

2.4

The Pulley

- George Herbert

Central Idea :

The central idea of the poem tells us about the creation of man and all the luxuries and blessings showered on him by his creator (God). God showered on man all the riches he could find on earth but withheld the jewel of 'rest' so that man would seek God when all the treasures bestowed on him would tire him out.

Summary :


'The Pulley' written by George Herbert a Welsh born poet, orator and priest of the Church of England was published posthumously in 1633. His style of writing was metaphysical and theological. He wrote poetry in English, Latin and Greek. The Pulley which was written in the 17th Century is a metaphysical poem that examines the relationship between the Creator and the creation. It helps us to understand how God relates to man and regulates his life. He begins the poem with the Biblical story of the creation of man. He says that God provided man with everything he could crave for in his life. His love further blessed man with strength, wisdom, beauty, honour and pleasure expecting man to worship him (God) who gives him everything. Perceiving that man would get greedy and worship nature and not the God of nature wherein both would be losers, he (God) withheld the treasure 'rest' which would pull man (creation) to God (the creator) just like a pulley lifts up a heavy object to the desired place. In other words he makes man depend on him for survival and man understands, that without God, man is nothing. The poem ends with God having the last say because there would come a time when all the riches in the world would also not give man satisfaction and he would be filled with an emptiness. It is the restlessness (weariness) which would pull man towards God, the giver of all and man would find everlasting peace, just like a restless unhappy child wanting to be hugged flinging itself into its father's arms.

MASTER KEY QUESTION SET - 2.4

Warming Up!

- (1) Go through the following images and try to link those with our lives. For example, Storm - Hardships that we face in our life.

Ans.

Images	What it stands for in our lives
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Live within darkness, which includes magic, mystery and ancient knowledge. Mythology relates the owl to wisdom and knowledge. Owl has been associated with wisdom in many parts of the world, especially ancient Greece.

Rose




- The beauty of this flower expresses promise, hope and a new beginning.
- Rose with its looks and fragrance is used in comparison to all beautiful things.

Tree



- Green leaves on the branches symbolize nature, fertility and life.
- The trunk represents strength, stability, standing firm and withstanding challenges.
- The entire tree represents balanced learning, growth and harmony.
- A tree depicts a fresh start of life; positive energy; good health; bright future; growth and strength; immortality.

Cloud 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rain clouds symbolize doom, gloom, disaster, they obscure our vision and dim our optimism. • Clouds symbolize the element of air which is associated with higher thought, intellectual ideas and abstract thinking.
Flowers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different flowers symbolize different qualities such as wisdom, beauty, loyalty, integrity, love, desire, elegance, daintiness, purity, innocence, pride, good luck.
River 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water of the river symbolizes your mood swings and changes. • Crossing a river indicates overcoming difficulties of life. • Journey towards your goal. • Power of nature. • Symbol of fertility.
Mountains 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depict obstacles • Climbing over mountains indicates overcoming obstacles or making progress. • Climbing up a mountain indicates spiritual or mental rising or improvement. • Represent the stable unmoving element of earth.
Sunrise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sunrise is a symbol of birth and rebirth, of awakening. • It suggests the notations of illumination and hope, the beginning of a new day and thus a chance for happiness and improvement.

(2) **You may have often indulged in talking to yourself audibly.**

For example,

- "Oh, dear! Why didn't I get up sooner?"
- "Let me finish this quickly and then I'll be free".
- "How silly of me! Why didn't I think of it before?"

Such expressions are called Dramatic Monologues. Imagine and write Monologues suitable in the following situations.

(i) **It's your birthday next week.**

Ans. "Good Heavens! How time flies! Next week is my birthday and I haven't planned anything yet."

(ii) **You have been waiting long at the city bus-stop.**

Ans. "Not a single bus in sight. It's half an hour since I'm waiting here. Where the hell have the buses disappeared? The government has to do something about the irregularity."

(iii) **Your final exam results are to be declared tomorrow.**

Ans. "Please God! God please, let me get good marks in my results tomorrow. I'll promise you I'll be regular in my studies."

(iv) **Your mother has been chatting for very long on the telephone.**

Ans. "Oh! Come on mama, I'm hungry. You have been on the phone for so long and you shout at me when I'm on the phone."

(3) **'The Pulley' is a mechanical device.**

Try and write down places where it can be used, and for what purpose.

Ans.

