

## A reflection of Rabindrabhabnai SriMadbhagavadgita and Tagore's Gitanjali

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### Abstract

*In Rabindranath Tagore's family, the Upanishads and Bhagavadgita were influential in forming their religion and life philosophy. Tagore's worldview revolves around the human being, their potential, and how it might be realised. Philosophical anthropology deals with these issues. Tagore's conception of the world is both creative and evolutionary. He applies scientific models while attributing evolution to God's powers. Tagore's God is a monotheistic personal God, and brahman is existence, consciousness, bliss, supreme reality, and All. Many of his writings contain references to the Bhagavadgita's central themes, conveying profound messages. Gitanjali was one of his influential writings, and it was awarded the Nobel Prize in literature. A compilation of religious songs that speak of God and the human soul, God and nature, and the relationship between nature and the human soul. The poem stands on its own and is influenced by ideas from the Upanishadic school of thought. This poem emphasises the universal reality that human life is God's most precious gift to the man on this planet and that man's duty on this planet is to make good use of that gift to the greatest extent possible. The poet longs for the merger of the celestial bodies.*

*This article aims to examine how Tagore's writings are affected by Sanatan Dharmic literature such as the Upanishads and the Bhagavadgita, as well as other religious texts. At the same time, Nityananda Chakravorty wrote a book titled Rabindrabhabnai Srimadbhagavadgita, which he used as a springboard for reflection. Jonantik, a publishing house based in Dhaka, Bangladesh, is responsible for the publication.*

*The main focus of this study is based on a review of the book and the discovery of linkages between the Gitanjali and the Bhagavadgita and other sources. Given that this is the first review of the book, it has high originality.*

### Keywords

Rabindranath  
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Gitanjali,  
Srimadbhagavadgita,  
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### Introduction and background

I can't recall the last time I grabbed a book and read it in Bengali that was entertaining and intellectually intriguing. Even though I continue to read books in Bengali, my reading is restricted to a specific genre and, of course, literature related to my career. As an educator, I regularly read because it is essential to my job. When it comes to expanding with confidence, professional reading is a must. Such reading can also be used for professional development, broadening our knowledge and skill base to improve our classroom methods. It appears that people are no longer interested in serious reading these days. The quality of life is becoming increasingly shallow. When it comes to achieving anything complicated, people appear reluctant or uninterested in attempting it. It becomes easy to be convoluted for many people, while it gets difficult to be straightforward. The idea for this brief review essay was a

book titled "Rabindrabhabnai SriMadbhagavadgita," which was recently published. This review's fundamental purpose is to grasp better the connection between Tagore's writing, notably Gitanjali, and the Bhagavadgita's central ideas. In addition, explore how Nityananda Chakravorty contrasted the Upanishad-based philosophical and spiritual notions of Gita with those expressed in Tagore's mammoth literary masterpieces, as well as the ramifications of this comparison.

### **Importance of reading**

We all need to read books to nourish our minds in the same way we nourish our bodies daily. To become more agile and healthy, our perception, thoughts, memory, determination, emotions, happiness, imagination, and sensory consciousness require adequate nutrition to function correctly. Books are nutritious for our mental well-being. When done with pleasure and interest, good literature can help one achieve better health and well-being while also assisting in the development of stronger social connections and interpersonal interactions. Books may be a tremendous source of friendship and camaraderie. Some days I am depressed when I observe people who are not interested in reading books but who are content to waste their valuable time on pointless activities instead. The presence of books in the house is always connected with increased reading delight and self-confidence in the reader. McGrane et al. published a report in 2017 titled 'progress in international reading literacy study: National report for England', which summarised their findings. According to the results, 32 per cent of youngsters are confident readers. However, 42 per cent claimed that they do not read books regularly when there are fewer than ten books in their households to choose from. Children who have 200 books in their families, on the other hand, have a different set of numbers. In a subsequent study, 73 per cent of youngsters claimed that they are confident readers, with only a tiny minority (12 per cent) stating that they do not enjoy reading at all. As a result, reading books can help us better understand ourselves and others and boost our empathy, self-esteem, and positive attitudes.

Reading for pleasure, a more prevalent word in England than elsewhere refers to any material's volitional, choice-driven reading. Often referred to as 'free voluntary' or 'independent reading' in the United States (Krashen, 2004) and recreational reading' in Canada (Ross, McKechnie, and Rothbauer, 2006), this type of reading is carried out at the reader's leisure. A study conducted by Ross, McKechnie, and Rothbauer (2006) uses extensive data to demonstrate the importance of reading in children, adolescents, and adults' lives. Their study found that reading helps us all discover who we are. Their book on "Reading Matters" provides a historical overview of reading and various perspectives on the act of reading. Their study analyses the impact reading has on people's lives from childhood through adulthood. The study also analyses why people read and provides statistics to back up its findings.

