



**WILLIAM BLAKE – THE
LAMB AND THE TYGER**

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INTRODUCTION TO WILLIAM BLAKE

Life and age of Blake (1757–1827)

Blake as:

- Poet
- Painter
- Mystic and visionary

Historical background:

- Industrial Revolution
- French Revolution
- Social inequality in England



Blake as a Romantic poet:

- Imagination over reason
- Importance of childhood
- Nature and spirituality

Blake's opposition to:

- Organized religion
- Social oppression
- Materialism

Life and age of Blake (1757– 1827)

Blake's Idea of Religion

- Blake believed in a personal and imaginative religion.
- He opposed rigid church rules and hypocrisy.
- God, according to Blake, exists in human imagination and love.
- Religion should teach freedom, mercy, and compassion.
- He believed every human being has divine qualities.
- His poetry combines spirituality with social criticism.

Blake's Concept of "Contraries"

- William Blake believed that "Without contraries is no progression."
- Human life grows through opposite forces.
- Important contraries in Blake's poetry:

Innocence vs Experience

Good vs Evil

Gentleness vs Power

Faith vs Questioning

- Both opposite forces are necessary for balance and development.
- The Lamb and The Tyger represent these opposite ideas.

Songs of Innocence and of Experience

(1794)

Songs of Innocence and of Experience is a collection of illustrated poems by William Blake. Originally, Blake illuminated and bound Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience separately. It was only in 1794 that Blake combined the two sets of poems into a volume titled Songs of Innocence and of Experience Shewing the Two Contrary States of the Human Soul. Even after beginning to print the poems together, Blake continued to produce individual volumes for each of the two sets of poetry.

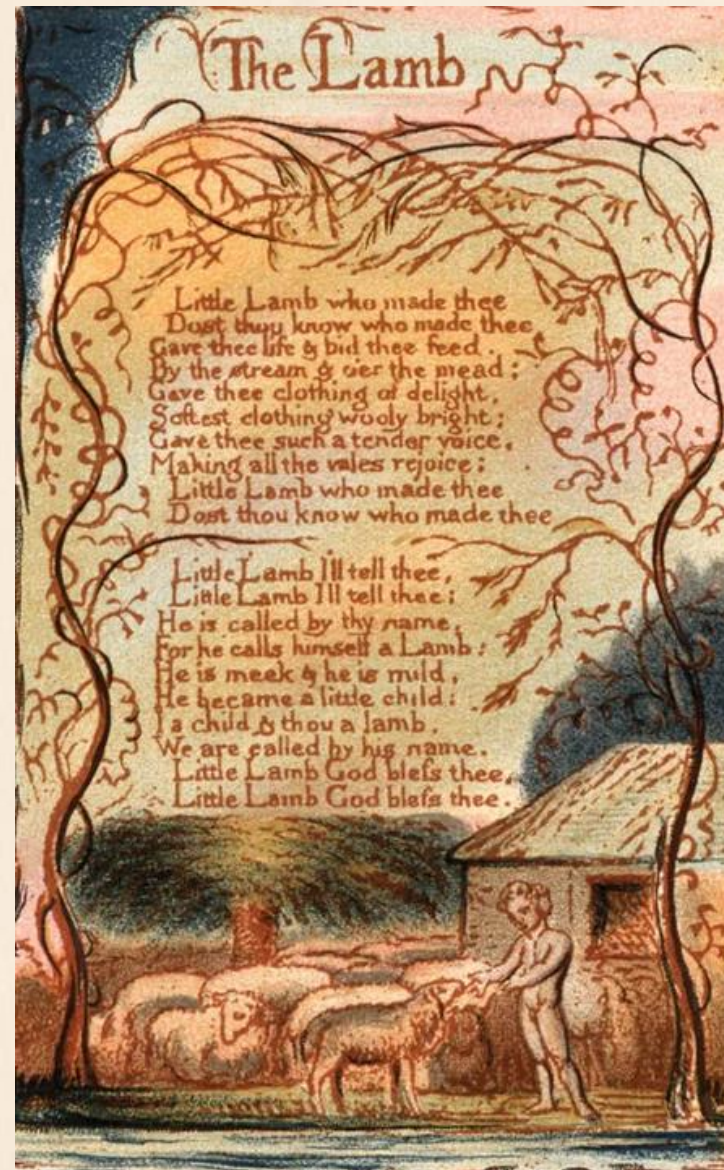
(Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Songs_of_Innocence_and_of_Experience, dt.18.04.2026)

THE LAMB

SONGS OF INNOCENCE (1789)

Little lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee,
Gave thee life, and bid thee feed
By the stream and o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing, woolly, bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice?
Little lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?

