

## UNIT-3

### POEM-1

#### PIED BEAUTY

-G.M. HOPKINS

Glory be to God for dappled things –  
For skies of couple-colour as a brindled cow;  
For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;  
Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings;  
Landscape plotted and pieced – fold, fallow, and plough;  
And áll trádes, their gear and tackle and trim.

All things counter, original, spare, strange;  
Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)  
With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;  
He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:  
Praise him.

Glory be to God for dappled things –

In the opening line of the poem, Hopkins plays his homage to God for having created “dappled things” in this world. These dappled things are evidence of God’s glory. The poet takes pleasure in the “pied beauty” of Nature – its dappled and variegated appearance. Here the meaning of “dappled things” refers to the multi-coloured and spotted things; mottled thing. Actually, the word “pied” in the title consists of the same meaning.

For skies of couple-colour as a brindled cow;

For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;

Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings;

From line 2 to 4, the poet then proceeds to give us examples of Nature’s pied beauty. He first mentions the “skies of couple colour” which he compares to a brindled cow or a cow on which the brown colour is mixed with streaks of another colour. Then he mentions the trout swimming around with their rose-coloured skin spotted with black.

The meaning of “skies of couple-colour” is the double-coloured sky; the sky when it looks double-coloured, while the meaning of “as a brinded cow” means a double-coloured cow. Here “Brinded” means “streaked”. The comparison of the sky with a streaked cow is rather odd. When the poet says “For rose-moles all in stipple”, he means the rose coloured markings spotted with black, while trout refers to a kind of fish.

Next, he mentions the windfalls from chestnut trees: having fallen on the ground they break open, revealing the reddish-brown nut within, looking like fresh fire-coal. He goes on to mention the finches with their multi-coloured wings.

When he says: “Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls”, he means chestnuts that have fallen down from the tree and which look like burning coals. This vision of Nature flowing from within with radiant colours and life is characteristic of Hopkins in the time of his spiritual formation. Finches’ wing means the wings of a bird that has multi-coloured wings.

Landscape plotted and pieced – fold, fallow, and plough;

And áll trádes, their gear and tackle and trim.

From line 5 to 6, the poet says that but there dappled things created by man, too. Man divides land into small plots or fields, some being used as folds or enclosures for sheep, others lying “fallow” for a time as meadowland, and yet others being plowed to raise crops. Then there are different kinds of industry, with their neat and well-maintained equipment and apparatus.

All things counter, original, spare, strange;

Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)

With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;

In line 7 to 9, the poet sums up the general qualities he admires in such dappled things. He admires the co-existence of contrary things: he admires their uniqueness and originality, their rarity which makes them precious, and their oddness which differentiates each from the others. He likes their very fickleness (that is, their irregularity in duration), and their freckled or speckled appearance (which implies an irregularity in the pattern). At the

same time, he asks the metaphysical question: “Who knows how?” He means to say that nobody can explain the reason why these things are “freckled”. Some things are swift, others slow; some are sweet, others sour; some are exceptionally bright, others lustreless. But nobody knows why such contrasts exist.

He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:

Praise him.

In line 10-11, the poet says that all these things have their origin in God. His beauty is changeless and eternal. Let us praise God who created all dappled things.

### **Theme of Pied Beauty**

In the poem, “Pied Beauty” by Hopkins, the poet gives glory to God for the rich colour-dappling of the world of Nature and of man. As illustrations of the pied beauty of the world, he mentions:

skies of couple-colour;

the trout with their rose-coloured skin spotted with black;

fallen chestnuts revealing the reddish-brown nut;

finches wings;

the landscape which looks like a patch work;

all trades.

Apart from the above illustrations, the poet also refers to the general qualities which he appreciates in dappled things such as:

Swift and slow;

Sweet and sour;

Bright and dim;

Fickle and freckled.

Thus, in the space of about nine lines, the poet covers a wide range of things and their attributes. In the last two (or one and a half) lines he praises God, the father of all this ever-changing variety and contrast, whose own beauty is eternal, therefore “past change”.

From the glorification of God as revealed in dappled things to the final injunction to the reader (“Praise him”), the movement of this poem takes place between the two mottoes of St. Ignatius: “To the greater glory of God” and “Praise be to God always”.

