of this poem?
- (A) Abanindranath Tagore
 - (B) Prince Dwarkanath Tagore
 - (C) The Almighty God
 - (D) None of the above
44. Why does the poet want his nation to wake?
- (A) His nation has fallen asleep
 - (B) His nation lacks the spirit to wake up
 - (C) His nation is suffering from insomnia
 - (D) His nation is going through a hard time and lacks proper inspiration
45. What is the poet's wish behind his country's waking up?
- (A) His country should not sleep any longer since it has already become morning
 - (B) His country should find the proper inspiration through his poem into a new awakening
 - (C) His country should prepare for the rejoicing of its independence in coming future
 - (D) His country should not miss the happy moments that the poet has drawn through this poem
46. Which is the serial number of this poem in *Gitanjali*?
- (A) 39
 - (B) 40
 - (C) 35
 - (D) 36

47. The poet wishes his country to wake up into the heaven. Where could be the heaven located?

- (A) The entire India itself
- (B) In the mind
- (C) Above the sky
- (D) The Garden of Eden

48. How can the poem help the country to wake up?

- (A) The poem can inspire the countrymen to grow strong from their within and up a nation to feel proud about
- (B) The poem can encourage spirit of patriotism in the fellow countrymen so that they can obtain independence from their slavery under the British colonizers
- (C) Both (A) and (B)
- (D) Either (A) or (B)

49. Can mere inspiring words induce fearlessness in someone?

- (A) If one has the interest to receive encouragement, poetry can surely do magic
- (B) Poetry is generally made to use hyperbolic imaginations, but not all of them are useful
- (C) Mere inspiring words are not enough to make someone fearless
- (D) Poetic insights are capable to work effectively if the poet explains them properly to the readers

50. How does the poet wish his countrymen to be benefitted by this poem?

- (A) This poem would teach strategies of rebellion
- (B) This poem would train the mind of the countrymen
- (C) This poem would drive away the British forces
- (D) This poem would create a parallel world of happiness for the countrymen

51. "Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high". The poet is referring to which particular place by 'where'?

- (A) India
- (B) A fearless country outside India
- (C) Bengal
- (D) It refers to a state of mind of the people of India

- 52.** To what kind of fear does the first line of the poem refer?
- (A) Fear of lack of wisdom and confidence
 - (B) Fear of ghosts
 - (C) Fear of insects
 - (D) All of the above
- 53.** What is the metaphorical meaning of 'head is held high'?
- (A) The head of a tall person
 - (B) A person with wisdom and conviction
 - (C) The persons holding high position in society
 - (D) The poets and teachers of the society
- 54.** Find out the figure of speech used in the phrase 'head is held high'.
- (A) Alliteration
 - (B) Symbol
 - (C) Metonymy
 - (D) All of the above
- 55.** The poet seeks for knowledge to become free. In which way is it bound?
- (A) By increasing amount of superstition
 - (B) By despicable condition of literacy
 - (C) By the effects of politics that promotes religion over literacy
 - (D) All of the above
- 56.** What is the meaning of the breaking of the world in the third line of the poem?
- (A) Distribution of different countries
 - (B) Distribution of different continents
 - (C) All of the above
 - (D) None of the above
- 57.** According to the poet what should not be broken into fragments?
- (A) The world
 - (B) The nation
 - (C) The community
 - (D) The country
- 58.** The walls which break the world into fragments are _____.
- (A) Shallow
 - (B) Narrow
 - (C) Dark
 - (D) Harsh

- 59. According to the poet where should the words come out from?**
- (A) The depth of consciousness (B) The depth of awareness
(C) The depth of knowledge (D) The depth of truth
- 60. What is the speciality of the words that come from the depth of truth?**
- (A) It is mixed with the power of conviction and wisdom
(B) It is mixed with the power of leadership and team-spirit
(C) All of the above,
(D) None of the above
- 61. What is the quality of human striving according to the poem?**
- (A) It is impatient (B) It is determined
(C) It is tireless (D) It is continuous
- 62. What does the tireless striving do?**
- (A) It takes one to the path of success
(B) It makes one happy and contented
(C) It anticipates a justified outcome of the effort
(D) It stretches its arms towards perfection
- 63. As per the poem reason flows through _____.**
- (A) Logical action
(B) Clear stream
(C) Cause and effect relationship
(D) Psychology of the speaker
- 64. What should the clear stream of reason not do?**
- (A) It should not lose its way
(B) It should not encourage many persons
(C) It should not flow down ward
(D) It should not evaporate
- 65. Where is the clear stream of reason feared to lose its way?**
- (A) In the forest of illiteracy
(B) In the ocean of ignorance
(C) In the mountain of illogicality
(D) In the dreary desert sand of dead habit

66. How would the mind reach the ever widening thought and action?

- (A) Following the inspiration of the poem
- (B) Being led forward by the almighty
- (C) By being fearless
- (D) By following the clear stream of reason

67. Where is the country of the poet expected to wake up?

- (A) Into a new morning
- (B) Into a world of wish fulfillment
- (C) Into a heaven of freedom
- (D) Into a world of fearlessness

68. What is the main identity of the heaven of the poet's dream?

- (A) It is full of fearlessness
- (B) It is full of freedom
- (C) It is vibrant with the flow of reason
- (D) It is ever widening

Answer

1. (B)	2. (C)	3. (C)	4. (C)	5. (D)	6. (B)	7. (C)	8. (D)	9. (A)	10. (D)
11. (B)	12. (D)	13. (A)	14. (A)	15. (D)	16. (C)	17. (A)	18. (B)	19. (D)	20. (C)
21. (B)	22. (A)	23. (D)	24. (B)	25. (A)	26. (B)	27. (D)	28. (A)	29. (C)	30. (D)
31. (C)	32. (D)	33. (A)	34. (C)	35. (D)	36. (B)	37. (D)	38. (D)	39. (A)	40. (D)
41. (D)	42. (A)	43. (C)	44. (D)	45. (B)	46. (C)	47. (A)	48. (C)	49. (A)	50. (B)
51. (D)	52. (A)	53. (B)	54. (D)	55. (D)	56. (D)	57. (A)	58. (B)	59. (D)	60. (A)
61. (C)	62. (D)	63. (B)	64. (A)	65. (D)	66. (B)	67. (C)	68. (B)		