- In a cargo lift system that allows items to be hoisted to higher floors.
- Wells use the pulley to hoist the bucket out of the well.
- Many types of exercise equipments use pulleys in order to function at the gym.
- At the construction sites pulleys are used to lift and place heavy material.
- Modern elevators use pulleys to pull the weight of people against gravity.
- Flagpoles on a sailboat or a ship uses a pulley system to hoist a flag or bring it down.

Reading Skills and Poetic Device

Q.1. Read the extract and answer the following questions:

Extract - I (Textbook Page No. 71)

When God at first made Man,

Having a glass of blessings standing by;

Let us (said He) "pour on him all we can:"

Let the worlds riches, which *dispersed* lie,

Contract into a span.

So strength first made a way;

Then beauty flow'd, then wisdom, honour, pleasure:

When almost all was out, God made a stay,

Perceiving that alone of all His treasure

Rest in the bottom lay.

Glossary

- (1) **riches** (*n*) - valuables
- (2) **dispersed** (*v*) - scattered
- (3) **contract** (*v*) - become less, collect together
- (4) **span** (*n*) - small space
- (5) **perceiving** (*v*) - noticing, becoming conscious of

A.1. Factual Questions:

- (1) **Write whether true or false and correct if the statement is false.**
 - (i) God bestowed all the blessings on man without withholding anything.
 - (ii) The most precious gift was at the bottom of the glass of blessings.

Ans.

- (i) False - He bestowed upon man all his blessings except 'rest', so that when man was weary, he would have to return to God of rest and peace.
- (ii) True

A.2. Interpretative/ Complex/ Inference Questions:

- *(1) What did God's glass of blessings contain?**

Ans. God's glass of blessings contained all the world's riches man could crave for.

- (2) What does God bless man with?**

Ans. God blesses man with all the material riches he can find on the earth as well as beauty, wisdom, honour, pleasure and strength.

- (3) What does God perceive?**

Ans. God perceives that He has gifted all treasures except rest to man.

- (4) What does God do to put man in his place?**

Ans. To keep man within his limits, God withholds the treasure of 'rest' from man.

- (5) Explain the line - 'When almost all was out, God made a stay'.**

Ans. The above line means that when God made man

He bestowed him with all the worlds riches and further bestowed him strength, wisdom, beauty, honour and pleasure. God gave man everything he could want but then restrained from giving the precious treasure 'rest' which if given would make man adore the gifts he possessed and not the giver who bestowed these gifts upon him.

A.3. Poetic Device Questions:

- (1) Identify the rhyme scheme of the 1st stanza.**

Ans. The rhyme scheme of the 1st stanza is ababa.

- (2) Pick out two pairs of rhyming words from the extract.**

Ans. Man-can-span, by-lie, way-stay-lay, Pleasure-treasure

- (3) Pick out the synonym of 'scattered' from the extract.**

Ans. dispersed

- (4) So strength first made a way (Identify the figure of speech of the above line)**

Ans. The figure of speech of the above line is 'Personification' as 'Strength' an abstract idea is given a human quality.

- (5) Let us (said He) "pour on him all we can:" (Identify the figure of speech)**

Ans. The figure of speech of the above line is a Biblical Allusion wherein a brief and indirect reference is made to the story of the beginning of mankind in the 'Book of Genesis'.

- (6) When almost all was out, (Identify the figure of speech).**

Ans. (i) Alliteration - The sound of 'a' is repeated for better poetic effect. (ii) Assonance - When two or more words close to one another repeat the same vowel sound. In the above line, 'a' in the words is stressed upon.

- (7) Pick out a line which has a 'Paradox' as the figure of speech.**

Ans. 'Rest in the bottom lay'

This line is a paradox because the line happens to contradict itself 'Rest' the most precious gift should have been at the top but it is at the bottom.

- (8) Pick out a line which has an 'Inversion' as a figure of speech.**

Ans. Rest in the bottom lay. The correct word order is 'Rest lay in the bottom'.

Q.2. Read the extract and answer the following question:

Extract - II (Textbook Page No. 71)

"For if I should" (said He)

Bestow this jewel also on my creature,

He would adore my gifts instead of me,

And rest in Nature, not the God of Nature.

So both should losers be.

Yet let him keep the rest,

But keep them with repining restlessness:

Let him be rich and weary, that at last,

If goodness lead him not, yet weariness

May toss him to my breast.

