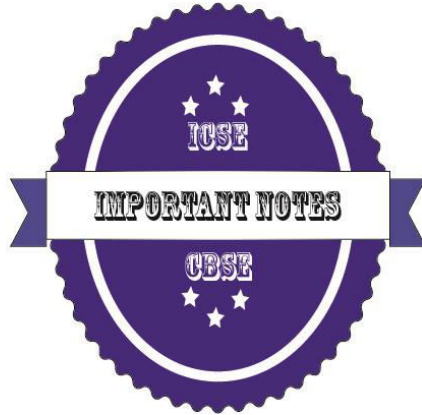


## On Killing A Tree-



Extra Questions and Notes

### INTRODUCTION

In this poem, the poet symbolizes a deep-rooted evil. He says that a tree can't be killed out just by hacking and chopping it. To put it to a permanent end, it should be uprooted entirely and left out to wither in the sun. In the same way, the social evil can't be put out just by criticising them. The society should root them up to die forever.

(इस कविता में कवि एक वृक्ष की तुलना गहरी जड़ों वाली एक सामाजिक बुराई से करता है। वह कहता है कि मात्र काटने या फाड़ने से एक वृक्ष को हम मार (समाप्त) नहीं सकते हैं। इसको हमेशा के लिए समाप्त करने के लिए पूर्ण रूप से जड़ से उखाड़ कर धूप में सूखने के लिए छोड़ दिया जाना चाहिए। इसी प्रकार से मात्र आलोचना करने से सामाजिक बुराइयों का अंत नहीं किया जा सकता। समाज को उन्हें हमेशा के लिए मारने के लिए जड़ से उखाड़ देना चाहिए।)

## **THEME**

“On Killing a Tree” is a scathing criticism of human callousness and cruelty in chopping down trees for agriculture, urbanization and industrialization. Apparently, the poem reads like a ‘How-to-Do’ manual of killing a tree but actually, it is a passionate appeal not to cut trees. The poem also applauds the sturdiness and resilience of trees in that they take all kinds of attacks and wounds in their stride but refuse to die. They may be wounded, scarred or maimed, but they bounce back into life by healing themselves in due course of time. One wonders if human beings can ever have that kind of attitude to life.

## **TITLE**

The title of the poem is simple and appropriate as it contains the major concern of the poet – merciless and callous felling of trees. It indicates appropriately that the poem is about the process of killing of the tree. The entire poem explains the

view that killing a tree is not a simple, short or easy process. Trees have tremendous strength and a great instinct for survival.

### **MESSAGE**

The poem conveys the message that trees are living beings just like any other form of life. They have strong survival instincts and can withstand any type of assault, trauma or crisis. It is not easy to kill them, for they have a never-say-die attitude to life. Every time they are attacked, injured or scraped, they heal themselves and regain their glory. However, if they are uprooted and left in the air and the sun, they die. We human beings must live just as trees do.

### **MESSAGE**

The poem conveys the message that trees are living beings just like any other form of life. They have strong survival instincts and can withstand any type of assault, trauma or crisis. It is not easy to kill them, for they have a never-say-die attitude to life. Every time they are attacked, injured or scraped, they heal themselves and regain their glory. However, if they are uprooted and left in the air and the sun, they die. We human beings must live just as trees do.

### **Summary:**

The poet says that if we wish to kill a tree it takes a lot of time. A simple job of the knife can't kill a tree. A tree grows up by getting food and other nutritious from the earth. It absorbs sunlight, air and water for years and becomes very strong. If we try to hack and chop it, it does not feel much pain. Its bleeding bark heals very soon. Small twigs begin to shoot up from it and soon they become very big and strong.

