LESSONS FROM TAGORE

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In conjunction with World Poetry Day, we pay homage to one of Asia’s greatest poets, writers, and artists – Rabindranath Tagore. Not only was he the first non-European to win a Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913, he was also the only person in the world to have written national anthems for two countries, India and Bangladesh.

Tagore won the coveted Nobel Prize for Gitanjali/Song Offerings, which is a collection of poems that continue to inspire millions of individuals regardless of race, nationality, age, religion, and gender. One particularly inspiring poem from Gitanjali is known as Song 36.

*This is my prayer to thee, my lord – strike, strike at the root of penury in my heart. Give me the strength to bear my joys and sorrows. Give me the strength to make my love fruitful in service. Give me the strength to never disown the poor or bend my knees before insolent might. Give me the strength to raise my mind high above daily trifles. And give me the strength to surrender my strength to thy will with love.*

Rabindranath Tagore
Gitanjali/Song Offerings

**STEER AWAY FROM CORRUPTION**

In the first line, Tagore prays that he will one day be rid of the corruption inherent within his heart. As human beings, all of us are bound to have imperfections and are vulnerable to varying degrees of temptation and corruption.

This poem appears to suggest that seeking solace in spirituality can guide us away from the bad things in this world, thus striking at the root of penury inherent in all our hearts.

In our careers, we are bound to encounter situations that can lead us to committing corrupted acts such as bribery, or perhaps even adulterating products without loyal consumers knowing.

This is why Tagore stresses the importance of spirituality and a strong set of morals that can help us steer us in the right direction when faced with situations that test our integrity.

**SERVICE TO OTHERS**

Yes, we all have our own lives, but we need to remember that all our lives are intertwined with those of others, which is what Tagore mentions in the third line.

This is why it is important to remember that we are all in this together and that we should help each other along the way by giving our service to others when they need it.

We have to show others that we care about them and that they are not alone in their hardships. Showing your support for others can make a world of a difference in how they handle difficult situations.

As leaders in the workplace, we should do our best to engage with our teammates by motivating them to do their best in their work.

In order to build that drive they need to get on with work, we need to ensure that they are happy with where they are by creating a supportive environment in which they can provide their honest opinions and ideas.

**PROTECT YOUR DIGNITY**

The main message the fourth line of the poem brings is to carry ourselves with dignity.

Having the strength to never disown the poor means that you show everyone respect regardless of who they are. Treat others as you would like to be treated.

It is also important to not grovel at the feet of others just because of their status or title. We should not bow down to someone just because they ask us to.

In addition, we should not overlook the mistakes of others just because they hold a higher authority over us. By exercising our right to speak our minds and call out those who have clearly done wrong, we keep each other in check and prevent the abuse of power.

**CONCLUDING THOUGHTS**

Song 36 is without a doubt, a classic from Tagore’s collection of his best works. It would do us all well to remember this simply worded, yet powerful poem as it rings true for all of humanity.

It is surely something that will last through generations to come as it also transcends the boundaries of time.

Tara is a lover of literature and poems that can beautifully string words together. She hopes that she can one day be at least half as good as a writer that Rabindranath Tagore was. To get in touch with Tara, email editor@leaderonomics.com

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