

Not Marble, nor the Gilded Monuments

(by William Shakespeare)

Extract Based Questions-

Read the extracts below and answer the questions that follow. Write the answers in short-

1. 'Not marble, nor the gilded monuments

Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rhyme;'

(a) What does the poet mean by marble?

(b) Who are the people who get gilded monuments made?

(c) What will happen to 'marble' and 'gilded monuments'?

2. 'Not marble, nor the gilded monuments

Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rhyme;'

(a) Explain 'gilded monuments

(b) What is more powerful than 'marble' and 'gilded monuments'? Why?

(c) Name a poetic device used in the above lines.

3. 'But you shall shine more bright in these contents

Than unswept stone, besmear'd with sluttish time.'

(a) Who is 'you'?

(b) Explain 'unswept stone'?

(c) Why does the poet refer to Time as being sluttish?

4. 'When wasteful war shall statues overturn,

And broils root out the work of masonry,

Nor Mars his sword nor war's quick fire shall burn

The living record of your memory.'

(a) What are the works of masonry?(b) Who is Mars?

(c) What can Mars not destroy?

5. 'Gainst death, and all oblivious enmity

Shall you pace forth; your praise shall still find room

Even in the eyes of all posterity

That wears this world out to the ending doom.'

(a) What are the things that may destroy a person's memory?

(b) How will 'he' live on in people's memory?

(c) Explain 'That wear this world out to the ending doom

6. 'So, till the judgment that yourself arise,

You live in this, and dwell in lovers' eyes.'

- (a) Who is 'you'?
- (b) How will he 'live' on?
- (c) Explain 'judgment'

7. Not marble, nor the gilded monuments
Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rhyme;

- (a) Who is the poet of this verse?

Ans (b) What do you mean by 'gilded monuments'? (c) Write the meaning of the expression 'shall outlive this powerful rhyme'.

8. When wasteful war shall statues overturn,
And broils root out the work of masonry,

- (a) Name the poetic device used in line 1 .

Ans. – The poetic device used in line 1 is alliteration.

- (b) In this stanza, what does the word 'broils' mean?

Ans. -In this stanza, the word 'broils' means quarrels that result into fights, disturbances.

- (c) What does the phrase 'the work of masonry' imply?

Ans. – 'The work of masonry' implies great admirable pieces of architecture reflecting skilled work.

9. Gainst death and all oblivious enmity
Shall you pace forth: your praise shall still find room,

- (a) In this stanza, what does the word 'gainst' mean?

Ans. – In this stanza, the word 'gainst' means against.

- (b) In this stanza, what does the pronoun 'you' stand for?

Ans. – En this stanza, the pronoun 'you' stands for friend.

- (c) Write the meaning of the phrase 'oblivious enmity'.

Ans. – The phrase 'oblivious enmity' means forgetful enmity that seeks to destroy everything.

10 . So, till the judgment that yourself arise
You live in this, and dwell in lovers eyes

- (a) Who is the speaker of the given lines?

Ans. -The poet is the speaker of these lines.

- (b) What does the expression 'you live in this' imply?

Ans. –The expression 'you live in this' implies a friend who is told to live in the poem.

- (c) What does the expression 'So, till the judgment, that yourself arise' mean?

Ans. – 'so, till the judgment, that yourself arise' means rising to the heaven after the last judgment is given.

11. But you shall shine more bright in these contents
Than unswept stone, besmear'd with sluttish time.

(a) Who is 'you' in these lines?

Ans. – In these lines, the pronoun 'you' is used for the poet's friend.

(b) What do 'these contents' here refer to?

Ans. – 'These contents' are the lines that are written on a piece of paper in the form of a sonnet dedicated to a beloved friend of the poet.

(c) What do you mean by 'sluttish time' here? Name the poetic device used in line 1.

Ans. – Here 'skittish time' means ravages of time. The poetic device used in line I is alliteration because of the repetitive use of the phonic sounds of 'b' and 's' consonants.

12. Nor Mars his sword nor wars quick fire shall burn
The living record of your memory.

(a) Who is Mars?

Ans. – Mars is the Greek god of war.

(b) What shall Mars' sword and quick fire burn?

Ans. – Mars' sword and war's fire would destroy the work of masonry and overturn statues.

(c) Explain 'The living record of your memory'.

Ans. – By these lines the poet means that neither wars nor Mars, the god of war have the ability to burn destroy or ravage the poem that he has written glorifying his friend. This poem (the living record) shall even continue after his friend's death.

13. Even in the eyes of all posterity
That wear this world out to the ending doom.

(a) Which literary device is used in line 1?

Ans. – The literary device used in line I is personification. Here poet assigns an 'eye' to posterity thus personifying it by endowing human traits.

(b) What shall be found even in the eyes of all posterity?

Ans. – The praise of the poet's beloved friend shall be found in the eyes of all posterity.

(c) What does the poet mean by 'the eyes of posterity'?

Ans. – The 'eyes of posterity' means people of the future generations.