### **Tagore's Gitanjali**

During my time in university, I used to read a lot. In Russia, I pursued a degree in physics. In Moscow in August of 1988, I vividly recall it being the most peaceful morning of the year. I visited the Progress Publisher iconic bookshop, located in Park Kultura, one of Moscow's grandest and busiest metro stations, which was created by Igor Rozhin in 1950 and is one of the city's most important cities popular tourist destinations. The Luzhniki Stadium, which the same architect designs. In the early 1990s, I also had the opportunity to visit this location. I was delighted and excited when I discovered a book published in Bengali in a foreign nation for the first time, and I instantly pulled it from the shelf. Rabindranath Tagore's Gitanjali (Garland of Songs) was the first Asian Noble laureate (1861-1941), a small volume of 103 poems. Gitanjali was initially published in 1913 with 157 poems, which was the first edition.

On the other hand, Gitanjali in English is a collection of 103 pieces of poetry. From the deepest part of his (Tagore's) heart, these poems are written, and they demonstrate a real commitment to God, as well as a universal message of harmony, toleration, beauty, and relationship. In Tagore's mesmerising melodies

and poems, we find life's summons for inner purification, salvation, and mental endowment. The book brought me great joy and calm as I read it, but I must say that I did not comprehend the actual meaning of all of the poetry when I was younger and just starting at university. I was a first-year University student at that time.

The English of Tagore, "Gitanjali" As he was preparing to embark on a journey to London, Tagore decided to "lighten his workload" by translating Gitanjali into English. (R. Tagore, Gitanjali, Song Offerings). The Preface to Bengali Gitanjali contains the following statement by Tagore: "A few of the poems in this book have previously appeared in a few publications." However, in the belief that the poems that have been written since then within short periods have a common theme that binds them together, they have all been published in this volume." Gitanjali served as the vessel for Tagore's resurrected life, presenting it to a heroic Heart – someone who appears in his poems as temperance amid ostentation, patience amid pain, and fearlessness amid the unknown. Tagore notices a pattern in this larger existence, and that pattern is the ability to recognise very clearly that life does not come crashing down when faced with reversals. In his poetry, Tagore [4] speaks of grit in sorrow, fearlessness in danger, stubbornness in hopelessness, love in despair calmness in distress.

In looking back and digging deeper into the Gita, we find parallels with Tagore's thinking, as the Bhagavad Gita also alludes to a standard over a mourning heart, the standard that He builds and which Krishna, his avatar, superimposes over Arjuna, as well as with Tagore's thoughts. It is stated in the Bhagavad Gita that to be dissolved into doubts during a crisis is not the way of the True, who have experienced trouble and its resolution in the oneness with the eternal soul, who is always calm, unmoved, in temporal, unstressed, and untouched by the senses [Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 2, Verse 24].

अच्छेद्योऽयमदाह्योऽयमक्लेद्योऽशोष्य एव च ।  
नित्यः सर्वगतः स्थाणुरचलोऽयं सनातनः ॥ 24 ॥

*A person's soul is impenetrable and incombustible; it cannot be dampened or dried in any way. It is unalterable, unchangeable, and fundamental, and it exists in all locations and at all times.*

[Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 2, Verse 28] Man is initially inexpressible, then expressed, and finally inexpressible at the end of his life. Furthermore, the Bhagavad Gita explains that a "dutiful Kshatriya" is one who throws himself in for the protection of justice, oneself, society, nation, and the subjects fighting wars on the balance of just against unjust; and that the "standard" to the "dutiful Kshatriya" throws himself in for the protection of justice, oneself, society, nation, and the subjects fighting wars on the. As a result, any refusal to carry out one's responsibilities is regarded as a disgrace for a Kshatriya.

अव्यक्तादीनि भूतानि व्यक्तमध्यानि भारत ।  
अव्यक्तनिधनान्येव तत्र का परिदेवना ॥ 28 ॥

*To you, O Bharat, all created beings are unmanifest before birth, manifest during life, and unmanifest once again after death, according to the Vedas. So, what's the point of being sad?*

In their simplicity and religiousness, Gitanjali's poems demonstrate a sound relationship between the poet and his divine and devout search, culminating in his soul's mystical realisation. Tagore thinks that the human body is the temple of God and that it must be maintained in its purity. As a religious expression of Cosmogony and Devotional Quest, Gitanjali is a spiritual quest that reflects God's finite love and humanity's deep compassion for all things lovely in their various facets. As a result, Gitanjali's works are concerned with the relationship between man and God and express thanks to the Supreme God for the

immortal gifts to humanity. The entire experience must be provided and transplanted from one mind to another to be effective.

As a result, Tagore believes that God cannot be comprehended by reasoning and reason but rather that His existence can be felt within and realised within. He can sense the touch of the Infinite, yet he is unable to comprehend the Infinite.

