

**Bachelor of Arts (DDE)**

**Semester – IV**

**Paper Code –**

**ENGLISH – IV**



## **B.A. Part-II (Semester-IV)**

### **(English Compulsory)**

**Paper Code:**

**Scheme of Examination:**

**Maximum Marks: 80**

Prescribed Book: Literature & Language-IV

#### **Instructions to the Paper Setters and Students.**

- Question 1.** Explanation with reference to the context: Students will be required to attempt any two out of the given three passages. **5x2=10**
- Question 2.** Short answer type questions: Students will be required to answer any five out of the given eight in about 50 words each. **5x3=15**
- Question 3.** Essay type questions: Students will be required to answer two questions in about 150-200 words each. There will be internal choice in both the questions. **7½x2=15**
- Question 4.** Student will be required to write short notes on any four of the given six poetic forms & devices. **10**
- Question 5.** Grammar: Pre-fix and Suffix; This will be a “Do as Directed” type question. Students will be required to attempt any twenty out of the given thirty items. **20**
- Question 6** Translation of a short passage from English to Hindi **5**
- Question 7** Dialogue Writing: Students will be required to compose dialogues on one of the given three topics (in about 150 words) **5**

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Distance Education Notes : Literature & Language-IV

**B.A Part-II (Semester-IV)**  
**(English Compulsory)**  
**Paper Code BA4001-IV**

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# UNIT-1

## SONNET XVIII

William Shakespeare

### Structure

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- 1.1 Unit Objectives
- 1.2 About the Poet
- 1.3 About the Poem
- 1.4 Summary
- 1.5 Key Terms
- 1.6 Answers to Check Your Progress
- 1.7 Explanation of Important Passages
- 1.8 Questions and Exercises

### 1.0 Introduction

Sonnet 18, often alternatively titled *Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?*, is one of the best-known of 154 sonnets written by the English playwright and poet William Shakespeare. Part of the Fair Youth sequence (which comprises sonnets 1–126 in the accepted numbering stemming from the first edition in 1609), it is the first of the cycle after the opening sequence now described as the procreation sonnets.

In the sonnet, the speaker asks whether or not he should compare his beloved to the summer season, and argues that he should not because the comparison does not properly express the depths of his emotion. He also states that his beloved will live on forever through the words of the poem. Scholars have found parallels within the poem to Ovid's *Tristia* and *Amores*, both of which have love themes. Sonnet 18 is written in the typical Shakespearean sonnet form, having 14 lines of iambic pentameter ending in a rhymed couplet. Detailed exegeses have revealed several double meanings within the poem, giving it a greater depth of interpretation.

### 1.1 Unit Objectives

The objective of this unit/poem is to help the students in understanding the poetic capabilities and deep insight of William Shakespeare, a well-known playwright and poet of the Elizabethan Age. The students need to be well versed in understanding the finer aspects of Shakespearean Sonnet.

### 1.2 About the Poet

William Shakespeare (26 April 1564 – 23 April 1616) an English poet, playwright, and actor, is considered to be one of the greatest writer in the English Literature. He is called England's national poet, and the "Bard of Avon". He has written 38 plays, 154 sonnets, two long narrative poems. The popularity of his splays can be gauged by the fact that they have been translated into major languages all around the world.

Shakespeare was born and brought up in Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire. At the age of 18, he married Anne Hathaway. Shakespeare produced most of his known work between 1589 and 1613. His early plays were primarily comedies and histories, which are regarded as some of the best work ever produced in these genres. He then wrote mainly tragedies until about 1608, including *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, and *Macbeth*, considered some of the finest works in the English language. In his last phase, he wrote tragicomedies, also known as romances, and collaborated with other playwrights. His *Sonnets* are considered to be his last non-dramatic works to be printed. He is credited with the creation of the Shakespearean sonnet. The Shakespearean sonnet is divided into four parts. The first three parts are each four lines long, and are known as quatrains, rhymed ABAB; the fourth part is called the couplet, and is rhymed CC.

### 1.3 About the Poem

#### Sonnet XVIII

*Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?  
 Thou art more lovely and more temperate:  
 Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,  
 And summer's lease hath all too short a date:  
 Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,  
 And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;  
 And every fair from fair sometime declines,  
 By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd;  
 But thy eternal summer shall not fade  
 Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest;  
 Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,  
 When in eternal lines to time thou growest:  
 So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,  
 So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.*

The Poet begins the poem with a question addressed to the friend: "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?" The next eleven lines are devoted to such a comparison. The poem, in fact, is a tribute to beauty. The poem is a statement of praise about the beauty of the fair youth who is 'more lovely and temperate' than a summer's day. The final quatrain of the sonnet tells how the beloved differs from the summer in that respect: his beauty is permanent. In the couplet, the poet explains how the beloved's beauty will accomplish this feat, and not perish because it is preserved in the poem, which will last forever; it will live "as long as men can breathe or eyes can see."

