

## What *Kamayani* Means to Me

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### **I like *Kamayani* for its beauty.**

As a child, I was presented a book of Prasad's stories that stirred me deeply. I slowly developed a deep love for his works. I read all of his work again and again and felt a kind of affinity for him. Of all his works, *Kamayani* is the one which made the deepest impact on me.

### ***Kamayani* is Prasad's last and best work.**

*Kamayani* is the daughter of Kama, the god of love. Kama indulges in excesses at times, but his *Kamayani* stands for the eternal values of compassion, submission and sacrifice. Her pen picture fascinated me and the richness and beauty of Prasad's poetry left an indelible mark on my mind.

Prasad worshipped the beauty of nature, of human form and of thoughts and emotions like a saint worships spiritual practice. His word-pictures leave haunting images. His description of Shradha's sensual beauty clad in a soft robe of blue fleece with her soft rosy breasts peeping through like a flowers of lighting, her curly hair gathering like cloudlets around her moon-face to fetch nectar, in his flowing rhythm, leaves a deep impression.

### **I like *Kamayani* for its gripping character images.**

Prasad's portrait of Ida – the goddess of knowledge described as a lotus blooming in the morning light of the dawn, piercing the darkness of night, her tangled tresses like the nets of logic, holding a book in her hand, three lines near her navel – is picture of perfection. She is a stunning beauty who appeals to Manu instantly.

### **I like *Kamayani* for its profound thought.**

In *Kamayani*, Indic thought, philosophic systems of advait vedant and yoga are blended so well that they become a part of the flow of poetry.

Manu, the protagonist of the epic, in the beginning is a self-centred, jealous and depressed person, always thinking about himself. But under Shradha's influence, meditating at the banks of Manas lake, he turns into a visionary sage, who realises cosmic consciousness pervading in all beings while Shradha transforms into a divine goddess blessing humanity. In terms of allegorical significance, Manu, *Kamayani* and Ida stand for mind, heart and intellect respectively.

This brings us to the crux of *Kamayani*'s beauty. Starting with the destruction of the deluge, it takes us to the evolution of human consciousness in the garb of pure, lilting rhythmic poetry.

The ultimate aim of human life is to achieve self-realisation or merge with the infinite.

God-consciousness or Shiva pervading in all living and non- living in its highest form dances to create vibrations in vacuum or Shunya creating or destroying the universe.

When Manu and Shraddha realize the supreme power, they are no more two but merged into one. All duality – living-non-living, love-hate, joy-sorrow, pain-pleasure – dissolves and supreme bliss prevails. There is a gripping description of how this bliss flows in the universe.

Even Mount Kailash witnesses the soft dance of waves of Manas lake as if Gauri, consort of Shiva is dancing there.

Prasad has taken mythological characters like Manu, Shraddha and Ida, not for a historical narration but to create an allegory in which main characters also represent mind, faith and intellect respectively.

Reading *Kamayani* is a soul-uplifting experience.