The Lamb has 2 stanzas,
and each stanza contains 10
lines.



Little lamb, I'll tell thee;
Little lamb, I'll tell thee:
He is called by thy name,
For He calls Himself a Lamb.
He is meek, and He is mild,
He became a little child.
I a child, and thou a lamb,
We are called by His name.
Little lamb, God bless thee!
Little lamb, God bless thee!

THE LAMB

Little lamb, who made thee?
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Background of the Poem

- Published in Songs of Innocence (1789)
- Represents innocence, purity, childhood, and divine love
- Speaker: a child

Little lamb, I'll tell thee;
Little lamb, I'll tell thee:
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For He calls Himself a Lamb.
He is meek, and He is mild,
He became a little child.
I a child, and thou a lamb,
We are called by His name.
Little lamb, God bless thee!
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THE LAMB

Central Themes

Little lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee,
Gave thee life, and bid thee feed
By the stream and o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing, woolly, bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice?
Little lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?

- Innocence
- Christianity and spirituality
- Creation and Creator
- Harmony between nature and God
- Simplicity of childhood
- Holi Trinity

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We are called by His name.
Little lamb, God bless thee!
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THE LAMB

William Blake indirectly presents the Christian idea of the Holy Trinity in The Lamb.

The theme appears through these three connected figures:

- God the Father – the Creator who made the lamb and the child.
- Jesus Christ (the Son) – called “the Lamb of God” in Christianity, symbolizing innocence, gentleness, and sacrifice.
- The Child/Speaker – represents the human soul connected with divine innocence through the Holy Spirit.

Blake writes:

“He is called by thy name,
For he calls himself a Lamb.”

Here, Blake connects God, Christ, and the Lamb together.

THE LAMB

Symbolism

- Lamb as symbol of:

Innocence

Jesus Christ ("Lamb of God")

Purity and gentleness

- Child speaker as symbol of innocent human soul

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THE LAMB

Important Literary Devices

- Repetition
- Rhyme and rhythm
- Simple diction
- Question-answer structure
- Pastoral imagery

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THE TYGER

SONGS OF EXPERIENCE

(1794)

Tyger! Tyger! burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand, dare sieze the fire?

And what shoulder, & what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? & what dread feet?

The Tyger has 6 stanzas, and each stanza contains 4 lines (quatrains).



What the hammer? what the chain?
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears,
And water'd heaven with their tears,
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

Tyger! Tyger! burning bright
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Background of the Poem

- Published in Songs of Experience (1794)
- Represents experience, energy, fear, mystery, and destructive power
- Speaker asks philosophical questions

What the hammer? what the chain?
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp
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When the stars threw down their spears,
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Central Themes

- *Mystery of creation*
- *Presence of evil in the world*
- *Power and terror*
- *Divine creativity*
- *Fear and awe ("fearful symmetry")*

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feet?

Symbolism

- Tiger as symbol of:

Power

Energy

Violence

Experience

Revolutionary spirit

Alpha and Omega

Tyger (spelling)

What the hammer? what the chain?
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears,
And water'd heaven with their tears,
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

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THE TYGER

In *The Tyger*, William Blake indirectly suggests the idea of Alpha and Omega, a Biblical symbol meaning the beginning and the end of all creation.

In Christianity, God is called "Alpha and Omega" (first and last letters of the Greek alphabet), symbolizing eternal power and total creation.

In *The Tyger*, Blake questions the creator of the fearful tiger:

"What immortal hand or eye,
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?"

The poem suggests that the same creator who made the gentle Lamb also made the powerful Tyger.

Thus, God is shown as the creator of both innocence and experience, gentleness and terror — the complete cycle of existence.

The tiger symbolizes destructive energy, power, mystery, and cosmic force, which connects to the idea of God as both beginning and end, creator and destroyer.

