



Dr. DEVESH CHAND
(ASSISTANT PROFESSOR)
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
FACULTY OF ARTS

JAGATPUR P.G. COLLEGE JAGATPUR VARANASI
221302

EMAIL: deveshchand10@gmail.com

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Dr. DEVESH CHAND
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JAGATPUR P.G. COLLEGE
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VARANASI 221302

deveshchand10@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

- ❖ ***John Milton*** (1608-1674), the son of a Puritan, a man of broad culture and lover of music, was born in London. He was educated at St. Paul's School, and at Christ's' Cambridge where he was nick-named, the Lady of Christ's because of his personal beauty. 'a niceness of nature and honest haughtiness'.
- ❖ he was very studious boy, Milton from age of 12 hardly ever went to bed before twelve O' clock. His devotion to learning made him a very great scholar. His learning sustains his poetry. It is evident even in his minor works and sonnets.

- ❖ In 1643 he married Marry Powell, it was not a happy marriage life. Early in 1653 he lost his eye sight and his wife. On the restoration of monarchy in 1660, Milton who was a staunch Puritan and had been the Latin Secretary of Cromwell, fell on evil days.
- ❖ Milton was arrested and two of his books were publicly burnt. The cause, for which he had fought and given up poetry, was lost. Poor, lonely and blind he left like Samson ‘eyeless in Gaza at the mills with the slaves’. In this loneliness he wrote his great epic ***Paradise Lost***, which was finished in 1665- the product of seven years labor in darkness. It was published in 1667. *Paradise Lost* placed him among the greatest poets of the world.

- ❖ Among his early poems special mention may be made of ode ***On the Morning of Christ's Nativity, L' Allegro, II Penseroso*** and ***Lycidas***. Some of the sonnets of Milton were written in his early days. And quite a few during the middle years and one or two in the last years of his life. In all he wrote only 26 sonnets- six of them in Italian. They are personal and occasional poems.
- ❖ The best-known among them are '***On His Deceased Wife***', '***To the Nightingale***', '***On Reaching the Age of Twenty- three***', '***The Massacre in Piedmont***', '***On His Blindness***' and '***When the Assault was Intended to the city to the City***'. His sonnets are seldom on 'love'-the favourite theme of Elizabethan poets.

THEME AND SUBSTANCE OF THE SONNET

'HOW SOON HATH TIME'

- ❖ The Central theme of the sonnet is anxiety of the poet for delay in arrival of spring, the season of flowering and fruition in life. Though he has completed twenty three years of his life yet his inner maturity is visible in his visible in his outer appearance.
- ❖ Milton has not been able to produce anything which may prove his poetic powers and maturity. It is the cause of his worry. But the poet brushes aside this anxiety by declaring that he has talents which might come flowering in function. It may take time but whenever he is able to produce his works the shall be of the highest excellence. They shall be in strictest measure even. They will marked by finish and perfection, real -

works of art of the highest order.

- ❖ He is confident of his powers and hopes that God is watching his progress and with his grace he will be able to accomplish his mission in life.
- ❖ The sonnet breathes confidence, faith and hope. Like a true Christian he has faith in God whom he calls his Taskmaster who is guiding his destiny.

CRITICAL APPRECIATION OF THE SONNET

- ❖ ‘*How Soon Hath Time*’ is a beautiful sonnet. It is concerned with the poets personal life. He believes that God had sent him into the world that he might perform certain duties. But he expresses his regret that although twenty-three years of his life have passed, yet he has not been able to do them which has been allotted to him.

HIS HOPE :

Although time is passing very fast and from his outward appearance no one could guess that he had very nearly achieved manhood, yet by the grace of the Almighty he would soon fulfill the duty allotted to him by God, That great Taskmaster.

STRUCTURE, METRE, AND RHYME SCHEME OF SONNET

- ❖ Like all the Sonnets '***How Soon Hath Time***' has also been written in Iambic Pentameter. Each line consists of ten syllables grouped into five feet in which the odd syllable , i.e. the first, third, the fifth, the seventh, and the ninth syllable are unaccented and the remaining five even syllables are accented. Milton followed Petrarch, the great Italian Sonneteer and divided his sonnets into an octave and a sestet. The octave was further subdivided into two quatrains (stanza of four lines) and Sestet was subdivided into two triplets (stanza of four lines).

CONCLUSION

'How Soon Hath Time' is an excellent sonnet. It is concerned with the poets personal life. It shows his optimism that with the grace of God, he will be able to perform the duty allotted to him by the Great Taskmaster.

Important questions

Question 1.

- ❖ Give the critical appreciation of the sonnet “How Soon Hath Time” ?

Question 2.

- ❖ “Milton was a great poet and scholar.” Discuss in brief this statement?

DECLARATION

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Prof. B. Banerjee

THANK YOU