

Gitanjali (NO. 50)
Rabindranath Tagore

**I had gone a-begging from door to door in the village path,
when thy golden chariot appeared in the distance
like a gorgeous dream and I wondered
who was this King of all kings!**

**My hopes rose high and methought
my evil days were at an end,
and I stood waiting for alms to be given unasked
and for wealth scattered on all sides in the dust.**

**The chariot stopped where I stood.
Thy glance fell on me
and thou camest down with a smile.
I felt that the luck of my life had come at last.
Then of a sudden thou didst hold out thy right hand
and say `What hast thou to give to me?'**

**Ah, what a kingly jest was it
to open thy palm to a beggar to beg!
I was confused and stood undecided,
and then from my wallet I slowly took out
the least little grain of corn
and gave it to thee.**

**But how great my surprise when at the day's end
I emptied my bag on the floor to find
a least little gram of gold among the poor heap.
I bitterly wept and wished
that I had had the heart to give thee my all.**

Analysis

Through a parable Tagore's *Gitanjali* (NO. 50) conveys to us an idea of the value of charity, love and sacrifice- a spiritual message. God, disguised as a raj beggar, asked for alms from the poet beggar who had himself been going about, asking for alms because he himself had felt the pangs of poverty. Being in no position to give any alms, the poet beggar produced a single grain of corn from his alms bag and gave it to the king of kings. On going home, the poet beggar felt amazed to find a piece of gold in his bag.

The beggar referred to in the poem, *Gitanjali* (NO.50) is none but the poet himself as well as everyman. One day he was begging from door to door in the village path or it might be the endless wondering of humanity in the wasteland of modernity where there is no hope, no love or no sympathy. En route something unusual happened. There appeared at a distance a

golden chariot that made everything bright with its golden hues. The chariot seemed to the poet to be a gorgeous dream —dream of pomp and splendour. The poet thought in wonder who this king of kings was. The “king of kings” referred to in the poem is God, who is the supreme ruler of the universe.

Seeing the golden chariot, the poet became hopeful. His hopes rose limping high. He thought that the king of all kings would give him unlimited wealth as alms and the days of his misery would come to an end. So he stood waiting with eager expectations for the chariot to come near him and for plenty of precious alms to be scattered in the dust.

The chariot came and stopped where the poet stood waiting for the king of kings to come and give him alms. The king’s glance fell on him and he came down from the chariot with a smile. The poet now felt that the luck of his life had come at last. palm to a beggar to beg? In fact, he is the raj beggar in this waste land where he earnestly solicit love, compassion and faith from his fellow subjects, human being. But the world is stuck in the mud of materialism, and spiritualism is altogether missing. However, the poet beggar was utterly confused and stood undecided. After a while he came back to his senses from his confused state of mind. He slowly took out from his wallet the least little grain of corn and gave it to the king of kings. The word ‘slowly’ used in the poem suggests the poet’s reluctance to give alms to the king. It also reveals his miserliness. Again, the expression “least little grain” shows how miserly the poet beggar was.

At the day’s end the poet-beggar returned home and emptied his bag on the floor to see what he had collected on that day. His surprise knew no bounds when he found that there was a little grain of gold among the poor heap of alms. He now understood that the king of kings was God Himself and the little piece of gold was given by him. He also understood that this gold had great spiritual value, because it was an embodiment of God’s blessing on him. The poet bitterly wept because he gave the king of kings only a little grain of corn. He realized that if he gave Him his all, he would receive much more. He thus lost a great opportunity to surrender himself to God or the lord of life ; and by doing this he could be elevated to a higher spiritual plane from a lower material one. So he said with great regret “I had had the heart to give thee my all.” He then realized that the beggar was no other than God Himself in disguise. Thus the poet beggar had been rewarded by God for the act of charity which the poet had done despite his own materialistic penury. In a nutshell, it is an interesting poem which tells a neat little story conveying a precious spiritual message.