



"Kavitanjali: Multiple Aspects of Love and Life"

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Katta Rajamouly is a familiar name and not a new voice in Indian writing in English, particularly in the field of Indian poetry in English. He has already published a few collections of poems and a few books on English Language teaching, published by APH Publishers, New Delhi. His critical work on the poetry of Philip Larkin, published by Prestige Publishers, is considered a prestigious critical study in centres of higher learning indeed. He has published three collections of poems- *Beauty in Variety*, *Cherished Cherries* and *Petals of Insight*; two collections of short stories- *Post Gandhian Days* and *Thorns in the Path* and a novel entitled *Rajarshi in Quest of Peace*, all the six literary pieces published in addition to his critical essays, *My Observations* by Authors Press, New Delhi. All these have received much critical appreciation. But primarily he is a poet and a poet of high calibre by inspiration who loves nature, and his feeling heart responds to each and every heartbeat and minute throb of life in nature which has an irresistible attraction on him.

The present volume, *Kavitanjali: Poem Offerings* is a collection of nine distinct poetical collections brought under one banner as a single book. They are - *Love Grows High*, *Love Grows Higher*, *Love Grows Highest*, *Appealing of Sculptures* and the other slender collections. All these mini collections reveal the multiple aspects of love and life and the poet with boundless zeal and youthful gusto, vivacity and joyous elasticity has devoted his creative energies and abundant resourcefulness in bringing forth all these prettily penned thoughts as verses. The poems are composed in poetic prose and though the form appears to be in the costumes of prose the expression of feelings and emotions is poetic transporting us to a Bohemian land of romantic atmosphere where we are brought to breathe the gentle breeze carrying the flavours of romantic thoughts and visions.

Kavitanjali: Poem Offerings, the nine collections of is a beautiful bunch of colourful thoughts poetically expressed. It consists of serially numbered sections with distinct titles. It opens with the verse 'Love Is Natural' which are indeed a universal truth and a refreshing as well as an enlivening factual expression. Rajamouly expresses this natural truth beautifully with an image from nature that adds to the brilliance of the expressed thought, as the figure of speech of the sunlight is well suited to the occasion. The fundamental features of love now come into the mind and the poet takes care in clarifying that 'Love is not hunger, love is not thirst, love is not lust.' Automatically the doubt arises- then what is love? Now the poet answers and the answer is expressed in a lovely way: 'Love is inborn. It rises like ripples in a lake. It grows like leaves on a stem. It is a sweet song to flow from the heart of a cuckoo. It is a graceful dance that glows from the lilt of a peacock'. The flow of stream of thoughts does not stop here. The poet continues that the utterance of love is spontaneous, and it blooms like flowers and glows like jewels. Now love is personified as God that blesses with the treasure of joy and it can never assume the role of a demon that inflicts pain and misery. Love speaks in silence with joy beyond words and bounds. The second one is titled 'Love is a Tree' and here the metaphorical use of the tree in symbolizing love is not only functionally appropriate but naturally realistic and rational. Just as trees give cool shade, love gives comfort and consolation with its restorative power. Like oxygen-yielding tree love yields fresh life and makes it meaningful and worthy. Like the tree, love has rejuvenating and reproductive power, and it sustains both love and life.

Rajamouly has an extraordinary capacity in painting diverse colours and shades of love with the quill of his brilliant brush without getting exhausted, as the fountain of his thought process



seems to be perennial. In the third one 'Love is Immaculate' his description of love becomes richly abundant with colourful images and metaphors. He compares love to a lotus flower. While love becomes burdensome and problematic to some, the poet says love is the solution to all problems in life. In other words, love is not a problem, but it is the right solution to the problem. The poet here appears as a gifted psychologist in analysing the existential problem, giving the right advice and prescribing the right remedy. His lucid description races with attractive swiftness: 'Childlike is love in its temperament, flowerlike in its enlightenment, lamblike in its innocence and parrot-like in its utterance.' How beautifully the poet has given expression to his finest thoughts on the flame of love! It is to be read and enjoyed; that is the only way to taste the nectar of his exquisite thoughts.

