

## ***On Time***

Fly envious Time, till thou run out thy race,  
Call on the lazy leaden-stepping hours,  
Whose speed is but the heavy plummet's pace;  
And glut thyself with what thy womb devours,  
Which is no more than what is false and vain,  
And merely mortal dross;  
So little is our loss,  
So little is thy gain.  
For when as each thing bad thou hast entombed,  
And last of all thy greedy self consumed,  
Then long Eternity shall greet our bliss  
With an individual kiss,  
And Joy shall overtake us as a flood;  
When every thing that is sincerely good  
And perfectly divine,  
With truth, and peace, and love, shall ever shine  
About the supreme throne  
Of Him, t' whose happy-making sight alone  
When once our heav'nly-guided soul shall climb,  
Then, all this earthly grossness quit,  
Attired with stars, we shall for ever sit,  
Triumphing over Death, and Chance, and thee, O Time.

**John Milton**

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**Introduction Of The Poem :-** In this poem, John Milton has taken “Time” as the primary subject. Milton has personified time as a living being who is destructive in nature. Milton wishes time to come to an end so that the human race can live a life of peace without being worried about the adversities of time. The rhyme scheme of this poem is ABABCDDCEEFFGGHHIIJKKJ .

**Thematic Concern Of “On Time”:-**

The primary thematic concern of this poem is the destruction of time in order to create an eternal world for the human race which will be full of peace and goodness.

### **Explanation Of The Poem :-**

**Fly envious Time, till thou run out thy race,  
Call on the lazy leaden-stepping hours,  
Whose speed is but the heavy plummet's pace;  
And glut thyself with what thy womb devours,**

In the aforementioned lines, Milton addresses time and asks the time to fly. This means that the poet has considered time as an entity which has its own abilities and which is capable of performing certain actions. Therefore, Milton has personified time as a living being and he desires time to die as soon as possible so that the entire humankind can live a peaceful life without being adversely affected by the shackles of time. He is evidently unhappy with the way time influences the world and asks time to call on the hours of life to speed them up as the hours of life pass very slowly . He simply desires to defeat “time” that poses many hurdles in the lives of human beings. Once the time will be extinguished, the entire human race will be able to lead an eternal life and would not be compelled to bear the ravages ( Devastating impact) of time .

The poet then compares the slow movement of time to a “plummet” (or weight) in a clock which descends slowly. Further, he continues to compare time to a glutton (one

who eats in excess) who is eager to devour ( eat quickly and hungrily ) the living things in order to fill his womb (stomach). Hence, Milton portrays time as a villainous living being who simply brings about death and destruction.

**Which is no more than what is false and vain,  
And merely mortal dross;  
So little is our loss,  
So little is thy gain.**

In the aforementioned lines of the verse, the poet says that if time will eat everything that it could possibly eat, time will become successful in taking away everything that is false and vain ( things that have no real value or importance ) . Although humankind will lose many things because time will consume all those things , yet humankind will not be at a loss because those things are valueless and false in nature. Those things are nothing but the worries of the mortal race. The poet further expresses his hatred towards time by taunting time and proclaiming that even after time will have consumed the false and vain worldly things that belong to humankind, it would still have no gain. This is because the worldly things that will be consumed by time are devoid of worth. Hence, even after losing many things at the hands of time, the human race will have lost “so little” whereas time will have gained “so

little” as the worldly things consumed by time are ultimately worthless.

**For when as each thing bad thou hast entombed,  
And last of all thy greedy self - consumed,  
Then long Eternity shall greet our bliss  
With an individual kiss;**

### Meaning Of Difficult Words :-

Entombed : To deposit in a tomb

The poet then continues to say that after time will have entombed every bad or worthless thing on Earth by consuming all the bad things, there will be nothing left for the greedy time to eat except its own self . Hence, time will fulfill its greed by consuming itself and that will result in the extinction of time. In the absence of time, the entire human race will be able to take a sigh of relief and the human race will be able to experience the bliss ( happiness ) of eternity . There will be no pressure of time passing and every individual will be greeted with “an individual kiss ” of welcome from Eternity. This is basically a religious reference to the concept of “afterlife” . According to this religious concept , one day the mortal Earth will come to an end and the entire mankind will enter into a life beyond the present mortal life. The new life or the afterlife will be eternal, that is , it will be endless .

**And Joy shall overtake us as a flood;  
When every thing that is sincerely good  
And perfectly divine,  
With truth, and peace, and love, shall ever shine  
About the supreme throne  
Of Him, t' whose happy-making sight alone**

The poet then continues to say that after the extinction of time from the Earth, the human race will be overpowered by the flood of joy ( happiness ) . Everything on Earth will then be sincerely good and perfectly divine ( Holy or Heavenly ) . The world will shine with truth , peace and love . The poet continues to state that all this goodness and divinity ( Holiness ) will be oriented around God and His “supreme throne”. The sight of the sincere goodness, truth , peace , love and divinity will further result in the creation (making ) of more happy moments.

**When once our heav'nly-guided soul shall clime,  
Then, all this earthly grossness quit,  
Attired with stars, we shall for ever sit,  
Triumphing over Death, and Chance, and thee,  
O Time.**

In the final section section of the poem , the poet says that the humankind will be able to enter into the afterlife and experience eternity only if the “heavenly - guided souls “ of the mortal race will quit the grossness of this Earth in order to go into the “Stars”. The poet also states that he desires to make the time fly quickly in order to meet God and experience eternity. But he wishes to do so, not in death but in life. This means that he desires to experience an eternal life ( which is full of goodness , truth , love and peace) by triumphing ( winning ) over death. After reaching the stage of uniting with God, the humankind will have conquered everything. Heaven will have come to Earth with no need of death. There will be no chance to fear the adversities of time as time will cease to exist in that eternal life of bliss.

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