**चञ्चलं हि मनः कृष्ण प्रमाथि बलवद्दृढम् ।  
तस्याहं निग्रहं मन्ये वायोरिव सुदुष्करम् ॥ 34 ॥**

"The mind is very restless, turbulent, strong and obstinate, O Krishna. It appears to me that it is more difficult to control than the wind" (The Bhagavad Gita, 6: 34)

They found calm and strength in Tagore's Gitanjali. A great introduction to Gitanjali was penned by W. B. Yeats back in 1912. Gitanjali's poet Yeats remarked that the poems' thoughts "show in their thought a world I've dreamed of all my life long.

Despite their high craftsmanship, they look to be as commonplace as grass and rushes" (2010, p. 19). Krishna Kripalini, Tagore's biographer, writes that the death of his wife and two of his children shifted him toward mysticism and spiritualism, and his anguish drove him to seek a higher form of love (1962, p. 209). Thus, the text of Gitanjali, which won him the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913, was born out of his sorrow.

### **Rabindranath Tagore and Bhagavadgita**

Only a few years ago, I re-started rereading the Bhagavad Gita, not by chance, but by rediscovering the various spiritual, religious, and scientific avenues and the philosophical underpinnings that this holy book of Hinduism has to offer. The more I read this book, the more I learn and advance in my knowledge. I feel more serene and secure, and at the same time, I can rid myself of all of the negativity and illusions that have accumulated in my mind. Reading such a book regularly and methodically helps purify one's mind and soul. Reading provides you with the power and bravery to tackle all of life's uncertainties and adversities head-on. Successfulness, advancement, and prosperity are the outcomes of reading such a noble, holy book with interest. It also helps me have a calm and optimistic attitude throughout the day. I believe that the Bhagavad Gita – the source of all Vedic scriptures and philosophy – is the life manual for everyone, the world's constitution, the father of all philosophies, the mother of all solutions to problems, the accumulating of many ponds of thought, and the most beautiful thing in our brain.

Through Mahatma Gandhi's (1869-1948) genuine reflection on the text, we can gain a comprehensive understanding of gravity and metaphysical enormity. Gandhi (2017) asserted, "When doubts stalk me when disappointments stare me in the face, and when there isn't a light of hope in sight, I turn to the Bhagavad Gita and find a passage to comfort me, and I immediately begin to smile in the midst of tremendous grief."

It is appropriate for me to quote Albert Einstein (1931), who said, "This is a wholly human vision of the cosmos." It is a global term. A visit to Albert Einstein's house near Berlin on 14th July 1930, while Tagore was on tour to Germany, resulted in an excellent conversation with Einstein about the essence of reality. This dialogue is featured in the January 1931 issue of Modern Review, which is published later in the year. According to Einstein's viewpoint, "when our universe is in harmony with man, the eternal, we know it as truth, we experience it as beauty," aligned with Tagore's conviction.

Furthermore, he argued that "There can be no other notion, for the world is a human world – the scientific view of it is likewise the scientific man's view of the world." Therefore, there is no such thing as a

world apart from us." Tagore's understanding of life is founded on the facts of life. When faced with a reversal, one's life does not come to a grinding halt. Fearlessness in the face of danger or the unknown, stubbornness in the face of hopelessness, love in the face of despair, and calmness in the face of death. These traits perceived as the universal mind by Tagore have a special connection to the Bhagavad Gita's essential dispositions. Anyone who digs more into the Bhagavad Gita will discover numerous parallels to Tagore's ideas, which are worth exploring further.

Rabindranath Tagore was an extraordinary thinker and the embodiment of humanity. He was a philosopher, poet, patriot, painter, and humanist who inspired three national anthems and was the first non-European to win the Nobel Prize for Literature. He was also a critical exponent of the Bengali renaissance. What role did the great epic play in influencing the later portion of his life, thinking, and writing is still debated? Finding some of the most critical parts of human reality in the deep oceanic waves of the Bhagavad Gita and connecting them with the writings of Tagore is not an easy undertaking. Rabindranath Tagore is the first Indian poet to acquire international literary recognition for his English Gitanjali. It's a timeless piece. The poetry is his soul's voice. It is a collection of religious songs that largely deal with God and the human soul, God and nature, and nature and the soul. The poem is self-contained and influenced by Upanishadic ideas. This poem expresses the universal reality that human life is God's most precious gift to the man on earth and that man's purpose is to use it well. The poet longs for divine oneness. In the absence of the divine, he is agitated. He longs to commune with his creator and praise Him. He sees the world's labour as a never-ending struggle amid the vast sea of life. Tagore is undeniably a devotional poet, and Gitanjali is his finest work. Gitanjali is a new soul song.