Thoughts on love overflow his mind without any pause or interruption. The poet brilliantly introduced the image of ocean. He says love is as unfathomable and immeasurable as the ocean. Just as the ocean never gets disturbed with rising waves and roaring billows, cyclones and hurricanes, love that is true can never be shaken with sorrows and hurdles and love moves in its eternal journey with its inbuilt strength. Now most reasonably Rajamouly employs the image of oasis and expresses love is an oasis. Yes, it is absolutely true in the wearisome journey of life sometimes in an unending desert he derives comfort and consolation from love which is the oasis in the desert of his life. Love is at once light, instinct, and insight. The memorable words reflect beauty: 'Love is not for fame and name. It needs no image or prestige.' The poet means to say that love is for love's sake just as art is for art's sake. In other words, love exists for the fulfillment of love only and not for any other tainted purpose. In the next section the poet further says love is a perennial river and the flow of its stream is eternal, and its flow is the sign of life because without love life is impossible. The next one starts with the title 'Love is Poetry' and Rajamouly is fully justified in making this statement because love like poetry refreshes and resuscitates life, gives a fresh lease of life, lends beauty to life and makes life meaningful. As the poet says, 'Love is truth. Love that reflects truth glows in the light of poetry'. Now the poet concludes this part by expressing 'Love is life', 'Love is beauty' and 'Love is a crown'.

All other love poems run exactly on the same lines with the description of the facets and features of love. They all have serially numbered sections with clear titles. In the poem, entitled as 'Love is the earth' Rajamouly pays a homage to love for its great quality of patience as love has the patience of the earth which is the byword for patience – 'Earth is love for living and love is earth for loving as the sign of love.' In the poem, 'Love is Peace' he explains that where there is love there exist peace and harmony and love can blossom in the wholesome climate of peace: 'Love is for peace and peace is for harmony and harmony is for progress.' Love plays a tremendous role in uniting hearts by chasing away prejudices that arise from religion, caste, creed, race, social status and other factors. Then he equates love with art and sculpture, welkin and ripe fruit, the University and the compass, seed and nectar. Just as seed stands for perpetuation and endless cycle of life, love also stands for the same. Love represents the art of creation of the divine and the harmony of life. Love stands for discreet silence like a piece of sculpture that remains mute enveloped by calmness. It bears resemblance to the sky, studded with twinkling stars and persons in love feel that they are transported to some higher region or to the welkin to enjoy the beauty of the star-studded sky. Love is as sweet as a ripe fruit and both are relished with great joy in the same spirit. Like the compass, love gives direction to our lives and it is love that determines our destiny and shapes our ends. The poet compares love to Amrith i.e. nectar that makes life deathless and where love is enmity will not be there, vengeance will not be there; love is the correct prescription and right remedy for the disease of hate and hostility. Love is an endless journey, and man is a lover forever. He starts loving and finds no end in the traverse of love as it knows only progress unmindful of hurdles and hazards as a dynamic force that is irresistible. Moreover, love is evergreen, and it never fades, as it is unaffected and undiluted. Love is a constant flow in the stream of life and its growth is marked by



exuberance and elegance. It glows not only in the eyes but also in all the cells of the body and love is the light of eyes and the light of life. As long as love is fresh and bright, the heart also remains fresh and fit. Love is health, wealth and power and it is as enchanting as the rainbow. In an exuberant vein, Prof. Rajamouly writes the memorable lines: “The knowledge of love is power that leads to success. Ignorance of love is a weakness that leads to failure. Love wins power, love achieves splendor, love wins confidence, love gains competence, love wins excellence and love owns permanence.” Love achieves unity in diversity and like honey in flowers. Love is inseparable from the mind; from the heart, it springs and soon it conquers the territory of the mind and intellect. So powerful is love that it has the inborn energy to transform the base element into the noble and earth into Paradise.