- George Herbert

Glossary

- (1) **bestow on** (*phr*) - give as a gift to
- (2) **jewel** (*n*) - precious valuable thing, (here) contentment (rest)
- (3) **adore** (*v*) - to love very much
- (4) **repining**
restlessness (*phr*) - continuous anxiety due to dissatisfaction.
- (5) **weary** (*adj*) - very tired
- (6) **toss** (*v*) - (here) bring

A.1. Factual Questions:

(1) **Complete the sentence.**

- (i) If God would bestow the jewel of rest on man, man would
- (ii) If goodness does not lead man to God then

Ans.

- (i) adore God's gifts instead of God.
- (ii) weariness may toss man to God's breast.

A.2. Interpretative/ Complex/ Inference Questions:

***(1) What would the human being do if God gifted him with 'Rest'?**

Ans. If God gifted man 'Rest', he would become conceited and rebellious and would forget 'God'.

(2) When would man adore the gifts of nature instead of God?

Ans. Man would adore the gifts of nature instead of

God, if God would have bestowed the jewel of 'rest' on man.

(3) What would surely lead man towards God?

Ans. Man's weariness would surely lead man towards God.

(4) Explain the line - So both should losers be.

Ans. This line tells us that if God would have bestowed the jewel of rest on man, man would forget his true creator and in this way, man stands to lose eternal peace and God stands to lose a devotee.

A.3. Poetic Device Questions:

(1) Pick out the rhyming words from the first stanza

Ans. he – me – be, creature - nature.

(2) (Identify the figure of speech of the line)

- (i) If goodness lead him not, yet weariness
May toss him to my breast.

Ans.

- (i) The figure of speech of the above line is Personification as 'weariness' and goodness are given a human quality for better poetic effect.
- (ii) The above line is also a Synecdoche because the word 'breast' is used to represent 'God'. A part is used to represent a whole:

(3) Write the rhyme scheme of the 1st stanza from the given extract.

Ans. The rhyme scheme is ababa.

(4) Pick out a line which has an 'Alliteration' as a figure of speech.

Ans. 'But keep them with repining restlessness' is an example of Alliteration because it has the sound of 'r' which is repeated for better poetic effect.

(5) Bestow this jewel also on my creature. (Identify the figure of speech)

Ans. The figure of speech is Metaphor because 'rest' is indirectly compared to a 'jewel'.

***Q.3. Write the critical appreciation of the poem in a paragraph format.**

Ans. The poem 'The Pulley' written by George Herbert was published posthumously in 1633. The Pulley is a metaphysical poem which is religious in nature. Metaphysical poems flourished in the 17th century when religion was given a lot of

importance. The influence of religion is clearly seen in the poem 'The Pulley'. The poet in this poem compares the relationship between God and man with a metaphorical pulley. In his religious poem, written from the heart, he creates a myth about God's creation of the world and humankind. He presents this with the metaphor of a pulley, a scientific equipment which helps to lift or lower heavy things. The poem is in the form of a monologue.

The poem is spiced with many figures of speech namely Pun, Paradox, Extended Metaphor Synecdoche, etc. adding to the flavour of the poem. The rhyme scheme ababa has got a beautiful poetic texture. The tone of the poem is spiritual and serious. The mood of the poem is thoughtful and reflective.

The central idea of the poem revolves around God creating mankind and showering his infinite love on them in the form of various blessings and gifts. God intended to give it all but something stopped him. He visualized man to become conceited and rebellious if all the gifts were showered on him so he withheld the most precious treasure i.e. 'rest'. This was done, so that man would give due respect to his creator. By withholding the precious jewel 'rest' from man, though he had everything that money could buy, he would be restless and it would be this restlessness which would lift him towards God just like a pulley. The whole poem has a beautiful Imagery which colourfully unfolds before us.

