

**Hirachand Nemchand College of Commerce, Solapur**

**B.Com I (Sem I)**

**English Compulsory  
(English for Communication)**

**Poetry Section**

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**Let me not pray to be sheltered from dangers**

Rabindranath Tagore

**About the poem:**

The poem, written by Rabindranath Tagore, is an extract from the prayer “THE GRASP OF YOUR HAND” taken from his collections of prayers titled The Heart of God. In this poem Tagore/ the speaker prays God to bless him with qualities of strength, patience and courage to face the problems, pain and dangers of life. He does not want God to shelter or protect him at times of difficulties but instead He wants God to instill qualities in him to conquer the battle of life fearlessly. However, he prays for the mercy and support of God and at all times in life He prays God to show him the right way when ever he goes wrong and in times of failure.

**The poem:**

Let me not pray to be sheltered from dangers  
but to be fearless in facing them.  
Let me not beg for the stilling of my pain  
but for the heart to conquer it.  
Let me not look for allies in life's battlefield  
but to my own strength.  
Let me not crave in anxious fear to be saved  
but hope for the patience to win my freedom.  
Grant that I may not be a coward,  
feeling Your mercy in my success alone;  
But let me find the grasp of Your hand in my failure

**Explanation:**

The poet/speaker prays and tells God to give him courage to face problems and dangers and not run away from them. He wants God to make him fearless and not to protect or shelter him from dangers in life. In short, man must have the courage to face problems fearlessly, and not run away from problems.

He wants his heart to conquer pain rather than praying God to help to reduce the pain, calming down pain. The speaker asks God to give him strength to become self dependent and not be dependent on friends to fight the problems in life.

He hopes that he is granted the virtue/quality of patience to reach his goal, achieve success and win freedom from problems. He desires to reach his goal patiently and not rush to take others help out of fear to be saved from dangers.

The speaker does not want other people to call him a coward who runs away from problems. He prays God that he should be remembered as a brave, patient and courageous person and not a coward.

However, in the last line the speaker says that even if God gives him strength and courage to live life , the support and mercy of God is very essential in all times. He prays God to show him the right way when ever he goes wrong and in times of failure.

## **The Lotus**

Toru Dutt

### **About the poem:**

The poem 'The Lotus' is a sonnet written by Toru Dutt. Taking characters from Greek/Roman mythology, Toru Dutt presents an imaginary story of the creation of the Lotus Flower. Love comes to Flora, the Roman goddess of flowering plants, asking her to create the most beautiful flower in the world.

### **The poem:**

Love came to Flora asking for a flower  
That would of flowers be undisputed queen,  
The lily and the rose, long, long had been  
Rivals for that high honour. Bards of power  
Had sung their claims. "The rose can never tower  
Like the pale lily with her Juno mien"—  
"But is the lily lovelier?" Thus between  
Flower-factions rang the strife in Psyche's bower.

"Give me a flower delicious as the rose  
And stately as the lily in her pride"—  
"But of what colour?"—"Rose-red," Love first chose,  
Then prayed,—"No, lily-white,—or, both provide;"  
And Flora gave the lotus, "rose-red" dyed,  
And "lily-white,"—the queenliest flower that blows.

The sonnet is divided into two parts- octave (8lines) and sestet (6 lines)

In the opening lines we are introduced to Love who comes to Flora, asking for a creation of a flower that would be recognized as the "undisputed queen" of all flowers. Two flowers contested in this contest to win the title of the queen of flowers. The two flowers were the Lily and the Rose. Both the rose and the lily use the power of poets/bards who wrote in praise of the beauty of the flowers they sided. The poets on the side of the rose claimed it to be the most beautiful flower on account of its colour. The poets on the side of the lily praised the lily as a stately flower towering high. This argument between the poets of the two factions (rose and lily) took place in the bower (garden) of Psyche.

In the final six lines of the poem (sestet), we find a solution to this dispute. Love tells Flora to create a flower which will be as beautiful as the red rose and as stately as the white lily. In response, Flora creates the Lotus which is both "rose red" and "lily white" and has the best characteristics of both flowers and emerged as "the queenliest flower" that exists.

## The Toys

Coventry Patmore

### About the poem:

“The Toys” is an emotional poem about a father’s love to his son and about the fatherly relation of God to man. The poem conveys the idea of mercy of God and his goodness to forgive people who commit mistakes. This is explained through an incident in the Poet’s house. The poem opens with the words,

“My little son”. The little motherless son had disobeyed his father, so the father has scolded and struck his son. The father regrets and feels bad for his behavior and prays to God to forgive him.

In this poem, “toys” is an important metaphor. On the first hand, it hints at the toys of the boy. At the same time, it refers to the earthly joys human beings are attracted to.

### The poem:

My little Son, who look'd from thoughtful eyes  
And moved and spoke in quiet grown-up wise,  
Having my law the seventh time disobey'd,  
I struck him, and dismiss'd  
With hard words and unkiss'd,  
—His Mother, who was patient, being dead.  
Then, fearing lest his grief should hinder sleep,  
I visited his bed,  
But found him slumbering deep,  
With darken'd eyelids, and their lashes yet  
From his late sobbing wet.  
And I, with moan,  
Kissing away his tears, left others of my own;  
For, on a table drawn beside his head,  
He had put, within his reach,  
A box of counters and a red-vein'd stone,  
A piece of glass abraded by the beach,  
And six or seven shells,  
A bottle with bluebells,  
And two French copper coins, ranged there with careful art,  
To comfort his sad heart.  
So when that night I pray'd  
To God, I wept, and said:  
Ah, when at last we lie with trancèd breath,  
Not vexing Thee in death,  
And Thou rememberest of what toys  
We made our joys,  
How weakly understood  
Thy great commanded good,  
Then, fatherly not less  
Than I whom Thou hast moulded from the clay,  
Thou'lt leave Thy wrath, and say,  
'I will be sorry for their childishness.

**Explanation:**

One night, the poet scolded his son for disobeying orders and talking in loud voice. The child went quietly to his bedroom with a gloomy heart. After some time, the poet realized that he had made a mistake, as his son was lonely and his mother had died. No one was there to cheer him up.

The poet went into his son's bedroom thinking that his child must be weeping and trying to sleep. But when he entered the room, he saw the boy calmly sleeping in bed. The poet noticed marks of tears on his cheeks. He also saw some toys neatly arranged on a table besides his son, which were kept to comfort the sad heart. The sight of the room was very uncomfortable for the poet. He felt sorry for his attitude and learning the importance of toys for the child.

The poet was inspired by the whole incident. He kissed his son and cleared the tears in his eyes. He thought that God loves his fellowmen more than a father loves his son. God will surely forgive the people who commit mistakes. He also realized that the toys symbolize the comfort we resort to when we are lonely, helpless and unhappy. This thought gave the poet a New Hope. He prayed all night with the feeling that God is merciful and would forgive him.