

KAMAYANI-AN EPIC IMMORTAL FOR MANKIND'S ETERNAL QUEST

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Outwardly, a poem about the primeval man's journey of life, Kamayani, exists at diverse levels. The physical, mental, emotional and the spiritual coalesce in it, to produce a work of puissant stature. While at one level, it shows characters involved in actions impelled by their deep-seated nature, at another, it is the story of the mind and heart in their combined development towards the ultimate objective of bliss. Kamayani is an allegory of epic proportions that subsumes within the psychological history of mankind. It is also a message of hope as it throws up a beacon to hew a path out of the miasma of contemporary civilization. It is a bugle of a new age for everyman who wants to journey to the bliss innate in every man. Kamayani is an outstanding work of modern Hindi poetry. By the time Kamayani was composed, two Hindi epics viz: 'Priya Prawas' by Ayodha Singh Upadhyay (1914) and 'Saket' by Maithili Sharan Gupt (1932) had already been published. Thus, Kamayani is the fruition and stands at the apex of this romantic tradition prevailing during the period between 1911 and 1933. It was published in 1936 and is regarded as the most valuable piece of writing of Chhayavad Movement (1910-1937) - a period of renaissance of Hindi literature.

Kamayani's publication coincided with the intensification of India's freedom movement; the nation was in a state of turmoil, struggling against colonial exploitation and a regeneration of faith in India's greatness. Externally, the nation was standing at the cusp of another catastrophic war. The First World War was a cataclysmic event, which shook the world out of its ancient beliefs and ushered in the era of technological advancement. The world was on the verge of massive materialistic explosion of ideas and concepts and against this backdrop Jai Shankar Prasad wrote an epic that dwelled on Indian Upanishadic inspirations. Arranging, categorizing, reconciling and resolving the diverse material, emotional and spiritual forces, it sought to see the way forward. Its focus was on the study of modern man in the light of Vedas, Upanishadas, Puranas and rich Indian traditions. It emerged as an epic based on the Universal Man's struggle in the context of rhythm of nature on one hand and the psychic and practical plane on the other.

FLOOD:

It is a coincidence that this paper on Kamayani centers around the deluge that was somewhat similar to Tsunami experienced by millions in 2004. The valor, the sympathy, the fellowship and other humanitarian aspects induced by such a catastrophe are used to highlight the philosophically optimistic view that man cannot be subdued by nature, but will eventually subsume its destructive and devastating forces. Man will come out victorious and not rest in the nostalgia of its glorious past but will struggle for his survival with a humanitarian zeal. The deluge shatters, dissolves inner consciousness and transmutes it into a harmonious equilibrium. This quest for harmony is the keystone of this epic that begins with the quest and ends with the accomplishment of harmony.

Like T. S Eliot's 'Waste Land', Kamayani establishes the perennial quest for the salvation in the tale of eternal man and woman. Prasad was a poet, equally adept at scientific research, English poetry and Sanskrit scriptures and philosophical works. Unlike epics like Homer's Iliad and Odyssey, which are centered on a particular nation or individual, or faith, this epic is not confined to a single nation. Its subject is of epic magnitude that has enveloped nearly all the religions and nations.

After the banishment of Adam from Paradise, for instance, the angel Michael relates the ferocity of flood that will succeed.

Flood overwhelmed, and them with all their pomp
 Deep under water rould; sea-covered sea,
 Sea without Shor; and in their palaces
 Where luxurie late reign'd. (Paradise Lost book XI)

Similarly, Kamayani says:

Time of end drew nearer and nearer,

Horizon dimmed, then went off sight;

The oceans drowned the earth entire, broke the limits got infinite (Kamayani-Chinta)

Hereafter, when the deluge abates and the ark reaches the dry land, a close parallelism between the two narrations becomes conspicuous.

