

God's Grandeur

by Gerard Manley Hopkins



UNIT 4: GOD AND MAN

10. GOD'S GRANDEUR

-Gerard Manley Hopkins

Summary and Central Idea

God's Grandeur is an Italian sonnet, divided into an octave and sestet (abbaabba, cdcdcd), describes the god's greatness in the present materialist world. By using lofty imagination, Hopkins praises the magnificence and glory of God in the world. Hopkins says that the world has been charging with the grandeur of god like an electric current. It is shining like a thin sheet of metal and gathering like the flow of oil. Although the greatness of God is endless, modern people have no fear at all for their mischief and for the punishment rod of god. Generations have been passing since years only giving priority for money and material pleasure. They have become crazy for commercial achievement and material success. People are blind towards their miserable condition. They have been labouring so hard that they are full of dirt and have lost the senses. Hopkins argues that beautiful nature and its resources have been destroyed. In spite of such inhuman activities of modern people, God has been preserving natural beauty and its phenomena. After

Every season's new freshness arises as night invites lovely mornings. Poet says that God is brooding (protecting) its creation like a dove giving warmth and love fledglings Hopkins expresses his deep belief of the power of God. For him that the freshness of God can't be made ugly. He further argues that it is the men's failure to recognize the greatness of god. Hopkins attacks the materialistic nature of men and shows their hollow condition. He suggests mankind to follow a spiritual path for eternal peace.

IMPORTANT QUESTION:

1. What is the central idea of the poem "God's Grandeur"?

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. 2076 PARTIAL D Q. NO. 2F

Why are people unable to understand the greatness of God? [3]

- The speaker forwards the idea that men are unaware of the greatness of God. He elaborates the reason why men don't obey God's command. The poet finds them irrational. The main reason for their unawareness of God's greatness, therefore, is that they never seriously think of the impact of their activities on the earth. This irrationality becomes the fundamental cause behind their mushrooming commercial activities. The poet observes the human activities which have almost damaged God's creation. He thinks men are unaware of God's magnificence as they have really been commercialized. The world has turned materialist on a great scale. The human beings have been involved in commercial activities forgetting the earth so changed with God's greatness. They have plunged into ugly competition. Similarly, they have also not understood how earth is everything for us and its protection is a necessity. The world has become so technocratic that they don't have time to rethink about God's majestic power. It might also be the cause that they don't have religious and theological faith on the earth. Consequently, earth has smeared, bleared, seared and smudged by their activities. But the poet is optimistic about the future of humanity for God is there to renew the earth so destroyed by commercial activities.

2. 2075 GIE Q. NO. 2E

Why are men unaware of the greatness of God? Give reasons.

- Please refer to 2076 Partial D Q. No. 2f

3. 2075 SET A Q. NO. 2A

What is the central idea of the poem, "God's Grandeur"? [3]

- "God's Grandeur" is about God's grandeur. In the poem, Hopkins praises the magnificence and glory of God in the world blending accurate observation with lofty imagination. As a religious poet, Hopkins offers his readers a religious theme, thus finding God all powerful. The whole world is charged with the greatness of God. Moreover, he is omnipresent and omnipotent. Attacking upon the materialistic human activities, he expresses the hope that God is there to save his creation. Starting the poem with a praise of God, the poet ends the poem with God's greatness too. Although the people are continuously destroying the earth with their unwise activities, nature, covered with God's warm breast and bright wings, constantly renews itself. In this sense, the poem is about hope and aspiration. The agent of our hope is no one but God. Thus, God is all powerful. The poet also displays a perpetual conflict between earth, God's creation, and commercial activities, man's creations. To conclude, the poem forwards the idea that God is majestic and the human activities that pose threat against nature remain weak since Gods are there to renew his creations.

4. 2075 Set C Q. No. 2d

How do the human beings hurt the world? [3]

- Please refer to **2076 PARTIAL D Q. NO. 2F**

5. 2074 PARTIAL D Q. NO. 2A

What is the central idea of the poem, "God's Grandeur"? [3]

- Please refer to **2075 SET A Q. NO. 2A**

6. 2074 PARTIAL E Q. NO. 2B

How is the glory of God praised in the poem 'God's Grandeur'?