The poet says that the real strength of a tree lies in its roots. If we want to kill a tree forever, its roots should be pulled out completely. They should be left in open to withering in sun and chock in the air. Thus after a long process of changing shapes and colours, we can say that a tree is killed

### **SUMMARY IN HINDI**

कवि कहता है कि यदि हम एक वृक्ष को मारना चाहते हैं तो इसमें बहुत अधिक समय लग जाता है। साधारण चाकू के द्वारा किए गए केवल एक कटाव से वृक्ष मर नहीं सकता है। वृक्षा धरती से भोजन और अन्य पोषक तत्व प्राप्त करके बड़ा होता है। वह सूर्य के प्रकाश, हवा और जल को

वर्षों तक चूसता रहता है और बहुत ही शक्तिशाली बन जाता है। यदि हम इसे काटने या फाड़ने का प्रयास करते हैं तो इससे इसको अधिक पीडा नहीं होती है। इसकी रक्त बहती हुई त्वचा जल्दी ही ठीक हो जाती है। उससे छोटी-छोटी टहनियाँ फूट पड़ती हैं और शीघ्र ही वे बहुत बड़ी और शक्तिशाली हो जाती है।

कवि कहता है कि वृक्ष की असली ताकत उसकी जड़ों में होती है। यदि हम वृक्ष को हमेशा के लिए मारना चाहते हैं तो उसकी जड़ों को पूर्ण रूप से बाहर निकाल लिया जाना चाहिए। उन्हें खुले में छोड़ दिया जाना चाहिए ताकि वे धूप में मुरझा जाएँ और हवा के कारण उनका दम घुट जाए। इस प्रकार से आकार और रंग बदलने की एक लंबी प्रक्रिया के पश्चात हम कह सकते हैं कि वृक्ष मर गया है।

## COMPREHENSION OF STANZAS

### STANZA 1

It takes much time to kill a tree,

Not a simple jab of the knife

Will do it. it has grown

Slowly consuming the earth,

Rising out of it, feeding

Upon its crust, absorbing

Years of sunlight, air, water,

And out of its leprous hide

Sprouting leaves.

हिंदी अनुवाद – पेड़ को मारने (समाप्त करने) में बहुत समय लग जाता है। चाकू की एक चुभन मात्र से पेड़ को नहीं मारा जा सकता। यह धरती से पोषण प्राप्त करते हुए और इसकी ऊपरी

सतह से उगते हुए वर्षों तक धूप ,हवा और पानी को चूसते हुए बड़ा होता है । इसकी छाल में से पत्ते निकलते रहते हैं और ये ऐसे प्रतीत होते हैं जैसे कि इस पर कुछ रोग के अनेक रंगों के धब्बे पड़ गए हों ।

Questions :

- (a) Name the poem and the poet.
- (b) Can we kill a tree just with a simple jab of the knife?
- (c) How does a tree grow up?
- (d) What does it absorb for years?
- (e) What does a tree symbolize in this poem?

Answers :

- (a) The name of the poem is 'On killing A Tree' and the name of the poet is 'Gieve Patel'.
- (b) No, we can't kill a tree just with a simple jab of the knife.
- (c) A tree grows up consuming the earth.
- (d) It absorbs sunlight, air and water.
- (e) It symbolizes a deep-rooted evil.

**STANZA 2**

So hack and chop

But this alone won't do it.

Not so much pain will do it.

The bleeding bark will heal

And front close to the ground

Will rise curled green twigs,

Miniature boughs

Which if unchecked will expand again

To former size.



हिंदी अनुवाद –इसलिए इसे भारी चोटें मार-मार कर फाड़ना चाहिए । परंतु मात्र इतना करने से ही पेड़ मर नहीं जाएगा । इससे उसे अधिक पीड़ा भी नहीं होगी । उसकी घायल छाल जल्दी ही ठीक हो जाएगीं और छोटी –छोटी कुंडली के आकार की हरी शाखाएँ निकलेगी और यदि उन्हें रोका (तोड़ा) नहीं गया तो वे पहले के आकार की हो जाएँगी ।

Questions :

- (a) How should we kill a tree?
- (b) That alone can't kill a tree?
- (c) What will happen to its bleeding skin?
- (d) What rises from close to the ground?
- (e) What is the meaning of 'miniature boughs'?