He looked, and saw the arc hull on the flood,

Which now abated since the clouds were fled

And the clear sun on his wide watery glass

Gaz'd hot... (Paradise Lost Book XI)

Fastened to the huge Banyan tree was

Lying a boat on dried-up ground;

Subsided the flood of waters,

emerged the earth from the sea around. (Kamayani- Chinta)

Analogous doomsday deluge is recorded in the Eighth chapter of Shathapath Brahmanas, Puranas and the Mahabharata. There is a reference to the boat landing on the northern regions of Himalayas. The place where Manu lands is called Manonarasarpana. He is called Shradhdhadeva the first-born man. In the preface to Kamayani, Prasad states that out of the four Vedas, Rig Veda, Yajurveda and Sam Veda do not mention any flood. Atharveda reveals accounts of Manu roaming in Himalayas and also talks of a certain flood, which devoured the earth during pre- Aryan era. The account of flood is also traceable in Babylonian and Hebrew sources. Thus, by starting his epic with a description of a flood, Prasad has tried to give a humanistic and universal appeal to the story and tapped mankind's shared human history. In the Bhagavat Purana, Shradhdha and Manu are the first parents of mankind. In the Chhandogya Upanishad, Shradhdha and Manu are metaphorical figures are interpreted on the lines of Nirukta. In the Rig Veda, Rishis symbolize the same. Adam and Noah are the Biblical equivalents.

Kamayani consists of fifteen cantos, each canto dealing with a psychological trait- each driven by an inner logic manifest in every man. e.g. anxiety is succeeded by hope and hope gives birth to faith and devotion. Envy is the central trait in an individual's psychological development, which motivates him to proceed to intellectual pursuits.

"In the unified effect of these cantos, the poem corroborates to plot business, act scene and discovery- the five essential dramatic stages set forth by stages set forth by Dhananjaya: Antareykarth Sambandandaha snadhira katwaysati." (Manohar Bandhopadhyaya)

After the anxiety, the emergence of hope in the mind of Manu is the beginning of this epic: his tryst with Shradhdha advances the further cantos. Its plot can be divided into two parts from Chinta to Karma and from Ida to Anand with Eershyaya canto as the central point. The former is the story of Manu's possession of Shradhdha and the second of his attempts to possess Ida and its struggles in the aftermath. The meaning of Shradhdha is a feeling of awe inspired devotion that believes without questioning and is an outcome of total surrender of inner being. The canto Swapna is essential to the theme of the epic structure. The Shradhdha dream is a hallucination foreshadowing Manu's fall - a scenic interplay of make believe which disintegrate into a myth. It appeals to the modern readers as it assumes substance with the coincidence of Manu's fall and is indicative of its preponderant psychological basis.

The canvas of the epic dwells in three planes, human, supernatural and preternatural. It is a motif of the primitive instinct that man is the rightful owner of this universe and with a rightful application of mind and heart, he can employ the higher and lower powers for his betterment. There are eight characters in the epic: Kaama and Lajja (desire and its inner restraint) are two intelligible human instincts, which are given an independent identity in Indian mythology. The Deluge is not a mere physical and universal inundation but has a deeply philosophical and metaphysical connotation. It marks the end of the urge to live. Kamayani begins from the great deluge when Manu the protector of mankind, the lone survivor finds

himself on the Manoravasarpana -the great Himalayan peak lamenting over the destruction of the deity race. Desperate and desolate, he loses the urge to live and becomes a nihilist. He sat as a young ascetic
Meditating upon Gods' graves
While vanished beneath, of catastrophic sea
The monstrous pitiful waves.

(Kamayani-Chinta)

The event of the deluge provided Manu the opportunity for establishing a new human civilization. Nature's beauty once again awakens delight and hope. Manu settles down in a Himalayan cave and starts meditating and performing sacrifices. But he soon gets tired of his life of isolation and longs for a companion. At this stage Shradha appears as an embodiment of beauty and devotion. She exhorts Manu to extricate himself from his plight of depression and inertia and offers to marry him and inspires him to take on the responsibility towards regeneration of a new race.