#### 1.4 Summary

Sonnet 18 is considered to be memorable for the dexterous and diverse presentation of the topic, in which the poet's feelings reach a level of delight.

The poet believes that beauty of his friend is "more lovely and more temperate" than a summer's day. The speaker lists some negative things about summer: it is short—"summer's lease hath all too short a date"—and sometimes the sun is too hot—"Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines." However, his

friend's beauty will last forever, unlike the fleeting beauty of a summer's day. By putting his love's beauty into the form of poetry, the poet is preserving it forever. "*So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see, So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.*" The lover's beauty will live on, through the poem which will last as long as it can be read. On the surface, the poem is simply a statement of praise about his friend's beauty; summer tends to unpleasant extremes of windiness and heat, but his friend is always mild and temperate. Summer is incidentally personified as the "eye of heaven" with its "gold complexion"; the imagery throughout is simple and unaffected, with the "darling buds of May" giving way to the "eternal summer", which the speaker promises his friend. Finally, the poet believes that his verses will live forever and though these verses the beauty of his friend shall remain alive for ever.

### 1.5 Key Terms

*temperate* (1): i.e., evenly-tempered; not overcome by passion.

the eye of heaven (5): i.e., the sun.

every fair from fair sometime declines (7): i.e., the beauty (fair) of everything beautiful (fair) will fade (declines).

nature's changing course (8): i.e., the natural changes age brings.

that fair thou ow'st (10): i.e., that beauty you possess.

in eternal lines...growest (12): The poet is using a grafting metaphor in this line. Grafting is a technique used to join parts from two plants with cords so that they grow as one. Thus the beloved becomes immortal, grafted to time with the poet's cords (his "eternal lines").

### 1.6 Answers to Check Your Progress

#### 1. Who is the Writer of this Sonnet?

Ans: William Shakespeare.

#### 2. Who does the poet compare his friend with?

Ans: The poet compares his friend with a summer's day.

#### 3. What is 'the eye of heaven'?

Ans: The 'eye of heaven' is the sun in this poem.

#### 4. What does the poet say will live forever?

Ans: According to the poet his own verse and the beauty and youth of his friend shall live for ever.

### 1.7 Explanation of Important Passages:

Passage 1

*Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?  
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:  
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,  
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:*

**Reference to the Context:**

These lines have been taken from William Shakespeare's famous sonnet "Sonnet XVIII". In this poem the poet compliments the unparalleled splendour of his friend, the Earl of Southampton.

**Explanation:**

The poet asks a question whether he should compare him to a summer day. But at once the poet himself answers that his friend is more lovely and sweet than a summer day. Though, sometimes the rough winds blowing during the summer season do shake the darling buds that sprung during the month of the may and summer season is also too short-lived

**Passage 2**

*Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,  
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;  
And every fair from fair sometime declines,  
By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd;*

**Reference to the Context:**

These lines have been taken from William Shakespeare's famous sonnet "Sonnet XVIII". In this poem the poet compliments the unparalleled splendour of his friend, the Earl of Southampton.

**Explanation:**

In these lines the poet says that usually a summer day is sweet and pleasant but sometimes the sun shines very hot. Quite often Sun's golden complexion loses its brightness. In fact, every beautiful object loses its beauty after some time. It happens due to chance or by the law of nature.

**Passage 3**

*But thy eternal summer shall not fade  
Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest;  
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,  
When in eternal lines to time thou growest:*

**Reference to the Context:**

These lines have been taken from William Shakespeare's famous sonnet "Sonnet XVIII". In this poem the poet compliments the unparalleled splendour of his friend, the Earl of Southampton.

**Explanation:**

In these lines the poet says that though every beautiful thing in the world loses its beauty but your beauty shall never fade away. Even death shall not be able to brag that the poet's friend wanders in its shade. Rather poet's friend shall become immortal when he is mentioned by the poet in his verse.

**Passage 4**

*So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,  
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.*



**Reference to the Context:**

These lines have been taken from William Shakespeare's famous sonnet "Sonnet XVIII". In this poem the poet compliments the unparalleled splendour of his friend, the Earl of Southampton.

**Explanation:**

In these lines the poet feels that his verses will live so long as men can breathe or eyes can see. In fact the poet wants to immortalise his friend through his verses. People will read his verses all through the ages and through his verses will come to know his friend's beauty as well.

