

B. A Final Honors

Unit : Kamala Das poem's

Topic : As A Poet Of Love

Important Question

As a poet of love, what Kamala Das is primarily interested in, is a kind of " emotional involvement in the affairs of life" – a kind of man -woman relationship which gives both love and security. But as she herself tells us in my story, at the marital level, she was unfortunately cursed with a life – long relationship. " Which left no scope for emotional fulfilment". Many of her early poems are, therefore, primarily concerned with her marriage, her love-life, her demand for intimacy and it's various results , including guilt and, of course, her fame as a writer.

Consider, for instance, "**The Looking Glass**". It presents us with an extremely horrifying picture of man-woman relationship. Here the woman is, in her own words, "softer, younger, lovelier" . She gifts her 'man' with all that makes her a woman. "The scent of her long hair", "the musk of sweat between the breasts", " the warm shock of menstrual blood", and all her "endless female hungers". But the "love" she receives in return is without any sense and meaning. She cannot hold her " man" for ever. Like the lover in "**The Old Play – House**", he dribbles "spittle into her mouth pours himself " into every nook and cranny" and embalms her "poor lust" with his "bitter-sweet juices" for a while. And, after squeezing her love and vitality, he leaves her for ever. She is consequently, reduced to a " shadow"-drab and destitute. The life she is left to live after that is a kind of "living without life".

And what happens to her when "man" leaves her forever is appropriately presented in the "The Invitation". The woman is permanently "diseased with remembering". She relies her past over and over again and glorifies "**The King Of Her dreams**". She fondly thinks of the moments she spent with him and lives constantly in the "paradise " they built together. The man goes away forever – but the woman keeps on waiting for him till at last death calls her and she accepts, in frustration, the call of the sea.

"**The Freaks**", another equally powerful love -poem, underlines a woman's search for ideal love, almost spiritual in its appeal. Man and woman, in their deepest moments, race towards love. But human limitations often pose a problem. Love often degenerates into lust. How a "man" feels in the situation is not underscored in the process but the woman, as Kamala Das herself confirms, fails to get higher fulfilment. She cannot enjoy sexual pleasure like other women. She only feels that she is a "freak" and in order boast of her self -image, she only flaunts a grand flamboyant lust, a kind of failure at the existential level.

"**The Sunshine Cat**", similarly, concentrates upon love from still another angle. It presents the man as extremely cruel, and selfish. The woman asks for love and freedom and the man tells her frankly. The woman being weak and helpless, weeps and cries. Man considers her insane and shuts her in. Here the husband (a typical representative of our own social set -up) is obviously a culprit. He reduces her to a " half dead woman". He heaves a sigh of relief when she is, at last "of no use at all to men".

A close consideration of lines such as these underlines the poet's thirst for understanding and mutual love. As a symbol of ideal man-woman woman relationship, love, in the poet's imagination,

stands for all that is excellent and worthwhile and gives sense and meaning to life. But in the modern male – dominated society Kamala Das is shocked to see woman subjugated to frustrations. Which often tell upon her psyche” . The woman in Kamala Das is always shocked to find herself as a plaything in the unfeeling hands of a man who is, in her eyes, no better than a mere beast, interested only in the gratification of his sexual hungers. So, the woman in Kamala Das is everywhere crying for what she is actually looking for in life. Hence, the complexity of man-woman woman relationship in her poetry.