Dismayed at fears of disappointment
Reckoning countless complexities pressure
From action you seem vacillating today
Ignorant of fruits of future

(Kamayani- Shradha)

Thus, Shradha attracts Manu towards a life of action - a primary prerequisite of life transforming the "I consciousness" into the world consciousness- into Ananda. In Indian philosophy, Ananda alludes to an all-pervading consciousness with equanimity of thought and action as well as an endless magnitude of human consciousness with the realization of truth. This is Brahma Tatwa- eternal truth. Shradha resurrects Manu's lost vigor and enthusiasm and puts him back into a life of action and creative attachment. In the company of Shradha, Manu feels a fresh hope but soon, being human, his love is distracted by lust and he becomes hesitant in taking on the responsibility of a householder. He hears in his dreams- the voice of Kaama the God of Love chiding him that Shradha is his daughter from Rati. So, in order to take her as his wife, Manu has to prove himself worthy of her.

Shradha is overcome by shyness and modesty at the prospect of becoming Manu's wife as she feels compelled into submission before her husband. Shradha also has a dream where Rati advises Shradha that a woman should follow the path of love and devotion. Thus, being convinced of their love and duty, the couple gets married and Shradha becomes pregnant. But the snake of jealousy raises its head. Manu abandons her in the Himalayan cave and wanders in isolation till he reaches the bank of Saswat region ruined by the flood.

Manu was lost in reflection
Plentiful abode of Shradha had he since forsaken
Meandering multitudinal paths he arrived at pale horizon
The brisk Saraswati flowed under stilled fold of even- crust
The crowdie banks of Saraswati were now barren
The memoir of Indira's victory was woe -laden (Kamayani- Ida).

At this moment, Queen Ida arrives and requests Manu to help her in the reconstruction of the Saraswat(knowledge technology based - not Saswat or eternal) kingdom. She gives him full authority of the state, as its ruler Prajapati. Inspired by her intellect and comeliness, Manu readily accepts the offer and very soon the raises the Saraswat state to a height of glory, making it a materialistic, scientific civilization akin to that of modern age.

The majestic town of Manu was inhabited in mutual friendship
Deep in the sturdy walls where houses and gates in companionship,
All means of comforts from rain, from cold, from sun were made
Metals were melted and now new robes were manufactured, newer
armaments

(Kamayani-Swapna)

The self-awakened men now gave shape to imaginings possible
And stood on soil of self-reliance, nor fear nor horror slew.

(Kamayani -(Swapna)

Manu rebuilds Ida's kingdom but imposes a purely material outlook. Hatred and distrust is widespread in this modern civilization based on science and technology. Manu, overcome by lust, attempts to forcibly marry Ida. An upheaval occurs in the nature due to Rudra's wrath - the God of Terror/Destruction- who punishes violators of virtue. Manu is unable to protect his people- they gather outside the gates of the palace. When they find that their queen has been imprisoned in the palace, they wreak havoc under the guidance of demon priests Kilata and Aakuli. Manu fights bravely and kills the demon priests but unfortunately he is stuck by a missile of Rudra and falls down in a pool of blood.

The slumber dream of Shraddha was but a corporeal reality
Ida laden in abashment, people enraged in agility.

(Kamayani -Sangharsha).

Shraddha envisions this whole episode in a dream. Accompanied by her son Manav, Shraddha rushes to the Saraswat kingdom and finds Manu lying unconscious in the palace of Queen Ida. By her divine powers, she restores him back to health. Manu apologizes to her but overpowered by his sense of shame and guilt, once again abandons her in the palace along with Manav and Ida. Shraddha in deference to Ida's wishes, leaves her son Manav with her and goes in search of her husband whom she finds sitting in a cave near the bank of Saraswati river. Manu is now a transformed man altogether -he sees Shraddha in the image of the Universal Mother. Shraddha guides Manu to Mount Kailash, where she teaches him about the three worlds of Desire- Action and Knowledge. These move in their own orbit in isolation from each other. She explains that the world is in a state of misery because these worlds remain divorced from each other.

"You are the center to this triangle
Of multitude power and force
Mark with your unfaltering eyes
Of will, knowledge and action those. (Kamayani -Rahashya)

They are out to set harmony
But end in strewing discord
They own and preach contradictions
And illude all wishes vowed. (Kamayani -Rahashya)

Shraddha then smilingly travels through these three worlds and brings them into harmony and Shraddha and Manu forever unite in this bliss. Ida, Manav and the citizens of Saraswat, travel to mount Kailash to have a vision of the two and upon reaching Mansarovar, they too experience the perfection of bliss.