## **POEM-2**

### **THE BALLAD OF FATHER GILLIGAN**

**-W.B.YEATS**

The old priest Peter Gilligan  
Was weary night and day;  
For half his flock were in their beds,  
Or under green sods lay.

Once, while he nodded on a chair,  
At the moth-hour of eve,  
Another poor man sent for him,  
And he began to grieve.

'I have no rest, nor joy, nor peace,  
For people die and die';  
And after cried he, 'God forgive!  
My body spake, not I!'

He knelt, and leaning on the chair  
He prayed and fell asleep;  
And the moth-hour went from the fields,  
And stars began to peep.

They slowly into millions grew,  
And leaves shook in the wind;  
And God covered the world with shade,  
And whispered to mankind.

Upon the time of sparrow-chirp  
When the moths came once more.  
The old priest Peter Gilligan  
Stood upright on the floor.

'Mavrone, mavrone! the man has died  
While I slept on the chair';  
He roused his horse out of its sleep,  
And rode with little care.

He rode now as he never rode,  
By rocky lane and fen;  
The sick man's wife opened the door:  
'Father! you come again!'

'And is the poor man dead?' he cried.  
'He died an hour ago.'  
The old priest Peter Gilligan  
In grief swayed to and fro.

'When you were gone, he turned and died  
As merry as a bird.'  
The old priest Peter Gilligan  
He knelt him at that word.

'He Who hath made the night of stars  
For souls who tire and bleed,  
Sent one of His great angels down

To help me in my need.

'He Who is wrapped in purple robes,  
With planets in His care,  
Had pity on the least of things  
Asleep upon a chair.'

The poem is written in multiple stanzas of a very short length. The rhyme scheme and the short length make it a perfect ballad.

The poem starts with the old priest, Peter Gilligan who is very, very tired. Half of his 'flock' were dead. Sleeping in their beds and lying down under the green sods are metaphors for them being dead. 'Flock' here means parish or the people who depend on the priest. This shows that the priest had a considerable number of people depending on him and he is the only one they can depend on. This combined with the 'green sods' gives us an image of a countryside, where people to priest ratio is very high. So, we have a priest in a countryside, presumably a rural area who is very tired.

'Another poor man sends for the priest': This shows that the people who sent for him previously, the half of his flock who are dead, are also mostly poor. So this paints us an image of a poor countryside with a single priest.

The priest grieves hearing that another man was going to die. This shows he cares for the people and that he was a good person. Such a person makes an outburst. This goes to show his tiredness and the extent of death which visited the village recently.

The night descends. Vivid imagery is used to describe its onset. God is said to whisper to mankind. This shows that God is closest to us when we are at our very peaceful and convys the benevolence of the Almighty.

When morning comes, the priest wakes up, in anxiety that he has failed to do his divine duty, and rides like the wind on the horse. 'Rocky lane and fen' and such imagery cement the idea that the setting of the poem is in a poor countryside. 'Mavrone! Mavrone!' the priest cries. This is Irish for a cry of grief. This shows the setting is in an Irish countryside, no surprise there, knowing that Yeats was Irish.

When the priest reaches the poor man's house, fearing he already died when he (the priest) was asleep, the man's wife says, 'Father! You've come again!' Though this is the first time that Father Gilligan came to the man's house, the wife says it is the second. The explanation is given in the following stanzas.

The priest says 'And the poor man died?' He does not notice the 'again' part of the wife's greeting. This shows that he was genuinely distressed for the man. The wife says that he died an hour ago, peacefully and happily when the priest left. It finally sinks to Father Gilligan the implication of what the wife was saying.

He thanks the merciful God who took pity on his tired self and sent an angel of His, to do his work for him.

This is one of the few poems of Yeats that has religious intonations in it.

### **Central Idea of The Ballad of Father Gilligan**

The central idea of the poem is to show that God is merciful. He sends help for those in need of it and at times when they need it the most. The poem also shows the Irish countryside and its poverty and is Yeats's one of the very few contributions to Irish folklore.

### **The tone of The Ballad of Father Gilligan**

The tone of the poem is sad and depressing at first; with all the deaths of the poor people. It turns repentant when Father Gilligan asks for forgiveness for his outburst. Then it turns hurried and suspenseful as he rides quickly to the man's house. Finally, it turns hopeful. It shows that there is a help to those who need it the most.

### **Conclusion**

W B Yeats writes a simple ballad telling a small story with some depths to it.