

Freedom

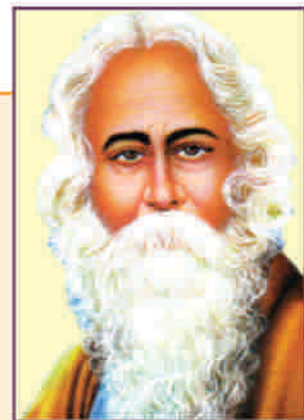
Freedom from fear is the freedom
I claim for you my motherland!
Freedom from the burden of the ages, bending your head,
Breaking your back, blinding your eyes to the beckoning call of the future;
Freedom from the shackles of slumber wherewith
You fasten yourself in night's stillness,
Mistrusting the star that speaks of truth's adventurous paths;
Freedom from the anarchy of destiny
Whose sails are weakly yielded to the blind uncertain winds,
And the helm to a hand ever rigid and cold as death,
Freedom from the insult of dwelling in a puppet's world,
Where movements are started through brainless wires, repeated through mindless habits,
Where figures wait with patience and obedience for the master of show,
To be stirred into a mimicry of life.



- *Rabindranath Tagore*

About the poet

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) is one of the best known Indian writers, who wrote both in his mother tongue Bangla and in English. He was a poet, playwright, novelist, painter, educator and musician. He translated a collection of his poems, '*Gitanjali*', which was published in 1912. In 1913 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature. He is the author of the Indian National Anthem as well as the National Anthem of Bangladesh.





Glossary

beckoning (<i>adj</i>)	:	signalling
slumber (<i>n</i>)	:	sleep
anarchy (<i>n</i>)	:	a situation in a country in which there is no government, order or control
helm (<i>n</i>)	:	a wheel to steer
stirred (<i>v</i>)	:	moved



Answer the following questions.

1. What sort of freedom does the poet wish to have?
2. The poet talks about fear in the opening lines of the poem. What kind of fear is he talking about?
3. What does the expression “truth’s adventurous paths” mean?
4. What does the poet mean by ‘figures’ in the poem? What sort of figures are they? What does the poet want them to be?
5. “Where figures wait with patience and obedience for the master of show.” What does the poet mean by this?
6. What does the ‘shackles of slumber’ mean? How does it arrest the progression of life?
- *7. Do you think we are all free from fear? What kind of fears are haunting our motherland now?
- *8. What does freedom mean to you? Is it freedom from hunger? Is it freedom from physical attack? Is it freedom from illiteracy? Is it freedom from social oppression? What else?

