Mythology and literature have a close relationship. Writers cannot keep themselves away from the impact of myths and the mythological images from them. They go to ancient Indian cults, legends and tales and read into them a new meaning. They find new concepts in old myths. In the writings of Rabindranath Tagore, Sarojni Naidu, Toru Dutta, Shri Aurbindo, Nissim Ezekiel, Kamala Das and others, the reader finds their attraction to God and Goddesses. They are interested in spiritual things. Using of these mythic stories and characters they develop their ideas of life.

Pre-independence Indian English poets have described the mythic images Satyawan and Savitri to sketch the pure and strong man-woman relationship. Shri Aurbindo has focused on the mythological character Urwashi, who is a courtesan in heaven. She has beauty and the mannerism that attracts any man. Lord Shiva, Krishna, figures from Mahabharata are the central figures in writing of Rabindranath Tagore. He is highly impressed by “Bhagwat Geeta” and the philosophy of life, which is narrated by Lord Krishna. For him Krishna is a transcendental significance.
In the opinion of Sarojini Naidu and Kamala Das, Radha-Krishna relationship is highly ideal. But both have narrated their story in different ways. Sarojini Naidu never depicts Krishna as her lover but as her God who is omniscient and omnipotent and is the central principle of this universe. She writes in high serious tone and becomes a devotee of Lord Krishna. On the contrary Kamala Das offers Lord Krishna as a lover, yearning for love. Krishna as her “Mate” who comes to her in “Myriad forms”. She describes the restless anxiety and pain that Radha experiences in waiting for Krishna. But Das’s appeal is highly personal.

Radha-Krishna relationship is a relation between Atman and Brahman. Radha is not anti-sexual. Yet sex is not the primary concern in the poems of Sarojini Naidu. Their meeting takes place at a platonic level. She is not looking at their union from the physical point of view. These mythic images are judged by the writers as divine images and never to be compared with the nature of human being.

Kamala Das is one of the writers who uses these images in relation to the human feelings and needs. Sex and love are the basic concepts of her poetry. Her love themes are decorated through the
Radha-Krishna attachment, which was unconventional in the Indian culture. Sex in her poems is deep and intense physical union and not devotional. Radha-Krishna and their love is very much concerned with human passions. She generalizes these divine images and connects them to human being.

The theme of love emphasizes the man-woman relationship, female biological experiences, mythological allusions, feminine sensibilities and her search for identity. Uses of different images are related to her search of self in a patriarchal society. It moves from the physical to the spiritual. Having been dissatisfied with her husband and lovers she becomes crazy in search of an ideal love. In her journey of self-location she has many bitter experiences. She is unsuccessful to find it in the world. Becoming nervous due to the selfish world Kamala Das turns to the mythological images, which are attractive for her from her childhood. She attains a balanced state of mind when she discovers that her situation is similar to Radha and Meera. Her choice of these images expresses her feminine consciousness. Some of her poems and her autobiography focus on her spiritual progress the desperate involvement and defeats that
constitute her vision of the self and that of the ideal lover. As she writes in her autobiography ‘My Story’:

I was wanted in those days, loved as men love their women, but I yearned for an ideal lover. I was looking for one who went to Mathura and forgot to return to his Radha. Perhaps I was seeking the cruelty that lies in the depths of a man’s heart. Otherwise why did I not get my peace in the arms of my husband? Subconsciously I hoped for the death of my ego. I was looking for an executioner whose axe would cleave my head into two. The ones who loved me did not understand why I was restive. You are like a civet cat in a cage, said a friend of mine looking at me walk up and down biting my nails. Take some gin, he said. It will quiet your nerves you are always dissatisfied, cried my husband. Only I can understand you, said my Italian friend, come away with me ……¹

She is defeated by her husband and lovers in different ways. Whom so ever she loved they never understood her properly. She is tired in search of love. It is a futile journey of her life. Everyone aroused in her, more than love. They have a strong sense of pity for her. Her unsafe and tortured body feels the need of the warm arms of a lover. She wants to be free from this temporary and weak relationship. Her soul turns humble for change. She has invented a
means of transcendence from the real to the fictional and the fantastic, from the mortal to the immortal. She is able to discover for herself the centre of her own self where the time-ridden, flux – begotten, self attains immortality. In ‘composition’ she says:

The ultimate discovery will be
that we are immortal,
the only things mortal being systems and arrangements,
even our pains continuing in the devours who constitute the world. Even oft-repeated moves of every scattered cell will give no power to escape from cages of involvement I must linger on, trapped in immortality, my only freedom being the freedom to discompose. (OP, 10)
Her varied experiences lead Kamala Das to celebrate the physical world as well as the spiritual. She makes the body and the spirit complementary to each other and these, in turn, lead to the illuminated vision of God. After having enjoyed the sensual life she knows the ultimate truth that she has lost her way in the veil of Maya. She discovers that the outward appearance of objects is not the reality; the reality is the essential soul, the Brahma that only matters. She is influenced by the Hindu world-view and recognizes that the passion of body is temporary.