Answers :

- (a) We should kill a tree by hacking and chopping it.
- (b) Hacking and chopping alone can't kill a tree.
- (c) Its bleeding skin will heal very soon.
- (d) Small green twigs rise from close to the ground.
- (e) 'Miniature boughs' means small branches.

**STANZA 3**

No,

The root is to be pulled out-

Out of the anchoring earth;

It is to be roped, tied,

And pulled out-snapped out

Or pulled out entirely,

Questions :

(a) What should we do to kill a tree entirely?

(b) What is the main anchor of the trees?

(c) Where does the strength of a tree lie?

(d) What should we do to its roots?

(e) Name the poem and the poet

Answers :

- (a) To kill a tree entirely we should pull out its root from the earth.
- (b) The earth is the main anchor of the trees.
- (c) The strength of a tree lies in its roots.
- (d) The roots should be snapped and taken out of the earth
- (e) The name of the poem is 'On Killing A Tree' and the name of the poet is 'Cleve Patel'.

#### **STANZA 4**

Out from the earth-cave,

And the strength of the tree exposed

The source, white and wet,

The most sensitive, hidden

For years inside the earth.

हिंदी अनुवाद – धरती की गुफा के अंदर से वृक्ष की ताकत निकल आती है और वृक्ष की ताकत का वह स्रोत सफ़ेद रंग का और गीला होता है तथा बहुत ही संवेदनशील होता जोकि वृक्षों से धरती के अंदर छिपा हुआ था ।

Questions :

- (a) What is taken out of the earth's cave?
- (b) What Is the source of the strength of a tree?
- (c) Where does the root remain hidden for years?
- (d) Name the most sensitive part of the tree.
- (e) How is the strength of the tree exposed?

Answers

- (a) The root of a tree is taken out of the cave.
- (b) Root is the source of the strength of a tree.
- (c) Under the earth.
- (d) The most sensitive part of the tree is its 'root'.
- (e) The strength of a tree is exposed by Pulling out its root.

## STANZA 5

Then the matter

Of scorching and choking

In sun and air,

Browning, hardening,

Twisting, withering,

And then it is done.

हिंदी अनुवाद—तब धूप में झुलसने और हवा न मिलने के कारण दम घुटने के लिए खुला छोड़ देना चाहिए। फिर वह भूरे रंग का होकर कठोर हो जाएगा और फिर उसकी शाखाएँ बल खाकर मुरझा जाएंगी और हम कह सकेंगे कि पेड़ मर गया है।

Questions :

(a) Name the poem and the poet.

- (b) What is scorching done by?
- (c) What is chocking done by?
- (d) 'And then it is done'. What is done?
- (e) In this poem what is a symbol of a tree?

Answers :

- (a) The name of the poem is 'On Killing A Tree' and the name of the poet is Gieve Patel'.
- (b) Scorching is done by the heat of the sun.
- (c) Chocking is done by the absence of the air.
- (d) A tree is put to an end forever.
- (e) In this poem, the tree is a symbol of deep-rooted evil.

### **Additional Very Short Answer Type Questions**

1. In the poem 'On Killing A Tree' what is the tree a symbol of?

Ans. In this poem, the tree is a symbol of deep-rooted evil.

2. How does a tree grow up?

Ans. A tree grows up by getting food and other nutrients from the earth.

3. Can we kill a tree with a simple jab of the knife?

Ans. No, we can't kill a tree with a simple jab of the knife.

4. How should we kill a tree?

Ans. We should kill a tree by hacking and chopping it.

5. What should we do to kill a tree permanently?

Ans. To kill a tree permanently we should take out its root from the earth.

6. Where does the strength of a tree lie?

Ans. The strength of a tree lies in its roots.

