ENG-CC: THE LAMB

**Q 1) Write a critical appreciation of the poem “The Lamb”.**

**Ans:** The Lamb by William Blake is the most representative poem published in the collection *Songs of Innocence*. It is a simple poem, written in a lucid style, conveying his philosophy about the world of children, its bliss, and perfection. The main symbol is the lamb, which is an innocent creature of God and which also symbolizes a child and Christ. The world of it is largely a world of simplicity, purity, happiness, and security. Both ‘child’ and ‘lamb’ serve as symbols for Christ. The lamb, pure and pretty, simple and innocent, seems the work of a kind Creator. To the mind, in the state of innocence, the lamb appears to be a fit symbol of life. In this poem, the lamb and the child are identified with Christ who represents purity and innocence as they do, and Blake glorifies the lamb. The speaker is a child who wants to know who created the lamb. The child describes the character and qualities of this meek and mild creature of God. To the child as to the poet himself, the lamb is a wonderful creature of beauty and innocence. The child puts this question because of the wonderful qualities which the lamb possesses. The lamb is blessed with life and the capacity to feed by the small river and over the grassy land. It has shining and soft wool which serves as its clothing. It has a tender voice which fills the valley with joy and bliss.

In the second stanza there is an identification of the lamb, Christ and the child. Christ has another name; He is called lamb, because Christ is meek and mild like a lamb. Christ is also called a child since He shared gentleness, meekness, innocence and simplicity with a child. Christ was also a child when he first appeared on this earth as the son of God. He, later on, praised the innocence of children. Both the child and the lamb have the same name as Christ has. They all share the same qualities – meekness, mildness and innocence. The poem conveys the very spirit of childhood – the purity, the innocence, the tenderness of childhood and the affection that a child feels for little creatures. A religious note is introduced in the poem because of the image of Christ as a child.

**Q 2) Discuss how the speaker in the poem “The Lamb” presents himself as an innocent child who finds divine innocence in the creation of God.**

**Ans:** The speaker in the poem is in awe of God's creation. As such the speaker is able to see the evidence of God's majesty in the soft figure of the lamb. This makes the speaker joyous, and the whole poem can be interpreted as the speaker's hymn of praise to God. The poem opens with the repetitive questioning of the speaker to the lamb about its Creator. It is in Line 17 that the speaker claims to be a child. The fact that a child is able to have such deep insight about the lamb and its connection to God reveals that childhood is actually a state of wisdom and not ignorance, thereby being able to understand God's will. Also, the reference that the speaker makes to being a child can also be read that as a human being, the speaker is a child of God. Perhaps, then, the speaker is not a literal child, but rather someone who believes in God and has managed to maintain a child's insightful perspective as a result. Either way, the speaker believes that all living creatures are part of God, and so the speaker is, in a way, God as well.

**Q 3) William Blake’s poem “The Lamb is a child’s song” – Discuss**.

**Ans:** This poem has two stanzas, and each has 5 rhyming couplets in a basic trochaic metre, often found in children’s verses. The repetition in the first and last couplets create a refrain which makes the poem have a song-like quality. The Lamb’ has been written in rhymed couplets. The use of repetitive pattern, with distinct differences in the opening and closing couplets, frames the questions and answers emphasize the idea that this is a catechism or almost like a child’s riddle.

"The Lamb" thus can be read as a child's song in the form of question and answer. The first stanza is descriptive while the second one is spiritual. Even though the child asks simple questions like "who made thee?", the question is deep at the same time because it's what all human beings ask about their origins and creation. The answer is presented as a puzzle, and it's easy to solve. The answer reveals the child's belief in his simple Christian faith and his innocent acceptance of its teachings.