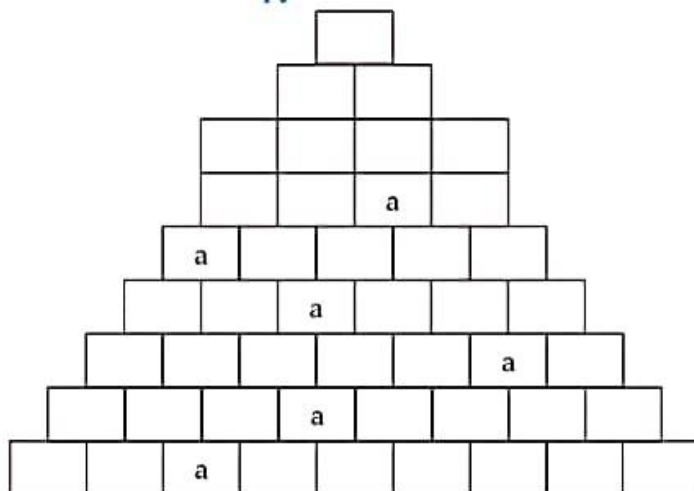
My favorite lines in this poem are 'Let the world's riches, which dispersed lie, Contract into a span. If goodness leads him not, yet weariness May toss him to my breast'

I like the poem because it shows the true nature of man. It teaches us to be humble and to be happy and satisfied with whatever God has endowed us with. It is also amusing that God would use a scientific invention 'The Pulley' to keep this creation under control and keep him bound to his creator.

Extension: Read William Blake's 'The Divine Image' and compare it with 'The Pulley'.

ENGLISH WORKSHOP

- (1) With the help of the clues pick out words containing the letter 'a' from the poem and build a word-pyramid.



- (i) an article (ii) a preposition (iii) past tense of 'lie'
(iv) maximum length of your open palm
(v) make much of (vi) loveliness (vii) in place of
(viii) a collection of priceless valuables
(ix) restlessness and discontent

Ans. (i) a (ii) at (iii) lay (iv) span (v) adore (vi) beauty
(vii) instead (viii) treasure (ix) weariness

- (2) Choose the correct alternative from the following:

- (i) Herbert's poem 'The Pulley' displays as the two main themes.

- (a) Origins and Morality / Spirituality
(b) Origin of species
(c) Origin of the universe / galaxy
(d) Origin of the earth / space

- (ii) The summary of the poem 'The Pulley' is
(Find two correct statements from the given alternatives.)

- (a) to focus on the mechanical operation of a pulley.
(b) to teach a lesson to a creation (man) by the Creator (God)
(c) to know the different gifts bestowed on man by God.
(d) to remind man about his creator in his exhaustion.
(e) God pulled man towards Him by making him restless and weary.

- (iii) In the poem, 'The Pulley' is considered -
 (a) a mechanical device.
 (b) a gift to mankind
 (c) an image to lift objects.
 (d) an image by which God compels people to become devout.
- (iv) is an example of Pun from the poem.
 (a) Rest in the bottom lay.
 (b) So strength first made a way.
 (c) Having a glass of blessings
 (d) So both should losers be
- (v) is an example of Paradox from the poem.
 (a) And rest in Nature, not the God of Nature.
 (b) He would adore my gifts instead of me.
 (c) Let him be rich and weary.
 (d) When God at first made man.
- (vi) is an example of Synecdoche from the poem.
 (a) So both should losers be.
 (b) Then beauty flowed.
 (c) "Let us" said he pour on him.
 (d) May toss him to my breast.
- (vii) is an example of Alliteration from the poem.
 (a) made a way
 (b) bottom lay.
 (c) repining restlessness
 (d) keep the rest.
- (viii) is an example of Inversion from the poem.
 (a) Contract into a span.
 (b) So both should losers be.
 (c) Bestow this jewel.
 (d) And rest in nature.
- (ix) The rhyme scheme of the poem is
 (a) a a b b c (b) a b c b c
 (c) a b c c b (d) a b a b a

Ans. (i - a), (ii - b), (iii - d), (iv - a), (v - a), (vi - b), (vii - c), (viii - b), (ix - d).

(3) Discuss and answer in your own words and write in your notebook.

(i) The poet has used the word REST thrice in the poem. Write what the word implies in each of the three lines it occurs.

Ans.

(a) Rest in the bottom lay: Here 'rest' is referred to as a treasure (which means peace and contentment).

(b) And rest in Nature, not the God of Nature: Here 'rest' means appreciate and worship the things available around him in nature.

(c) Yet let him keep the 'rest': Here 'rest' means the remaining qualities and blessings bestowed upon man.

(ii) What does God want in return from man, for the gift he has bestowed upon him?

Ans. God wants man to be grateful and worship him, who has bestowed all the gifts upon him.

(iii) Why did God withhold the gift of 'Rest' from man?