7. What should be done to the roots of a tree?

Ans. The roots of a tree should be snapped and taken out of the earth.

8. What finally kills the tree?

Ans. Scorching and choking kill the tree finally.

9. What does it mean 'the strength of the tree is exposed'?

Ans. It means the roots of the tree are taken out of the earth.

10. It is easy to kill a tree?

Ans. No, it is not easy to kill a tree.

**SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS**



Q1.Can a “simple jab of the knife” kill a tree? Why not? (Textual)

Ans:- simple jab of a knife can certainly not kill a tree. It can merely injure it and cause its sap to ooze out like blood. The real life of a tree comes from the roots that provide it nourishment and firmly hold it.

Q2.How has the tree grown to its full size? List words suggestive of its life and activity.

(Textual)

Ans:- The tree has grown to its full size gradually. It has grown by slowly consuming the earth. It has risen out of the earth and has fed upon its crust. It has also absorbed light, air and water for years. Leaves have sprouted out of its discoloured bark.

Q3.In the phrase ‘consuming the earth’, who consumes the earth and how?

Ans:- It is the tree that consumes the earth by drawing its nourishment from the soil through its root. The diet required by the tree lies deep inside the earth and the root sucks and absorbs nutrients and nourishes the tree.

Q4. What is meant by 'years of sunlight, air and water'?

Ans:-Years of sunlight, air and water means that the tree takes years together to grow up fully. In this course of time, it draws energy from sunlight, air and water.

Q5. Why has the tree's 'hide' been called leprous?

Ans:-The bark of the tree is uneven in texture and colour. Leprosy also robs the skin of the leper of its colour and evenness. Hence, the poet has drawn a metaphorical comparison between the discoloured bark of a tree and the diseased skin.

Q6. What is the role of hacking and chopping in killing a tree?

Ans:- Hacking and chopping wound the body of a tree causing it great pain. They peel the bark of the tree and it appears to be bleeding when the sap oozes out. However, this pain or bleeding does not manage to kill the tree.

Q7. What is the meaning of 'bleeding bark'? What makes it bleed? (Textual)

Ans:-The 'bleeding bark' stands for the sap oozing out of the tree trunk when it is attacked with a knife or an axe. The word 'bleeding' is metaphorically used to

compare the sap to the blood from a wound of a human being. It signifies the pain of the tree.

Q8. What will rise from 'close to the ground'? Why?

Ans:-Curled green twigs and miniature boughs will rise from the stump of the tree that is close to the ground. They will rise because the tree rejuvenates and revives itself as long as its root is intact.

Q9. 'What will happen if the miniature boughs are left 'unchecked'?

Ans:-'Unchecked' here means left free to grow without any harm or danger. If left 'unchecked', the new, green, delicate branches from the stump of a tree will expand and regain their original size.

Q 10. "No, The root is to be pulled out." Why has the poet started this stanza with "No"? Or The poet says "No" at the beginning of the third stanza. What does he mean by this? (Textual)

Ans:-The poet uses 'No' to emphasize the fact that merely hacking and chopping are not sufficient for killing a tree. They can injure it, make it bleed, and cause pain. But killing a tree requires more ruthlessness and much more effort.

Q 11. What is the meaning of "anchoring earth" and "earth cave"? (Textual)

Ans:- "Anchoring earth" means the earth which gives a firm grip to the tree and keeps it from falling. Just as a ship anchored in the sea stays in its place securely and steadily, similarly the tree stands secure and stable with the support of the earth. "Earth cave" refers to the depth under the earth where the root of a tree remains sheltered safely for years. It is firmly attached to this point and a cave-like hollow is created when the root is pulled out.

Q12. How is the root of the tree to be pulled out? What is the result of this pulling?

Ans:-The root of the tree is to be tied to a rope and pulled out with a great force. This pulling results in creating a cave-like hollow in the earth and exposes the root to the vagaries of weather that eventually cause the death of the tree.