Short Answers type question

1. Why do you think the rich and powerful people get monuments and statues erected in their memory?

Ans. – Rich and powerful people get monuments erected in their memory so that people do not forget them. They want to live on in people's memory.

2. How does time affect powerful rulers?

Ans. – Powerful rulers get monuments and statues built in marble and gold to be remembered by posterity but Time destroys their efforts by annihilating their creations.

3. Describe how the monuments and statues are affected by the ravages of time.

Ans. – Monuments and statues are destroyed by time. They fall into ruin.

4. Why does the poet refer to time as being sluttish?

Ans. – Time is 'sluttish' as it is careless. Time cares for no individual, it is immoral and will pass.

5. In what way is the poet stronger than powerful rulers?

Ans. – The creations of powerful rulers like statues and monuments are destroyed by time but the poet is more powerful than these rulers because Time cannot destroy his creation, his poetry.

6. The poet says that neither forces of nature nor wars can destroy his poetry. In fact, even the godly powers of Mars will not have a devastating effect on his rhyme. What quality of the poet is revealed through these lines?

Ans. – The poet says that his poetry will survive the passage of time. This shows his arrogance and his pride in his own creation.

7. What is 'the ending doom' and 'the judgment'?

Ans. – In traditional religions, Doomsday or judgment day is the point at which all souls, even those that have been dead for a long time will 'arise' to be judged by God.

8. What is the theme of Shakespeare's sonnet, 'Not Marble nor the Gilded Monuments'?

Ans. – This sonnet is a poem about time and immortalization. The speaker claims that his poem will immortalize the beloved, in this case the young man. The sonnet traces the progression of time, from the physical endeavours built by man (monuments, statues, masonry) as well as through warfare to the concept of the last judgment. The young man will survive all of these things through the verses of the speaker.

9. How does the poet declare his rhyme to be powerful? Or

What comparisons does the poet draw between the poetry and monuments?

Ans. The poet tells how time will not destroy the powerful rhyme (the poem), though it shall destroy the world's most magnificent structures. He makes comparisons between the poetry and various monuments to show how poetry is stronger than these structures. Neither the precious marble nor the gold-plated monuments meant to be the graves of princes can match the powerful effect of the poem that the poet has written in praise of his young friend. Sluttish time destroys everything. Even the great monuments once carefully preserved are tarnished and left uncared with the passage of time. But the time will have no sway over the poem that glorifies the young friend in its lines.

10. Describe how the poetry survives all wars and destruction. Or

Describe how the memory of the friend shall survive all kinds of ravages.

Ans. – The poet is quite optimistic about the power of poetry. He expresses his anguish on how

great stat ties are broken and overturned to insignificance by the destructive wars. Not only that he feels sad to find that even great quarrels, disputes especially during a war, ravage great works of architecture. But he is also glad to declare that these wars organized by Mars and his followers are not able to spoil the verses in which he has glorified his beloved friend.

11. 'Gainit death and all oblivious enmity, shall you pace forth.' On the basis of these lines comment how the poet honours his friend.

Ans. –The poet states that he has established a living record of his friend in the form of a sonnet that will Outlive all the ravages of time. This recorded memory of his friend shall be honoured and remembered until posterity. The poet emphasizes that like a powerful man, his friend shall stride forward against all destructive forces like death and enemies and will be praised even by the future generations to come. His memory will Outwear this world and Survive until the doomsday (the last day of humanity).

12. What judgment does the poet talk about in the ending couplet of this poem?

Ans. –In the ending couplet the poet refers to the doomsday, the Apocalypse, i.e., the last day of humanity when he talks about the judgment'. He makes this reference to judgment because he wants to declare the immortality of his friend in his verse. He wants to ensure it to the readers that until there is humanity alive, people will read this verse and henceforth his friend will be immortalized.

13. Where does the poet tell his friend to stay until the judgment day and why?

Ans. The poet is very caring about his love for his friend. He tells that his friend shall forever remain in the poem composed by him and will be admired by all the lovers around the world. He shall only rise to heaven when it will be the last. day of humanity (day of Last Judgment). Until then he will remain in this poem and remain in the eyes of the lovers who read this.

Long Answers

1. Compare and contrast the ravages of Time as shown in 'Not Marble, nor the Gilded Monuments – and 'Ozymandias '

Ans. – In 'Not Marble, nor the Gilded Monuments', the powerful rulers get monuments and statues built but Time destroys all monuments and statues. Time is more powerful than these man-made creations. It paints a destructive image of time, but explores the immortality of the subjects of poetry through the power of verse.

In Ozymandias, the main theme is the inevitable complete decline of all leaders and of the empires they build, however mighty in their own time but art survives.

2. Comment on the immortality of poetry to withstand the forces of decay over time with reference to 'Not Marble Nor Gilded Monuments'.

Ans. – 'Not Marble Nor Gilded Monuments' one of Shakespeare's most famous verses, asserts the immortality of the poet's sonnets to withstand the forces of decay over time. While monuments that princes get erected to be remembered forever will be destroyed, and their creators forgotten, the poet's friend will continue to shine brightly in this verse. The value that can be derived from this instance is that stone monuments may crumble to dust, blackened by time and devastating war, but neither the god of war nor his quick-burning fires shall destroy poetry.