**Q 4) How does the poet link the innocence of the child with the innocence of Christ in the poem “The Lamb”?**

**Ans:** The poet makes a triangular connection of the Lamb, child and Christ. The three of them are innocent and mild in their manners. A child has a pure heart and is a symbol of innocence; a pure soul that has not yet been corrupted or manipulated by the world of conventionalized pretensions, including religion, culture, society and state and other codified systems. A lamb, also is a vulnerable and meek creature, often used for sacrifices. In the Christian Gospels, Jesus is compared to a lamb because of the way he surrendered to God's will and despite the pain he went through; he sacrificed himself for betterment of humanity. The traditional image of Jesus as a lamb represents the Christian values of gentleness, meekness, and peace. The image of the child is also associated with Jesus. In the Gospel, Jesus displays a special attentiveness for children, and the Bible’s depiction of Jesus in his childhood shows him as guileless and vulnerable; thus, reiterating the theme of innocence.

**Q 5) Give after Blake, a description of the lamb in the poem “The Lamb”.**

**Ans:** The speaker describes the lamb as a meek and mild creature, which is given life and food by the Creator. It is described to have a shiny woolen coat as cloth to wear and a beautiful tender voice that soothes the entire valley. Wherever the lamb goes, it brings with it peace, beauty and an appreciation of God’s creation.

**Q 6) How does Blake include the element of religion in the poem “The Lamb”?**

**Ans:** The poet has touched on the themes of religion, innocence, and morality in ‘The Lamb’. The entire verse appreciates God and his representation with a mixture of the Christian script and pastoral tradition in the form of a conversation between a child and the Lamb. It has deep symbolic meaning, which is almost relevant throughout the poem. The purpose of symbolization of child, Lamb and Christ are interconnected and deeply connected with Christian mythology. The child is a symbol of innocence, a pure soul that has not yet been corrupted or manipulated by the world of conventionalized pretensions, including religion, culture, society and state and other codified systems. This poem subtly approaches the subject of creativity and the creator. Furthermore, the repeated parallels between lamb and Christ alludes to the crucifixion of Christ where he sacrificed himself for the betterment of humanity. Thus, Blake weaves religion as a theme within the poem.

**Q 7) Write an illustrative note on the theme of the poem “The Lamb”.**

**Ans:** The prominent themes of the poem are Nature, Childhood and Innocence, and Religion. The poem presents an idyllic pastoral scene, painting a vivid picture of the lamb in its countryside environment highlighting the beauty of nature and to portray it as a powerful source of happiness and freedom. The lamb itself is one part of nature, but it’s also a symbol of the freedom and happiness associated with the natural world more generally, which the poem implies cannot be found in the modern urban environment. Childhood as a theme is used to depict that fact that this age is not of ignorance but of wisdom because a child is a pure soul that has not yet been corrupted or manipulated by the world of conventionalized pretensions, including religion, culture, society and state and other codified systems. As such the child has the innocence that allows it to see what the society may often be unable to realize. The lamb and Christ are given a parallel connection in relation to their meek and mild behaviour. Christ has the innocence of the lamb and the child as he sacrifices himself for the betterment of humanity, thus bringing forth the theme of Religion in the poem.

**Q 8) Explain the following lines:**

**A/ *He became a little child:***

***I a child & thou a lamb,***

***We are called by his name.***

**Ans:** The above quoted lines are taken from the poem “The Lamb” by William Blake, published in Songs of Innocence in 1789. These lines indicate the three-fold connection the speaker has made between the child, the lamb and Christ. In the lines, the speaker, a child tries to describe that Christ is a child like him and also a lamb. As such the child and the lamb; both share a name with Christ. A child has a pure heart and is a symbol of innocence. A lamb, also is a vulnerable and meek creature, often used for sacrifices. In the Christian Gospels, Jesus is compared to a lamb because he sacrificed himself for betterment of humanity. The image of the child is also associated Christ.

**B/ *He is called by thy name,***

***For he calls himself a Lamb:***

**Ans:** The above quoted lines are taken from the poem “The Lamb” by William Blake, published in Songs of Innocence in 1789. The lines indicate that Christ is also called a lamb.

These lines bring the theme of religion into the poem. A lamb is a vulnerable and meek creature, often used for sacrifices. In the Christian Gospels, Jesus is compared to a lamb because of the way he surrendered to God's will and despite the pain he went through; he sacrificed himself for betterment of humanity. Hence Christ is called a lamb.