- The glory and magnificence of God is expressed in the poem explicitly. The poet dedicates this poem to God, almighty. He expresses the glory of God with a keen observation. He writes that the whole earth is filled with God's greatness that he compares with "shook foil" and "ooze of oil". He also observes irrational human activities that smear, blur and smudge the earth. But the poet is not horrified with this rampant human industrialization. He makes God great by assigning all the tasks of renewing the earth. The poet doesn't think that the world is destroyed completely as there is the freshness deep down of every thing. The sun sets to reappear again in the morning. By portraying God a protector who broods the earth with his warm breast and bright wings, the poet expresses God's glory in the poem. God created this world and is so splendid with his glory. And since it is his creation, he is the one who has to protect it from the ruins. This is how he makes God all mighty and all powerful. By saying that the earth is charged with the greatness of the god and the blurred earth is renewed by god power, the poet praises the glory of god in the poem, "God's Grandeur."

7. 2072 SUPP Q. NO. 2D

Write the central idea of the poem 'God's Grandeur'? [3]

- Please refer to **2075 SET A Q. NO. 2A**

8. 2072 SET C Q. NO. 2D

What is the significance of the repetition of the words, "have trod..." in the poem? [3]

- The words "have trod" are repeated in the octave of God's Grandeur by G. M. Hopkins. The poem is written on the glory and greatness of the god. The poet believes that the world is created by god and is filled with his greatness. But human beings are negligent of his command. They are doing their commercial activities for ages. To express his anger against human activities, the poet has used the word "have trod" twice. He expresses his hatred by repeating these last in the poem. At the same time, the words and repetition also suggests to the careless human that has bleared, seared and smeared the earth.

9. 2072 SET D Q. NO. 20

What is the significance of the repetition words, "have trod..."?

- Please refer to **2072 SET C Q. NO. 2D**

10. 2072 SET E Q. NO. 2D

How is the glory of the God praised in the poem "God's Grandeur"? [3]

- Please refer to **2074 SET E Q. NO. 2B**

11. 2072 PARTIAL SET A Q. NO. 2D

What do the words 'bleared', 'smeared' and 'seared' suggest? [3]

- The words 'bleared', 'smeared', and 'seared' indicate the state of the earth. All three words have harsh sounds and give negative meaning. They suggest the industrial activities that have polluted the earth, the beautiful creation of the god. The earth that shines with the power of god is faded away by human trade. The beautiful creation of God loses its freshness. The earth is rather commercialized and destroyed by mushrooming trade. The world wears the smudge and human smell. This is a dark picture painted by the poet at the time of the Industrial Revolution so as to react against industrialization. But the poet is still hopeful that the situation would soon changed because the earth is preserved and protected by the power of god almighty.

13. 2072 PARTIAL SET B Q. NO. 2D

What do the words 'bleared', 'smeared' and 'seared' suggest? [3]

- Please refer to **2072 PARTIAL SET A Q. NO. 2D**

13. 2071 SET D Q. NO. 12 A

What are the reasons to determine the god as powerful? Illustrate? [3]

- The poet G.M. Hopkins magnifies the god's greatness in the poem, "God's Grandeur". He portrays god as powerful and magnificent. The main reason to determine him powerful is that the poet is catholic and true worshipper of the god. But the poet gives his own reason to explain the greatness of the god. The reason he gives is that the world is filled with the greatness of the god. For example he writes God's presence runs like an electronic current, becoming momentarily visible in the flashes like the refracted glinting of lights produced by metal foil when quickly moved. Alternatively, god's presence is rich oil, a kind of sap that wells up to a greatness" which tapped with a certain kind of patient pressure. The poet shows the destructive human activities to show god's greatness. The landscape in its natural state reflects God and its creator. But industry and the prioritization of the economic over the spiritual living have transformed the landscape and robbed the natural beauty. Because of their activities, earth is seared, bleared and smudge. But the poet shows the greatness and power of the god by saying "freshness" that lies underneath the things continually renews the power of God's creation. This power of renewal is seen in the way morning always waits on the other side of dark night. The source of this constant regeneration is the grace of God who "broods" over a seemingly lifeless world with the patient nurture of a mother hen. This final image one of the God's guarding the potential of the world contains with Himself the power and promise of rebirth. Writing at the end "ah! Bright wings", Hopkins suggests the beauty of God's grace, and the joyful suddenness of a hatching bird emerging out of God's love.

14. 2071 PARTIAL SET A Q. NO. 12 C

What is the main idea of the poem "God's Grandeur"? [3]

- Please refer to **2075 SET A Q. NO. 2A**

15. 2070 SUPP SET B Q. NO. 12C

What is the central idea of the poem 'God's Grandeur'? Discuss.

- Please refer to **2075 SET A Q. NO. 2A**

16. 2070 SET C Q. NO. 2C

When does the God show its greatness, according to GM Hopkins?