All griefs then soothed, and the forest
Turned a greenwood, happy and cool.
A harmony dwelt in life and matter
The beauty itself was intangible
One consciousness pervades everywhere
Bliss was profound, indivisible.

(Kamayani -Ananda)

Thus, the story of Kamayani is unique and allegorical, standing apart from all other works of this kind. Shraddha is the daughter of Kaama and Rati, the Gandharavas are a divine/deity race. She is called Kamayani and Prasad named his epic on her as the principal character. Shraddha, whose etymological

meaning is the preserver and the purveyor of truth, symbolizes the faith, urge and determination to live with truth as an ideal. Affixed in her will and determination, she stands by Manu, who represents the mental being in all its layers of consciousness- both individual and collective.

Shraddha is an idealized heroine. Her face is radiant like the rosy sun; there is music in her voice and fragrance in her frame. She is a perfect woman possessing qualities of head and heart:

So sweet and serene and solitary
The solved mystery of the universe
A benevolent beautiful beam
The stir of heart's leisure
(Kamayani -Shraddha)

While Manu is the pessimist a fatalist and a nihilist like Everyman, Shraddha is the embodiment of faith and devotion. The conscious, the unconscious and the super conscious are harmonized in her. She arrives in the Third Canto and remains till the end. Her character is replete with emotions of love, affection and charity. She is an ideal mother, wife, guide, loves nature and inspires Manu towards the beauty of human civilization. Creation for her is the manifestation of an Absolute Consciousness: she surrenders to Manu for the procreation of mankind. She explains to Manu that involvement and upliftment without self-expansion is not possible. Thus, Prasad does not plead for an objective detachment in human actions. Further, Shraddha is entirely free from jealousy- she does not hate Ida as she is aware of the immense power of intellect i.e. Ida. For the growth of creation and mankind, Shraddha gives her son to Ida since Ida and Kumar symbolizes the union of intellect with devotion. Ida is naturally overwhelmed by her divine nature and though a queen, she bows to her in reverence before parting company. Prasad illustrates how women by instinct are the inspirer and executrix of all actions. If Ida drew Manu to an active life, it was Shraddha who showed him the path of eternal bliss. She is a mystic, a transcendent and a supernal force; by her smile, she brings the three worlds of knowledge, action and desire into fruition.

MANU : THE FIRST AMONG MEN

The Shatapatha Brahman calls Manu both the husband of Shraddha and the King of all men. He is the first-Born man, first to kindle the fire on altar, first to perform sacrifices, the hero of Vedic Legends. He is both a historical and mythical personage: all Vedas have accepted the story of Manu as the precursor of a new era of mankind. The story of evolution from the union of Shraddha and Manu is taken from the Nirukta. The Bhagvad Purana describes him as Shraddha's husband. The Rig Veda depicts him as the father and the sage of mankind, one who performs Vedic sacrifices. Thus, Manu is a historical personage. If Shraddha and Manu are taken as metaphors of consciousness then Kamayani the epic becomes a psychological history of mankind. Manu, the great sage symbolizes the basic guiding principle of man and his life i.e. Sankalpa. Manu is the hero of the epic, all events center around him; like Everyman his transitory idealism is soon fragmented as he faces the reality of deluge. He needs Shraddha for his upliftment. His sufferance makes him idealistic.

The remnant of sacrificial grain
A little farther he kept
Rejoicing in his contemplation, he mused
"Someone would eat and be blessed."
From the deep lessons of sorrow
He knew the import of compassion. (Kamayani -Aasha)

The weakness from which he suffers is actually the weakness of Every modern man. His longing for material possessions, authority, power, adventure, sex are common human contemporary weaknesses. He seeks salvation when Nirved or remorse strikes him. Thus, he is not invincible but the symbol of a common or everyman that every reader can identify.

IDA – THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD CONSCIOUSNESS.