Q13. What does the poet mean by "The strength of the tree exposed"? (Textual)

Ans:-The expression 'the strength of the tree exposed' means the root of the tree is pulled out of the earth and thrown open at the mercy of harsh weather. Root is the source of the tree's power. Once exposed to the scorching and choking sun and air, it withers away and the tree finally dies.

Q14. What is 'the most sensitive' part of the tree? What is it sensitive to and why?

Ans:- The root of the tree is its most sensitive part. It is sensitive to the heat and vagaries of weather on the open surface of the earth. It is so because it remains hidden safely under the earth.

Q15. How is the exposed root affected by the sun and air?

Ans:- Sun and air start drawing life out of the exposed root. It becomes discoloured, dry and hard. It starts withering and becomes gnarled and twisted. Devoid of all its moisture, it gradually becomes lifeless and the process of killing the tree is completed.

Q16. What finally kills the tree? (Textual)

Ans:- The withering of the pulled out root finally kills the tree. The root of a tree is the source of its strength. Once it is pulled out, it can no longer nurture the tree. The root is sensitive to sunlight and air. Once exposed, it gets dehydrated, brown and twisted. Ultimately it dries up and the tree yields to death.

Q17. What message is conveyed by this poem?

Ans:-The poem conveys the message that human beings have destructive temperament towards nature, but Mother nature has regenerative powers and cannot be destroyed easily. It has the ability to resurrect itself. Also, the tree teaches us that mere physical assaults cannot ruin us. As long as our root, our soul, is intact we can rise again.

### **LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS**

Q1. How does a tree grow up?

Ans:- A tree takes years together to grow to its full size. After sprouting out from the surface of the earth from a seed it grows gradually. Its root nurtures it by drawing nutrients from deep under the earth. Sunlight, air and water further nourish it. Out of its bark, tender green branches shoot out and leaves grow all over them. After a long span of time, the tree stands so strong and sturdy that it can survive even the wounds inflicted with a knife. In fact, chopping and hacking are not sufficient to kill it as the wounds get healed. Branches appear again even

from the stump and in due course attain their original size. As long as the root of the tree remains intact under the earth, the tree keeps growing.

Q2. What relationship does the tree have with the earth?

Ans:- A tree has a deep relationship with the earth. It owes its very existence to the earth. The seed germinates in the womb of the earth and the baby plant sprouts out over the surface of the earth. The tree draws nutrients for it from the soil. It is the earth that gives it support to stand erect and protects it from falling. Giving a firm grip to its roots, the earth gives it ground to grow and assume a massive size. The earth keeps roots of the tree concealed, protecting it from exposure to the sunlight and the air which can prove to be very injurious for its existence. Thus, the earth helps a tree right from its birth to its survival. Even a chopped tree grows again out of the stump and gains the original, big size because the earth supports it.

Q3. What does the root of the tree look like when it is pulled out of the earth-cave? What happens to it when it is left exposed?

Ans:-The root of the tree is moist and white when it is pulled out of its hiding, the earth-cave. It is very tender and delicate as it has remained concealed for years together, away from sunlight and air. The root cannot tolerate the light and heat of the sun and the open air. When it is left exposed, it feels scorched and choked in the sun and the air. Initially, it starts changing its colour and becomes somewhat brown. Then it starts losing its tenderness. It becomes hard and its suppleness declines. Gradually, it withers away and becomes gnarled and twisted. Ultimately, life is completely drained out of it and it leads to the death of the whole tree. This is how exposure robs first the root and then the entire tree of its life.

Q4. What would happen if the tree is hacked and chopped?