- As a Roman Catholic, G. M. Hopkins praises the magnificence of God in the poem, "God's Grandeur". He believes that God displays his greatness in the difficult mode of our living. Though the earth is filled with the greatness of the God, human beings don't obey his command to which G.M. Hopkins is dissatisfied. But the poet believes that since God is so great and kind, he shows his greatness at the time when the earth is at stake by human activities. Hopkins elaborates on the human recklessness that destroys the cosmic beauty of earth, God's creation. From generation to generation, human beings have been continuing their work on the earth. This has really smeared bleared and seared the heaven's creation. The poet perhaps indicates the 19th century industrialization and its impacts. But by being optimistic, the speaker thinks God shows his greatness in this time of destruction by renewing it. Since God has covered this earth with his warm breast and bright wings, the natural freshness gets renewed. So the poet thinks that at every difficulty God manifests its greatness and protects the earth from sinking.

17. 2069 Q. NO. 12C

What is the central idea of the poem 'God's Grandeur'? Explain.

- Please refer to **2075 SET A Q. NO. 2A**

18. 2068 Q. NO. 12 A

Give the central idea of the poem "God's Grandeur." [3]

- Please refer to **2075 SET A Q. NO. 2A**

19. 2067 Q. NO. 12E

How the glory of God is praised in the poem 'God's Grandeur'?

- Please refer to **2072 SET E Q. NO. 2D**

20. 2062 Q. NO. 12D

What is the central idea of the poem "God's Grandeur"? [3]

Please refer to **2075 SET A Q. NO. 2A**

21. 2061 Q. NO. 10 C

What is the central idea of the poem, 'God's Grandeur'? [3]

- Please refer to **2075 SET A Q. NO. 2A**

22. 2059 Q. NO. 2 D

What is the central idea of the poem "God's Grandeur"?

- Please refer to **2075 SET A Q. NO. 2A**

23. 2058 Q. NO. 3

Give reasons why men are unaware of the greatness of God?

- Please refer to **2076 PARTIAL D Q. NO. 2**

LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS

24. 2071 PARTIAL SET B Q. NO. 13B

Critically appreciate the poem, 'God's Grandeur'. [10]

- "God's Grandeur" is composed by English poet G.M Hopkins. As a Roman Catholic, he praises the glory of God in the poem. In other words, this is a religious sonnet in which Hopkins admires the magnificence of God in the world, blending accurate observation with lofty imagination. The poem is written in the form of Italian Sonnet in which the octave shows the conflict between God's creation and human activities and the sestet explains the immanence of God. The first four lines of the first stanza display the glory of God with similes. God's greatness runs lit by an electronic current, becoming momentarily visible in flashes by metal foil. Again, this is compared with ooze of oil, a kind of sap that wells up to a greatness when crushed with a pressure. But the poet is surprised by observing the human activities and finding them obeying the divine authority. The second quatrain within the octave describes the state of contemporary human life - the blind repetitiveness of human labor and the sordidness and strain of "toil" and "trade". The landscape in its natural state reflects God and its creator. But industry and human activities have transformed the landscape and robbed humans of their sensitivity to those few beauties of nature still left. The shoes people wear block physical connection between our feet and the earth they walk on, symbolizing an ever-increasing spiritual alienation from nature. The final six lines of the sonnet forward a religious tone. By being hopeful, the poet believes that nature does not cease offering up its spiritual strengths to human beings despite their activities. World's deep "freshness" proves the continual renewing power of God's creation. This power of renewal is seen in the way morning always waits on the other side of dark night, The source of this constant regeneration is the grace of God who "broods" over a seemingly lifeless world with the patient nurture of a mother hen. This final image, one of the God, who guards the potential of the world, reflects God's power. In short, the world is full of God's magnificence. But generations of men, ignoring the miraculous quality of life, have lost touch with the grandeur of god and become callous

to it. The poet's sweeping condemnation of 19th century industrialization comes very close to his condemnation of man himself. Structurally speaking, the poem is a sonnet with fourteen lines with an intricate rhyme scheme. The images like "Shared man's smell", "seared", "bleared" and "smudged" have negative connotations suggesting a loath against human commercialization. But even at this stage, there is hope and faith. The similes and images used to magnify the god's power really set in contrast to the negative images like seared, bleared and smeared. Similarly, the harsh sounds used to describe human activities are again contrasted with soft sounds attributed to describe the god's glory. To sum up, G.M Hopkins powerfully elaborates the god's greatness almost with a religious tone.

2065 Q. NO. 13B

What is the central idea of the poem "God's Grandeur"? [10]

- Please refer to **2075 SET A Q. NO. 2A**