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Sub:- English (M.A, CC-4, Unit-5) Sem-I

Topic:- Songs of Innocence ; William Blake

* Critical Analysis of the poem "The chimney Sweeper".

(Ans) Blake is the most inspired of English poets; and, as he himself said, he wrote poetry under the influence of supernatural powers. He was a visionary whose ideas came to him in the form of clearly visualised encounters with angels, prophets or other symbolic characters. He obeyed no voice but that which he heard in his mystic soul. He believed that words were dictated to him by some supernatural powers. He always dreamt dreams and saw visions; and these he embodied in his poetry. The present poem The chimney sweeper is a part of the poem The Songs of Innocence. Blake's state of innocence seems at first sight to have something in common with what Vaughan, Traherne and Wordsworth say in their different ways about the vision of childhood which is lost in later life. His subject is the childlike vision of existence.

The poem, "The Chimney Sweeper," is a simple poem about childhood. It dwells upon the wretched conditions of the children employed as chimney sweepers by factories and industries. The child recalls his past and said he was very young when his mother died and before he could hardly shout ~~sweep~~ ^{weep}, ~~sweep~~ ^{weep} - .., his father sold him out. So he sweep the chimney and sleep in the smoke. The very first stanza shows the miserable conditions of the children.

The child further narrates the condition of other boys also who work with them. When Tom Dacre hair was removed off as the wool is shaven off from the lambs, he cried but the child consoled him also saying, "Never mind the loss for when your head is bare, the smoke cannot spoil your white hair."

In the third stanza we find that Blake was ^{truly} a mystic and visionary idealist. The children who were suffering so much suddenly saw a beautiful dream. Tom dreamt of an Angel with a bright key opening the ~~gates~~ ^{locks} of the coffin - the workhouse in which the children had to work and live like prisoners. The Angel freed all the children, - Dick, Toe, Ned & Jack. They ran out in the open, under the Sun, in green fields.

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They all were jolly and cheerful. ~~When~~
~~they enjoyed, life and work.~~ They get
washed in river and shine in the Sun.
They were naked and white with all
their bags left behind which shows that
they were set free from their work,
They rise upon clouds and play ~~with~~
in the wind. Here the entire beauty
shows the beautiful abode of God on
heaven where each and every soul get
pleasures and love.

At such a joyful moment the Angel
told them to have faith in God who would
always care for their happiness and health.
This promise made ~~to~~ Tom so happy, that
he forgot all his pain and got ready
with their bag and brush to work again.
The morning cold which was ~~for~~ earlier
painful to him now seems happy and
warm. He had learnt that lesson that
if all do their duty they need not
fear ~~of~~ harm. Because God ~~all~~ help
those who perform their duty well.

The poem succeeds in spite of its
holding scansion, by its imaginative quality.
The message given by this poem to some
extent supports the Karma philosophy of
Indian mythology. ~~where it is taught~~
~~that~~ don't