### **Rabindrabhabnai Bhagavad Gita: A critical Reflection**

Rabindrabhabnai Bhagavad Gita is the book that provides an intriguing account of intellectually most compelling insight that helps us to think fast and slow. The book is written by one of the greatest minds and prominent personalities from Bangladesh, Mr Nitya Nanda Chakraborty. He is a great orator, poet, writer, international speaker, and thinker who published extensively, including his intellectually stimulating books SriMadbhagvadgita, Sanatani Galpo, Amar Chelebela and Budoyonto Poromprom. His intellectual contributions are highly appreciated on both sides of the Atlantic, especially among Bengalis. Recently Bangladesh Government, under the Ministry of Religion, has published 30,000 copies of the SriMadbhagvadgita book to distribute to various educational institutions across the country. A great testimony of his contribution to society.

Rabindrabhabnai Bhagavadgita is his latest book. An excellent treaty, based on the reflection of Gita's philosophy in Tagore's writings and written in an elegant style that combines a writer's flair of mood description and brilliantly researched accounts. The author gives us a richly and fluently documented study. All chapters are well-grounded in novelty and the power of connectivity. It is a brilliant book of examination with a mind of curiosity. I read this book twice within a space of one month. Each chapter, words, lines, and sentence are mesmerising and stimulate our thought process. This is, therefore, a book that both commands and deserves our attention. In this book, Mr Chakraborty proved him a trustworthy researcher who confidently investigates, analyses, and interprets phenomena or events/alliances between variables. Actual researchers do not speculate, and there is no room for speculation. While fabrication and supposition are the norms for some researchers, those with method and integrity will always set to the task of bringing the truth and testing evidence. The shreds of evidence and relevant sources support discussions and arguments in every chapter.

This impressive and intellectually stimulating booklets readers think unconventionally and reflect upon some of the most salient snippets of Bhagavad Gita's core philosophical messages in Tagore's thoughts through his writings (especially poems and songs). The book comprises 12 chapters with 175

pages. The book is further enriched with an intuitive foreword by Amiya Mukherjee, President-Aurobindo Centre, Dhaka and an insightful well-written introduction that sets the book's rationale. The book ends with an evaluative and reflective conclusion (chapter 12). The chapters are based on common themes that are found in both Bhagavad Gita and various writings of Tagore. The recurrent thread throughout the book focuses on Souls and their immortality, Peace of mind and human life, devotion, God-Maya-Nature, the religion of man, the caste system, egoism, Karma yoga, any incarnation for the establishment of religion/Dharma.

This book by Mr Chakravorty is a most measured, researched, and robust analysis of some of the most salient aspects of Gita in Tagore's writings; I am confident that the insightful and critical analysis will provide readers with a lot of food for thought. The author very intelligently has unveiled the wealth of spiritual wisdom of Gita that are coherently incorporated in various writings of Tagore. The book seems well-edited and relevant sources are applied adequately to support discussions and arguments. While some of the terminologies are difficult to understand for layman's, these are appropriate as the intended audiences are very knowledgeable. The choice of words and framing of the lines and sentences are very consistent and balanced to provide a reading flow. The concepts such as devotion (Ch. 3), the religion of man: Gita & Rabindranath (Ch. 5), the birth of religion (Ch. 6), Karmayoga (ch.10), the establishment of religion (ch.11) all are well explained and connected within the context of the subject.

After an extended period, I had the great opportunity to read the vividly written and exhaustively researched book in Bengali. Anyone is looking for eudaimonic happiness, inner peace and tranquillity of reading books that enhance one's knowledge and insight on Tagore's thinking in alignment with the critical messages of Bhagavadgita must read this book.

## Conclusion

Mr Nityananda Chakravorty of Bangladesh wrote the book "Rabindrabhabanay Srimadbhagabadgita," which was published by a renowned publisher, "Yanantik," and it was an extraordinary treatise on the assimilation of Upanishad-based philosophical and spiritual concepts of Gita with those expressed in Tagore's monumental literary creations. The book's content is divided into 11 topics that appear in Gita's 18 chapters and Tagore's literature and have been related. The immortality of the soul, peace, Bhakti, God-Maya-Nature, man's religion, the development of Divine Realisation, the Yajnas, the Four Castes, egoism, Karma yoga, and God's incarnation for the foundation of Dharma are all covered. In Chapter 12, the author summarises the results of his extensive research. The book focuses on how Tagore's songs and poems resonated with Gita's magnificent and nuanced hymns.

Mr Chakravorty provides us with a well-documented study and easy to read. Every chapter contains a unique factual element and the ability to connect with other chapters – a fantastic book of examinations. We are drawn into each chapter by the words, lines, and sentences, which captivate us and engage our cognitive process. An elegant style is used to blend the writer's flair for mood, description, and meticulous research to create literary art. Because of this, this is a book that commands and merits our consideration.

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