Ans:-If the tree is hacked and chopped and left as such with the root of the tree neither dugout nor injured, the root will continue to provide nourishment to the stump of the tree. This stump will then be covered with tender twigs that will sprout out of its surface. If these twigs are not pruned or hacked or chopped, they will keep on growing and eventually, with the passage of time, the tree will grow up to its original size. The wounded bark of the tree will get healed and the tree will be as big as it was earlier. The threat to its life will be overcome and hacking or chopping will fail to kill the tree. The safe root will rescue and resuscitate the tree and help it to regain its lost glory.

Q5. Suppose you are a tree. Write a diary entry in about 150 words describing how you were hacked and chopped and your root was pulled out and how you are inching towards your end.

Ans:-

(Day and Date)

(Time)

Dear Diary Today my heart is crying and I suffer due to the pain inflicted upon me by cruel men. Two days ago, I was enjoying the fresh air and warm sunlight when



suddenly I felt a blow of an axe on my trunk. I noticed that a man was hitting me hard, giving one blow after another. My bark was wounded, the sap was oozing and my leaves and branches were falling off lifelessly. I could feel a sharp pain that I found hard to tolerate. When the man got tired, he left me for the night. I was relieved that he had not harmed my root. I was certain that my wound would heal and new branches would grow after some time. But the next day there came five people. The first chopped off big chunks from my trunk and then tied a rope firmly around me. They applied force to pull my root out of the earth. Now my strength gave way and my white, wet and sensitive root was hauled. My root has been left exposed to the sunlight and air. Its white colour is turning brown and it has started hardening and twisting. Slowly, it will wither away and I will die. I wish these ignorant people had realized that I was serving them selflessly with fresh oxygen and dense shade. Sadly, I have to say goodbye to this beautiful world because of the insensitivity of some people. Banyan

#### QUICK REVIEW OF THE POEM

1. What does the poet symbolize a tree too?

(A) a good tradition

(B) a deep-rooted evil

(C) a noble thing

(D) all of the above

Ans. (B) a deep-rooted evil

2. Can we kill a tree with a simple jab of the knife?

(A) yes

(B) no

(C) maybe

(D) not known

Ans. (B) no

3. What does a tree consume to grow?

(A) earth

(B) sky

(B) chopping

(D) none of the above

Ans. (A) earth

4. What does a tree absorb in the process of growing?

(A) sunlight

(B) air

(C) water

(D) all of the above

Ans. (D) all of the above

5. What can alone kill a tree?

(A) hacking

(B) chopping

(C) hacking and chopping

(D) none of the above

Ans. (D) none of the above

6. What is needed to be pulled out to kill a tree?

(A) root

(B) leaves

(C) flowers

(D) fruit

Ans. (A) root

7. What does the strength of a tree lie in?

(A) leaves

(B) root

(D) fruit

(C) flowers

Ans. (B) root

8. What is scorching done by?

(A) the water

(B) the earth

(C) the heat of the sun

(D) the rain

Ans. (C) the heat of the sun

9. Chocking is done in the absence of :

(A) earth

(B) air

(C) water

(D) sunlight

Ans. (B) air

10. Where does the root remain hidden for years?

(A) in the earth

(B) in the water

(C) in the air

(D) all of the above

Ans. (A) in the earth

11. What is related to the death of roots?

(A) pulling out

(B) scorching

(C) choking

(D) all of the above

Ans. (D) all of the above

12. What happens to a tree's bleeding bark?

(A) it heals soon

(B) it heals in a big time

(C) it never heals

(D) a tree's bark never bleed

Ans. (A) it heals soon

13. What will again expand to a tree's full size?

(A) roots

(B) green twigs

(C) fruit

(D)flowers

Ans. (B) green twigs

14. What is needed to kill a tree?

(A) a simple jab

(B) hacking

(C) choking

(D) pulling out the roots entirely

Ans. (D) pulling out the roots entirely

15. Who is the poet of the poem 'On Killing a Tree'?

(A) Edward Lear

(B) Gieve Patel

(C) W.W.E. Ross

(D) William Wordsworth

Ans. (B) Gieve Patel