THE TYGER

SONGS OF EXPERIENCE

(1794)

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Important Literary Devices

- Symbolism
- Alliteration
- Repetition
- Rhetorical questions
- Imagery of fire, furnace, hammer, chain
- Biblical and mythological references

What the hammer? what the chain?
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears,
And water'd heaven with their tears,
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

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THE TYGER

SONGS OF EXPERIENCE

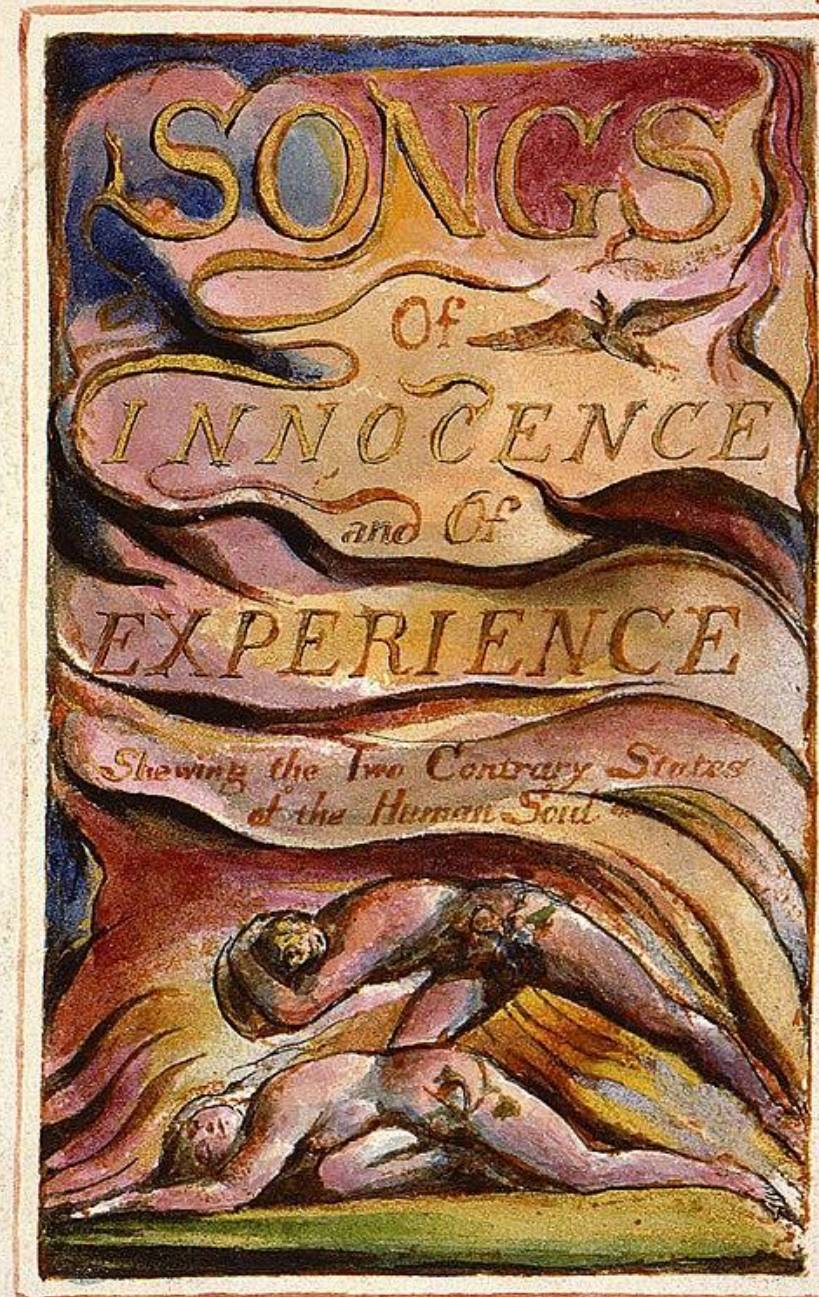
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Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? & what dread feet?

THANK YOU



What the hammer? what the chain?
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears,
And water'd heaven with their tears,
Did he smile his work to see?
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Reference

Bloom, Harold. *The Visionary Company*. Reprinted Indian Edition, Cornell University Press, 2006. New Delhi

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Songs of Innocence and of Experience. Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Songs_of_Innocence_and_of_Experience, dt.18.04.2026