**1.8 Questions and Exercises**

Answer the following questions in 20 to 30 words.

**1. Who is 'thee' referred to in the Sonnet?**

Ans: Although there is no written evidence about who is this 'thee' referred to in the poem. Presumably it is referred to poet's friend.

**2. Who is 'thee' compared to?**

Ans: 'thee' is compared to a summer's day and all the beautiful objects/creations of the nature. The poet feels that 'thee' is immortal due to poet's verses.

**3. What does the poet say about the month of May?**

Ans: According to the poet in the month of May lovely flowers bloom. But, quite often in the month of May it becomes too hot, and rough winds shudder the lovely buds of May.

**4. How does the poet eulogise eternal summer?**

Ans: The poet feels that summer is a season of warmth and lovely flowers bloom all throughout. This everlasting summer represents endless youth and beauty.

**5. How does the poet compare eternity with mortality?**

Ans: poet calls all beautiful things mortal i.e they are subject to death and transience. Whereas great work of art like poet's own verses are eternal i.e are timelessness.

**6. How does the poet talk about death?**

Ans: In this poem William Shakespeare has personified death. Shakespeare calls death all powerful and all the creations wander in its shade.

**Answer the following questions in about 200 words each.**

**1. Sum up the idea of beauty as talked about in the poem.**

Ans: The poet believes that beauty of his friend is "*more lovely and more temperate*" than a summer's day. The speaker lists some negative things about summer: it is short—"summer's lease hath all too short a date"—and sometimes the sun is too hot—"Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines." However, his friend's beauty will last forever, unlike the fleeting beauty of a summer's day. By putting his love's beauty into the form of poetry, the poet is preserving it forever. "*So long as men*

*can breathe, or eyes can see, So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.*" The lover's beauty will live on, through the poem which will last as long as it can be read. On the surface, the poem is simply a statement of praise about his friend's beauty; summer tends to unpleasant extremes of windiness and heat, but his friend is always mild and temperate. Summer is incidentally personified as the "eye of heaven" with its "gold complexion"; the imagery throughout is simple and unaffected, with the "darling buds of May" giving way to the "eternal summer", which the speaker promises his friend. Finally, the poet believes that his verses will live for ever and though these verses the beauty of his friend shall remain alive for ever.

**2. What is a sonnet? How does Shakespeare use other poetic devices in this poem?**

Ans: A *sonnet* is a fourteen-line lyric poem, traditionally written in iambic pentameter—that is, in lines ten syllables long, with accents falling on every second syllable, as in: "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?" The sonnet form first became popular during the Italian Renaissance, when the poet Petrarch published a sequence of love sonnets addressed to an idealized woman named Laura. Sonnet is usually of two types :

Petrarchan sonnet and Shakespearean sonnet. The Petrarchan sonnet is divided into two parts, *octave* and a *sestet*, with a rhyme scheme *abba abba cdecde*. The Shakespearean sonnet consists of three quatrains *abab cdcd efef* and a concluding couplet *gg*.

Shakespeare has used other poetic devices in the poem to heighten the poetic effect.

Shakespeare has used alliteration, 'And every fair from fair sometimes declines' personification, 'Nor shall death brag thou wander'st in his shade' metaphor, 'Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines'.

**3. It is presumed that rather than immortalising his King, the poet tries to establish his own credentials. Comment on this.**

Ans: The poem starts with a flattering question to the beloved—"Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?" The poem starts with a tribute to the beauty and youth of poet's friend. But soon the poet declares that his friend is far more beautiful and sweet than a summer's day, because it is short—"summer's lease hath all too short a date"—and sometimes the sun is too hot—"Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines." However, his friend's beauty will last forever, unlike the fleeting beauty of a summer's day.

However, the poet does not mean that his friend is immortal, rather he emphasises that it is his verses which are immortal. Infact, the poet is praising his own poetry which he feels will remain forever.

**4. 'Shakespeare in his poem compares permanence and transience.' Comment on this assessment of the poem.**

Ans: In this poem William Shakespeare has compared transience of human life or natural beauty with permanence of his own verses or art. The poet says that all beautiful things lose their beauty after some time. He states that summer's day, lovely blooming buds of May are short lived, as they are

shaken by the rough winds. But in a self-praising tone, the poet states that his own verse is permanent. To quote :

*So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,  
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.*

Whatever one may feel about the sentiment expressed in the sonnet and especially in these last two lines, one cannot help but notice an abrupt change in the poet's own estimate of his poetic writing. Thus, in this poem William Shakespeare believes that his verses will live forever and through these verses the beauty of his friend shall remain alive for ever.