If Manu is the ruler of mankind, Ida is the consciousness of mankind i.e. Ida Karma. There are

many hymns in Rig Veda, which describes her as the guide of Prajapati Manu and a true ruler of mankind. Ida arrives in the Ninth Canto -she is the queen of Saraswat. The poet has depicted her as a damsel who arouses extraordinary fascination- a picture of unsurpassed loveliness, a glorious feast for the eyes. Her first encounter with Manu is described in the following terms:

Hair disheveled like nests of reason
Cups of lotus eyes were brimmed in love and distraction
The white face likened as bud beneath a humming bee

(Kamayani -Ida)

Ida's birth according to the Shatpath Brahman was due to Pustipak yagna.

When Manu enquired of her "Who are you?" Ida replied, "I am your daughter. Manu again questioned, "How are you my daughter?" She replied "By your oblations of curd, butter, etc, I have had my Birth."

(Preface)

Ida is thus the daughter of creation of many aeons that came into being after much mental efforts and of aspiration. She is also linked to Saraswati, who is symbolic of the birth and growth of Indian civilization. She is described as intelligence, the Creative Intelligence that impels mankind to receive the gift of knowledge. In Rig Veda, Ida is also linked with earth or Mahi- she is also known as the sister of gods. Ida's reign is based on the lack of heart but infused with mental reasoning, categorization, analysis and marked by the division of classes. In modern terms, it is a technically advanced empire governed by law and order and material possessiveness. Yet, her world is devoid of any human attachment or heartfelt emotions that makes human life beautiful- acquisition of material prosperity is their sole purpose of life. Her alliance with Manu is symbolic of man's distance from spirit and devotion. She warns Manu that no one can enjoy absolute freedom with authority. She is dispassionate and enjoys immense organization skills but vacuous of heart. She reconstructs her state by manipulating Manu, satisfying his male ego by assuaging his zeal for material upliftment of mankind.

The divine forces intervene when Manu tries to seduce her. This symbolizes- apart from the fact intellect often misleads the heart and allures it- also that the intellect is not a gift to be misused but to be used judiciously for the betterment of humanity. The dialogue between Ida and Shradha in the "Swapna" Canto brings out her character in a positive light. There is a symbolic meaning in Shradha handing over her son to Ida that the intellect is the handmaiden of the Heart's way and not vice versa. The poet argues that Manu has gained knowledge in the company of Ida, but in faith and devotion lie his ultimate freedom.

While Shradha is a universalistic, Ida has a very limited vision, being parochial whose interests are confined to the four walls of her kingdom. Ida is pusillanimous- she is an embodiment of self-help and self-reliance and believes in the rigid law of the survival of the fittest. She inspires men to stand on their own; however, her lust for power over the minds of men is her innate weakness. She believes in the urbanization of culture believing in erecting grand structures, gleaming roads and bridges - whereas Shradha has faith in the spiritualization of culture. Though a rationalist, Ida's character undergoes a change when she comes in contact with Shradha who makes her aware of the strength of spiritualism as well as her hole in the heart. She is a classicist in the sense that she is chaste, refined and restrained and well respected. But being a materialist, she is indifferent to the highest concepts of religious consciousness of the ethical mind.

Kumar or Manav the product of Manu and Shradha, indicating that the Mankind melds both the qualities of the male and female energies. He is again a symbol of love and devotion -thus his union with Ida becomes necessary. Shradha is pure devotion, Manu is pure action and Ida is pure intellect and the epic brings the three disparate elements. Manu is symbolic of man's distance- but not the fall- from spirit and devotion. She warns Manu that no one can enjoy absolute freedom with authority. She is dispassionate and enjoys immense organization skills. She reconstructs her state by manipulating Manu, satisfying his male ego by assuaging his zeal for material upliftment of mankind.

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THE PSYCHIC SYMBOLS

Apart from being the story of Manu and Shraddha as physical entities, Kamayani is also the story of mind and heart in their combined journey towards the ultimate objective of bliss. The outstanding merit of Kamayani is that it is an allegory, the psychological history of the mankind. The surface story with all physical characters is underpinned by the suggestive story with its symbolic characters representing the human instincts and impulses. Using the legendary sources, the poet endeavors to place it in a familiar context, i.e. the reader never finds himself in a dry and arid land of philosophical contemplation or intellectual exercises; nor is he chained to the surface story. Thus, he has intermixed the moral and historical element.