The fourth in the series is *Life in Sculptures* that consists of 16 individual pieces with distinct titles written in prose and in spite of the fact that it is in prose the thought as well as the expression is poetic. That is why it deserves its place in poetry. These are all carefully articulated ideas and reflections on varied subjects that reflect the rich experience and profound wisdom of a senior Professor working in centres of higher learning. The first one is titled ‘Life in Art’ that speaks about the multisided phenomenon of life that is like a fascinating piece of art. He likens life to sculpture and painting and says while stone is lifeless sculpture enchants us with its aesthetic beauty that creates the feeling as if it is alive. In this context, Rajamouly gives the instances of Ramappa and Jakkana the immortal sculptors to chisel the most beautiful figures of Gods and angelic beauties in Ramappa and Beluru Temples with their intricate designs and ornamental work on stone. The poet writes, “Sculptures in stone are the sermons in art and the lessons on life. Sculpture is the part and parcel of life-carving and life-engraving to convey message for life.” While describing life in dancing he says, “Dancing is not just moving from side to side; it is a systematic, rhythmic movement as a sign of life.” His reflection on life makes him think that ‘Life is a painting in different colours’ and it is as wonderful to a thinking mind as the enchanting rainbow. Likewise, the writer sees the melody of music in life and says ‘music is a sign of life’ and it rejuvenates life that feels exhausted. Now the attention of the writer turns to the subject of art and sees the beauty of art in tides and smiles, in peace and speech, beauty and truth. He says – ‘Beauty excels in art’ and ‘beauty abides in the realm of art’ and art marches to beauty through truth. Cuckoo’s sweet song is really a thing of beauty that spreads aesthetic delight coupled with the excellence of the art of singing. Indeed, the beauty of art is as significant as the beauty of a flower and the beauty of truth has no equal to it on the surface of the earth. ‘Art in Truth’ is the concluding part of this small collection that speaks of the undying value of truth and the inseparable relation between real art and truth. In this context Dr. Rajamouly brings the most suitable example of Emperor, Harischandra who, in the path of truth, cherished most in strict adherence, faced a series of hazards and miseries, trials and tribulations, lost his kingdom in the path, got alienated from his wife and child, and was forced at last to work as a watchman of a burial ground. The poet tries to drive home the eternal truth: ‘Truth is the light of knowledge’ that drives away the ignorance that is the root cause of all ills and evils in the world. One who scrupulously follows truth is the real victor and this is in its exquisite expression by the poet who has seen the vicissitudes of life with his rich experience. In this context, we are reminded of the oft-quoted unforgettable lines of Keats, one of the greatest of English poets and they are the ending lines of his poem “Ode on A Grecian Urn”: “‘Beauty is truth, truth beauty’ - that is all/ Ye know on earth and all ye need to know”. In another context, Keats begins his long poem *Endymion* with the immortal line: “A thing of beauty is a joy for ever.”

All these poems in the present anthology reveal the poetic potentiality of Dr. Rajamouly who has established himself as a signature in the field of Indian poetry in English. At every stage, we see the abundance of his love of nature and the profound influence nature has imprinted on his



mind that in turn has shaped him into a poet of nature. His poems on the multiple facets and features of love reveal the intensity of his love for the theme of love and the treasure house of his vast and wider knowledge. Moreover, the lines reveal his passion for rhythmic words by a conscious use of assonance and alliteration that naturally results in word music. Along with his love of nature, social consciousness forms the undercurrent of his verses. The dynamic effect of social awareness sharpens his mind in exposing the incredible presence of corruption at all levels and in all fields with the sole objective of bringing correction at all levels. Proper use of image is his forte. The image makes a poem and breathes life and aesthetic beauty into the body of the poem. Thus, we derive great pleasure in reading his poetry that is indeed a treasure house of multiple themes and refined sensibilities.

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