Ans. God withheld the gift of 'Rest' from man because he knew that if all the gifts were bestowed on man he would become greedy and conceited and forget his maker.

(iv) Besides those given in the poem, what other gifts has God blessed mankind with? Enlist them.

Ans. material wealth - nature / environment
 good health - man, the most intelligent of all animals.
 proper sight / vision
 love - speech

(v) When does man generally turn to God? Give one example to support your response.

Ans. Man generally turns to God in times of difficulties, trials and tribulations. Whenever we are in difficulty, it is God of whom we think first. This is not so when there is a reason for joy or entertainment.

(4) (A) Discuss with your group and justify the title of the poem 'The Pulley' in your own words.

Ans. The Pulley is a scientific representation of man's helplessness and reliance on God for salvation. The poem invokes a visual imagery of a heavy object being lifted up by a Pulley to the desired place. The Pulley in the poem is mans restlessness and weariness which acts as a Pulley to reach God.

(B) Pick out 3 lines that contain Monologues of God.

Ans.

(i) Let us "pour on him all we can".

(ii) Let the worlds riches, which dispersed lie.

- (iii) For if I should bestow.
 (iv) Let him be rich and weary
 (5) (A) Pick out two lines that contain the following figures of speech.

Ans.

(i) **Antithesis :**

- (a) Let the world's riches, which dispersed lie, contract into a span.
 (b) Perceiving that alone of all his treasures.

(ii) **Alliteration :**

- (a) When God at twist made man.
 (b) But keep them with repinning restlessness.

(iii) **Inversion :**

- (a) Rest in the bottom lay.
 (b) So both should losers be.

(B) **Explain the figures of speech in the following lines.**

(i) **Rest in the bottom lay**

Ans. Rest in the bottom lay—PUN because **rest** means 'to withhold the remaining' it also means 'to relax, sleep or have peace of mind'.

(ii) **Bestow this jewel also on my creature**

Ans. Bestow this jewel also on my creature—METAPHOR because 'rest' is compared to 'a jewel'. This is an example of an indirect comparison.

(iii) **And rest in nature, not the God of Nature**

Ans. And rest in nature, not the God of Nature—REPETITION because the word 'nature' has been repeated for better poetic effect.

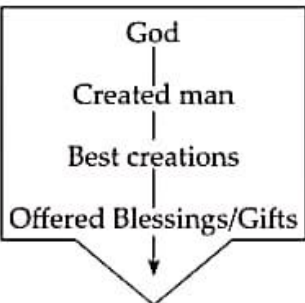
(6) **'Pun' can be defined as a play on words based on their different meanings. Example: 'Writing with a broken pencil is pointless.' In this poem there is an example of Pun. Find and make a sentence of your own. Share a joke with the class where the use of 'Pun' creates humour.**


Ans. This actor has lots of dates.

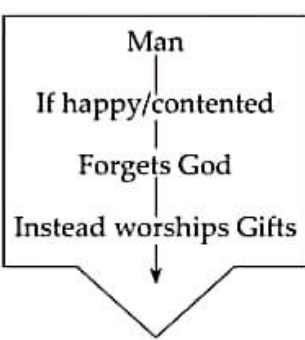
WRITING SKILLS

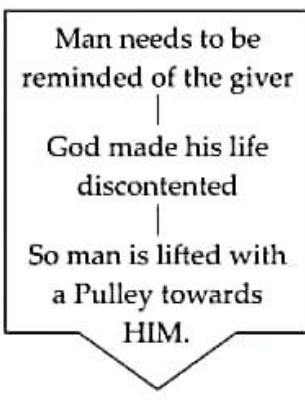
- (7) **Write a paragraph on the points in each block given below to get a summary on each of the four stanzas of the poem.**

Ans.

- (i)  God the creator, created man, the most prized possession. He, therefore, decided to bestow all the best qualities and blessings on man.

- (ii)  God gifted man blessings such as strength, wisdom, beauty, honour and pleasure. When only 'rest' remained at the bottom, God decided to withhold it from man.

- (iii)  Good believes that if man would get contentment and peace along with all the other blessings, man would appreciate and worship the materialistic gifts abundantly available to him and not the creator and giver i.e. God.

- (iv)  Man, therefore, needs to be weary, restless and discontented so that he is constantly reminded of his creator. God, who has given him all the other gifts. Eventually, it is this weariness and discontentment which will act as a pulley and lift man towards God.