Literary Devices In Life Of Pi

The novel “Life of Pi” written by Yann Martel tells the tale of an Indian boy named Piscine Molitor who finds himself on a life boat in the middle of the ocean with a Hyena, Orangutan, Zebra and a tiger Richard Parker. While reading the story there were two main themes the first the devotion and believing to god and the second being the will to survive will drive you to do anything.

Firstly, Piscine Molitor devotion to god begins from an early age. Practicing 3 different, religions Hinduism, Christianity and finally Islam. Hinduism is the very first religion Pi indulges himself into, in fact on page 47 “I feel at home in a Hindu temple. I am aware of Presence, not personal the way we usually feel presence, but something larger. My heart still skips a beat when I catch sight of the murti, of god residing in the inner sanctum of a temple… But religion is more than rite and ritual. There is what the ritual stand for. Here too I am Hindu. The universe makes sense through Hindu eyes.” This example clearly expresses Pi actions his devotion to the Hindu religion, it brings him life it gives him a clear image of the world religion is not for practice it’s a way of life to pi he is spiritually connected to the belief in god his love for god is present with is heart that skips a beat. The murti of god is a symbol representing Pi figure as a believer in god, a murti in the Hinduism religion is the representation of god in an abstract figure. Christianity is the second religion Pi indulges himself into. Pi writes down on the chalk board 3.14 know as pi in mathematics which comes from the Greek alphabet that contains alpha and omega, “My name is Piscine Molitor Patel, Know to all as Pi Patel. For good measures I add pi=.314” (23) Pi name with the Alpha and Omega sign symbols the “beginning and the end of god representing eternal life of god.” Alpha being the first and Omega being the last letter in the Greek alphabet. This clearly indicates symbolically that Pi name represents his devotion and connection to god. Pi even goes to the extreme of showing his devotion to god with the process of baptism, “I would like to be Baptized… Because I love God” (72-73) The process of being baptised in the Christian religion is very special. It’s a ceremony performed with holy water symbolising the purification and being reborn as a child of god. Baptism is done on a person who has accepted the Christian faith and belief in god. Pi in this case has welcomed god into his life with the religion of Christianity. Finally, the last region Pi is interested in is Islam. Pi action’s show his dedication to the religion of Islam. He was just 15 years old when he commited to the Islam religion , “Islam followed right behind, hardly a year later.I was fifteen years old and I was exploring my hometown. The muslim quarter wasn’t far from the zoo. A small, quiet neighborhood with Arabic writing and crescent moons inscribed on the facades of houses(58)”This example explains the beginning of Islam in pi life his love for Islam is expressed through the use of his prayer rug and the symbol of the crescent moon. Pi uses a prayer rug to pray to allah which is one extremely important symbol, he summits himself to god when he kneels on the rug reciting the words “Allah Akbar” meaning god is great. Pi devotion to god is expressed when he kneels down on the rug he accepting god to come into his spiritual life. The crescent moon in the Islamic religion is a symbol for opening god and allowing him to come into your life which is clearly the case for Pi who has accepted god in 3 religions to come into his life devoting himself to god. Pi devotion to god seen in the 3 different religions shapes his personality as a young compassionated man with a warm heart. Pi affection to god shaped him to even respect others who practice different religions such as atheism. He comes to terms with “atheists are my brothers and sisters of a different faith”(31) Even doe he religious Pi

respects the decisions of others to practice any other religion thus showing us how religion shaped him into a good individual who respects other religions. Pi devotion to god and the religions he practice's teaches him about life, to love and respect each other. Pi connection to god also correlates with the second theme of the will to survive that will drive you to do anything. Pi when he lost at sea uses his devotion and belief in god to keep going giving him strength that one day he will be rescued. His connection to god allows him to repent and move on from his sins on the lifeboat.

Secondly, the sinking of the Tsimtsum resulting in Pi survival on a lifeboat for 227 days at sea. It's during this part time of novel where the theme of the will to survive will drive you to do anything is expressed clearly. Instead of giving up on the lifeboat he struggled dearly doing things he regrets that was against the morals of his humanity. He went to the extent of killing the cook on the lifeboat stabbing his body multiple times and even ate him resulting in cannibalism. His actions of stabbing the cook is seen here "He was the one who put it there. I picked it up. I stabbed him in the stomach. He grimaced but remained standing I pulled the knife out and stabbed him again. Blood was pouring" (310) Pi is a very calm pacifist character he against violence but in this case the need to survive drives him to do what it takes bringing out his survival instincts using the cook for a food source and killing him gruesomely. He even goes to the full of extent of killing an animal, Pi Patel a vegetarian against the killing of animals but the need to survive overcomes his humanity. From the example seen from the quote "tears flowing down my cheeks, I egged myself until I heard a cracking sound and I no longer felt any life fighting in my hands. I pulled back the folds of the blanket. The flying fish was dead." As an illustration this shows Pi sympathy towards killing the fish and how he would do anything to survive even going against his morals.

In conclusion, "Life of Pi" uses the literary device characterization of Piscine Molitor to show the two themes of the devotion to god, believing in him and the second being that in order to survive man will do what ever it takes.