3. Comment on the theme of the poem 'Not Marble, nor the Gilded Monuments'. Or
"The poem 'Not Marble, nor the Gilded Monuments' is all about love." Comment.

Ans. Shakespeare's sonnet 55 deals with the idea that his friend, his love will be made immortal in these verses, though everything else will be lost through war, "sluttish" time, or other violent forces. Shakespeare considers poetry as superior and the only assurance of immortality in this world, but lowers this particular sonnet itself as being unworthy of his friend. Thus, his theme is that everything will be destroyed and forgotten except the friend, who will be praised forever, because he is immortalized in these lines. This, he proves by comparing his verse with marbled, gilded monuments of the princes. He is glad to declare that these great monuments too have been ravaged by time and are in a state neglect. But neither time nor any other mode of destruction reduce the effect of his powerful rhyme' in which his friend has been shining through ages.

The poet goes on to say that wars and broils too have done great damage to the great statues and great buildings of architecture as a result, these once popular buildings and statues will be destroyed. But neither Mars, his sword nor any devastating fire resulting from the wars can burn the verses in which the poet has immortalized his friend.

His love for his friend is imminent when he ensures that death or any sort of enmity would not rue his friend as he 'shall pace forth' to be remembered till posterity until the day of Last judgment. Thus the poet immortalizes his friend forever in his verses.

4. Shakespeare, in this poem talks about two destructive forces. What are those and how does he manage to save his love from their clutches?

Ans. -Time and war are the two destructive forces that the poet talks about in this poem. The very first quatrain of his sonnet revolves around the theme of the ravages made by the passage of time. The poet says that the once acclaimed and well known durable marbled and gilded monuments of princes too have been tarnished and left uncared by the 'sluttish time'. In the second quatrain, he goes on to talk about yet another destroyer called war. These wars, over the ages have overturned great statues and rooted out great 'works of masonry'.

However, the poet is comfortable when he ensures that his verse as well as his beloved friend have no threat from either sluttish time or from the sword of Mars. His poetry shall outlive all the ravages of time and his friend shall shine brighter than the gilded monuments of the princes. Even the Mars or his 'quick fire' shall not be able to burn the living record (the poem) in which the poet has immortalized his friend.

5. How does the poet immortalize his verse along with glorifying his friend?

Ans. -The process of immortalizing the friend and the verses progress side by side. In the first quatrain, when the poet says that 'But you shall shine more bright in these contents' the poet is glorifying his friend and his verse equally. Again, at yet another place in the second quatrain, he ascertains the memory of his friend in the living record (his verse).

However, towards the end of the sonnet the friend gains more recognition as he is made to 'pace forth' gaining regard from the generations to follow. The poet ensures that his friend shall be immortalized until the last day of the humanity.

In nutshell, we can say that Shakespeare considers poetry as superior, and the only assurance of immortality in this world, but lowers this particular sonnet itself as being unworthy of his friend. This way he immortalizes both his friend and his verse together, though the former has an upper hand in immortality.

6. Imagine you are the poet's friend. Write a letter of thanks to the poet for his love towards you.

. # 19, Red Square

Stratford at Avon

20 June, 1590

Dear Shakespeare

Sometimes certain sentiments are better expressed in written form than communicating.

Yesterday when we met you wanted to thank you from the depths of my heart but I was so overwhelmed that I could not speak... . Therefore I preferred to write to you.

First of all, I thank you for gifting me with such a beautiful poem. As you said that it was dedicated to me, I was emotionally perplexed after reading it. You have done the impossible through your verse. I appreciate your poetic skills with which you have immortalized a mortal being. I am ennobled as you have overshadowed me eclipsing the marbled statue and gilded monuments. The way you have portrayed me as stronger than death and enmity has led me to introspect about my life. Your faith and love for me is indicated when you praise and declare that I shall be remembered even by the coming generation to follow and remain immortal until the doomsday.

I don't know whether I deserve the honour bestowed on me by you but one thing is clear that your expectations from your friend are high. I shall try my best to come up to your desires. This poem shall be preserved by me as a souvenir. It will strengthen our bond of friendship.

I pray to the Almighty that your verses shall become immortal and the future generations may read your works with the same fervor as we read today.

Your friend

Allen

7. How, according to the poet, will his beloved outlive monument and time?

According to the poet, his beloved, is captured in this sonnet, and therefore shall outlive the marble and golden monuments built by the princes, because the monument shall get spoiled by time.

8. How does the poet immortalize his beloved?

The poet immortalizes his beloved by stating that his beloved shall live forever in this sonnet and in the eyes of future generations. Also, this poem will wear out this world till the judgment day and outlive it.

9. What is the moral of the poem?

The moral of the poem is that literary art is not affected by time, though marble and gilded monuments are. They are ravaged by time it will have no effect on his beloved who is a living record in this sonnet. Time is shown as a great leveler and destroyer here.