



# Identity and Crave for Love in Kamala Das Selected Poems

**Ms. S. Srinivetha**

Assistant Professor, Department of English

M.I.E.T Arts and Science College, Trichy, India.

## ABSTRACT

Kamala Das is one of the best Indian English poets of any time. She occupies a dignified place in the Indian poetry in English. She has an authentic voice of modern tradition and identity. Das is one of the pioneers of Indian poetry along with Nissim Ezekiel and A.K. Ramanujam who liberated from outmoded diction. Kamala Das vision of life is tragic and pessimistic. She has lost all her originality, naturalness, freedom and identity in the male dominated world which made her life gloomy. Kamala Das poetry is not only personal but also impersonal or universal. The most distinguished feature of Das poetry is frankness which she talks about male and female bodies and their functions and sex. She has a strong passion to dominate to establish her identity to assert her sovereignty. She writes with striking individuality and freshness of her own. Das never accepts inferiority and rejects all conventions. For Kamala Das, nothing is dearer than her freedom.

## Key Words:

Crave, love, emotional, lust, frustration, freedom

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Kamala Das is a remarkable confessional poetess who frankly dramatizes her personal life in them. She has no hesitation in admitting her failure in both marital and extra marital relationship in life in search of true love. It is painful account of her psychological traumas and personal frustrations. It was a hollow relationship which she could never endure nor untie the marriage knot. Das love was without lust, but as a traditional woman she had to act that she loved him. She started her married life as a shy, traditional life. It was extremely difficult for Kamala Das to view herself as just as an object of male sexual gratification. Kamala Das felt like a whore in her sexual companionship. It was her unpleasant discovery which changed her entire life.

In the poem “The Freaks” the word ‘freak’ means a creature that deviates from either in appearance or conduct. She complains that her husband’s finger tips can do nothing more than awaken her skins lazy hungers and even though they have lived so many years together there is no love between them. She expected a kind of love from her husband but she did not experience it. She describes her heart as an empty tank which is not filled with water but snakes of silence. Kamala Das calls herself an abnormal person who makes to show being lustful in order to be regarded as a normal person. She just pretends to have a sexual desire towards her husband.

And have failed in love? The heart

An empty cistern, waiting.

Through long hours, fills itself  
 With coiling snakes of silence...  
 I am a freak. It's only  
 To save my face, I flaunt at  
 Times, a grand, flamboyant lust. (The Freaks)

In her poem "An Introduction", she struggles her identity against the categorizers who ask her to fit in. she refused to choose a name and a role she feels it necessary to define her identity as

I am saint. I am the beloved and the betrayed.  
 I have no joys which are not yours  
 No, aches which are not yours.  
 I too call myself I (An Introduction)

Kamala Das realized that her experiences were experience of every woman. In the world, she sees only man who exploits woman's love. She is sometimes loved and sometimes betrayed in love. She has joys which others have and she has sufferings which others suffer. She is every woman. "I too call myself" I come from the heart of a confessional poet. Her experience is common and ordinary but the "I" is something unique.

In "Looking Glass", Kamala Das explores the difference between male and female psychology man wants woman to dominate over the female at any cost. She expresses the female sense, were Das has given some valuable suggestions to a woman who wishes to please her lover. It is easy for a woman to love a man for love making. If the woman is honest in express her sexual needs as a woman. The poetess realise that lust cannot redeem to make them new. It's a frank admission Das emotional defeat, frustration and sense of nothingness in love relationship in her. For a man love making is not a permanent one but a momentary relationship. But for a woman love making must leads to emotional and spiritual satisfaction. Life becomes unbearable for a woman after being destroyed by a sensual lover.

In "The grandmother house" shows Kamala Das intense love for her grandmother. This is the only place where she received love in her life time. The death of her grandmother has created vacuum in the life of Das. She is badly missed her grandmother because she feels suffocated in the company of her lustful husband who denies her pure love. She is disillusioned by the sensual love which fails to satisfy her self-satisfaction.

Love is the leading thematic concern in Das poetry and other themes are directly or indirectly connected with love. The themes of suffering, humiliation, man and woman relationship and body are immensely helping us. She has no hesitation in confessing her marriage life was an utter failure. Understanding the dimension of love is the distinguished feature of Kamala Das poetry. Kamala Das is always generous with love and her attitude towards love is quite liberal and thought provoking. Physical love is desirable, but it is not the end of life. True love involves emotional attachment and a spiritual union that go beyond the sexual level. Love is a bilateral relationship based on mutual trust and mutual understanding. It is based on the principle of equality and respect for each other's identity and integrity.

Kamala Das is not opposed of extra marital relationships which realize the victimised woman from the life of suffocation at the hands of her selfish and self-handed husband. Love must lead to self-growth and self- realisation. Pure love satisfies her romantic aspirations and emotional needs. Love loses all its relevance in the presence of fear. Fear prevents interaction between the lover and the beloved. She fails to get true love inside and outside marriage. Kamala Das does not consider love for the sake of love only. An act of love must lead to learning and not a mechanical experience of life. Das poems are the reflections of inner voyage, a quest into her and a mode of self-searching. Pure love satisfies her romantic aspiration and emotional needs. She loves the romantic adventures and limitless freedom.

## Conclusion

Kamala Das could not find any emotional fulfilment in marriage. She craved for love which was absent in her married life. Das compares love beyond marriage, ties with Radha's love for Krishna and

Mira's love for Krishna. Man enjoys woman and he soon forgets her and never returns. Kamala Das suffers all through her life because of the emotional integration has been denied. Love is the central emotion in woman heart. She craves for union with man for the fulfilment of love but she is disillusioned and frustrated in throughout her life. Most of her poems deals with unfulfilled love and yearning of love. The repetition of loved and loved and loved reveals the woman's intensity for love but her male partner is loveless as sex personified. Das experience is true with respect to emotions. Her own failures and disgust lead to search for mythical Krishna, the ideal lover, with whom she could establish an eternal bond. Without emotional involvement, sex is sterile and barren for her. Kamala Das uses the words which describes her emotions directly and she writes only about herself. So, Kamala Das imparts a personal touch with words.

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