Prasad regards Kaama(Desire) and Lajja (Restraint as coyness) as moral forces. Their position in human mind and their functions on the impulsive plain, are vital. Kaam and Rati are supernatural beings-- they represent lust and modesty and also symbolically play the parts of father and mother to the heroine Shradda. The gods are symbolic of the senses that risk the fall into "restraintless" blind gratification even to the extent of getting drowned. As the water denotes Maya - illusion- the flood is suggestive of the consciousness surrounded by illusion following the excesses of sensual satiety of mind. The mind discovers Hope only when the Maya i.e. flood recedes- as is evident in the Second Canto. It also symbolizes the endless lust of man for sex. Thus the gods, which were drowned in the flood, actually drowned in their excessive desires. Manu's deep anxiety in the First Canto forms the basis of the birth of the psychic state born out of the limitless sexual perversity of his deity race. This psychological allegory not only gives a moral warning of the repercussions of expending sexual energies but also foreshadows the disastrous consequences of such laxities. Demons Kilata and Aakuli are symbolic of evil urges that the poet has accorded a physical existence and indicate how evil is more easily accessible to man than virtue.

Ida is a symbol of material wealth and prosperity and symbolizes the predicament of modern man. Her intellectualism helps in creating an insular wall between Manu and Shraddha. It is natural that pain and misery will result in the wake of developing intellectualism as is evidenced in Cantos Tenth to Twelfth. Manu's contact with Ida symbolizes his inclination towards intelligence and her Saraswat kingdom stands for division and discrimination, which is the function of intellect. It justifies the allusion of Yajurveda that Ida is the form of fire which brings mankind together and emotion is thus a secondary element. She is an allegorical manifestation of man as the Creator and Destroyer. But as the rational spirit behind science and industry, Ida stands in her hierarchic position at a higher order in the world of human existence.

Like "Waste Land", Kamayani also offers a solution to the dilemma of modern man. Manu is described as the husband of Shraddha, which concurs with the psychological explanation that mind is subordinate to the ruling impulse of the heart. In fact Ida hijacks him through allurements hence a lasting solution is only in the way of the heart. The moral journey of the mind over anxiety, hope, devotion, love passion, lustful desire and renunciation enables him to achieve eternal bliss. An abrupt replacement of one set of values by another - leaving Shraddha to be with Ida- portends an impending disaster leading to Manu's fall. The poet emphasizes that the salvation of modern man lies in the unification of desire, knowledge and action around the way of the heart.

Manu realizes that the mind suspended in fulfilling sensual desires is distanced from the conscious soul. All actions have their results, which inspire man to accept his own doings. This reflection manifests in the ego that elicits envy which Manu suffers from until his salvation. Manu's moral journey from Chinta to Anand symbolizes the development of soul on a spiritual plane. None of the stages of Intermediate Cantos fulfill the supreme demand of the soul. The soul has to undergo the often tortuous journey- and only after the realization of all experiences in the stages of each Canto that the soul is awakened to bliss and beauty. Prasad thus establishes Ananda(bliss Divine) as the ultimate goal of human pursuit. It is also a solution for the predicament of modern man.

The mind in its unconscious state imposes ego over devotion and thus seeks to gratify its ego. In this attempt he is assisted by intellect, which invents laws to facilitate the possession of intellect in captivity. The rebellion is a natural outcome. The mind at this stage, deciphers the import of devotion and this realization leads it onto peace and hope. The chain of the journey through hope, devotion, sex,

passion, conflict and remorse is inescapable in the apocalyptic cycle of man. In Rig Veda it is stated that Shraddha resides in the heart and is worshipped by the world. It is soul's journey that reclaims shraddha to itself.

"Shraddham hridaya yakutya Shraddhaya vindate vasu". (Preface)

Thus, devotion is not a blinding temperament but a positive force. It allows distinction in identities irrespective of faith. Shraddha and Manu retain separate identities till the Last Canto and yet melt all their differences to attain spiritual growth and salvation. They also have a deep mutual appreciation or symbiotic existence. Without Shraddha, Manu cannot attain the ultimate bliss or Ananda. Thus, Kamayani establishes the fact that physic is doomed to perish if not strengthened by the force of soul.

THE RASAS

Any Indian work of art is ultimately judged on its felicity in depicting the rasas. The beauty of Kamayani not only lies in its allegory but also in the treatment of sentiments/emotional states or 'rasas' which constitutes the emotive beauty of poetry. Rasa is the impression created on the mind's eye by the expression of the various Bhavas or emotions. There are nine rasas in Indian dramatic categories and Kamayani demonstrates a consummate use of these rasas. The erotic rasa reigns in the Shraddha, Kamma, Vaasana, Karma and Sangharsha cantos. The pathetic rasas is demonstrated in the Chinta, Swapna and Nirved cantos. The heroic rasas is evoked in Sangharsha canto while the Vatsalya (Child affection) rasas is featured in the Eerashyaya and Nirved canto. The epic culminates on a quietist note. The poet succeeds in delighting and thrilling his readers through their evocation. Kamayani is however replete with the erotic sentiments throughout mostly mixed with other sentiments.

LITERARY NUANCES

The loftiness of the theme attains perfect execution with the use of consummate diction and imagery. Prasad's diction is quite appropriate to the subject. His language is Khariboli, though polished and Sanskritized to suit the purpose. As the epic advances, the resonance gives way to metaphors and the end stop is succeeded by the run on. Kamayani demonstrates Prasad's perfect skill in handling complex meters. About twelve meters are used in this epic viz. Veer, Laavani, Indukala, Saar, Paddhari, Rola, Taatank, Sakhi, Padpadakulak, Rupmala and Harigitika. The similes and imagery are drawn from the nature and mostly treated as feminine gender. He uses objects of nature like the sun, moon, river and forest to convey rasas which gives poetry its characteristic intensity and clarity. His Ovidian love for nature is depicted in Aasha, Shraddha and Kaama cantos.

"In delineating beauty he withholds the narrative until he is satisfied that he has elucidated all facets of the beauty with a careful eye on the delicate and mellow aspects of life and nature." (Manohar Bandhopadhyay P.29)

KAMAYANI IN TRANSLATION

As noted, Kamayani is not a pessimistic document of human failure. P.L.Sahney, Jaikishandas Sadani, Manohar Bandopadhyay and Hari Chand Bansal have translated Kamayani into English. They have not taken liberty with the spirit and the content and do not deviate from the original idea or message that the work wants to convey. Thus, their translation becomes a window that opens up a great world. Since Kamayani is so full of Hindu myths, a new idiom has to be constructed to convey the subtleties and it is one of the most difficult books to translate in English. It is both a story of the First Man i.e. Manu but also that of the Modern Man. Man needs a reassurance of his basic goodness and optimism to resolve the greatest dilemmas. Man needs a testament and a covenant to reassure that all his endeavors on this planet is not going to end up in desolation. Then this moment of history that he inhabits glides into a moment of humanity. The enigma of Manu's lack of faith, conflict and struggles, his pseudo attachment to material prosperity, psychological inhibitions and his treatment of women only act as a source of sexual gratification very akin to modern man. Its resolution in a deeply spiritual firmament shows the way forward and is a

triumph etched in stone. An epic with so few characters and with such slender supernatural machinery is rarely found as Kamayani is not the epic of incidents but of human aspirations and emotions. Manu has known life's bitterest moments, his life has been full struggles both inner and outer and he redeems his character and to lead to the peak of human evolution. His aversion to bondage of any kind and his love of beauty and insatiable thirst for pleasure and happiness is the essential element of this epic. Thus, it is an epic of events and occurrences or situations, which take place in the material world outside but also on the planes of ideas, emotions and intuitions. Lyrical in style, it is written in rhyme and in a different meter for each of its fifteen cantos. With the exception of Bhagvad Gita in Sanskrit, the De Rerum Natura in Latin and the Divina Commedia in Italian, Kamayani is the most metaphysical and mystical long poem in the world literature.

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