In ‘Anamalai poems X’ she says:

There is a love greater than all you know
that awaits you where the red road finally ends
its patience proverbial, not for it
that random caress or the lust
that ends in languor. (OSKHS, 111)

At last she comes out from the world of maya and declares that spiritual love is greater than other things which are related to the body’s pleasure. She thinks of love beyond flesh.
The body is mortal and soul is immortal. Love is not only physical but also spiritual. So we cannot separate the body from the soul. She writes in her poem entitled ‘Suicide’:

Bereft of soul
My body shall be bare
Bereft of body
My soul shall be bare  (CP, 71)

Kamala Das is influenced by the theory of Karma and Moksha. She admits that she has committed the sin of adultery. As she has no chance to purify her soul and get Moksha. ‘The Descendants’ brings out her sense of spiritualism and her fear of salvation:

None will step off his cross
Or show his wounds to us no god lost in
Silence shall begin to speak, no lost love
Claim us, no we are not going to be
Ever redeemed, or made new. (CP, 44)
Kamala Das explains that a man is responsible and pays for what he does not only in this life, but in the future lives as well. However to achieve Moksha one must get rid of all the Karmas. She always believes that Mukti of the soul relates to the deed done by the person. A man is responsible for all his deeds, good or bad. She is conscious that the sin of adultery closed the door of Moksha for her. A man or a woman who commits a sin in whatever form it can’t be “redeemed” or “made new”. Kamala Das has committed the sin and has knowledge that she does not have a chance of salvation.

Whatever happened in her life including the mistakes she made was the need of the hours. It might have been the sin in the attitude of society but for Kamala Das it is the way of searching ideal love. Meena Surjit Singh says:

She herself is priest and confessor, saint and sinner, beloved and betrayed.²

She plays different roles in her life and confesses her illicit relations. Paradoxically she calls herself “a sinner” as well as a “a
saint”, she is betrayed by her lovers. She represents the victimized woman in the society.

The social exploitation of the female by the male is always done for his self-gratification. She is suppressed everywhere. Even the religion never provides her support. Devadasi is physically, mentally harassed by blemished religious rules. In ‘Lines Addressed to Devadasi” Kamala Das describes the pathetic condition of a Devadasi, a courtesan dedicated to god. Men use her, defile her and discard her under the name of religion and culture. No one will give her a place in his life. She is a helpless woman played with by everyone. She knocks the door of men and God to ask about her loss. Kamala Das locates herself in the image of Devadasi.

Ultimately there comes a time
When all faces look alike
All voices sound similar
All trees and lakes and mountains
Appear to bear common signature.
It is then that you walk past your friends
And not recognize
And hear their questions but pick
No meaning out of words
It is then that your desires cease
And homesickness begins
And you sit on the temples steps
A silent Devadasi, lovelorn
And aware of her destiny ...(CP, 101)

Being humiliated by men she loses her faith in marriage and love. Her tortured, painful mind feels that all faces look alike. Every man whom she loved is the same in nature and in treatment. Everyone treats her in an inhuman way and talks to her in an indifferent manner. After the physical union and their fulfillment of lust they depart. It is her solace after her loneliness in life. It is a very brutal time for a woman who is fondled by men and left alone afterwards. Her hidden desire for love can’t be expressed. For her there is no other way but to sit on the temple’s steps like “a silent Devadasi” and look towards the dark future. Devadasi is aware of her painful, insecure future but can’t reject it. Because she is a woman and chained in different ways.
Religion, culture, social institutions and norms shape the different images of woman from the male point of view. Woman is ‘a devi, deaf and dumb, always waiting for Bhakta’s’ ‘a Pativrata’ – a life for husband. Shaping the ideal image of women, the society builds a very strong wall of morality around her which she cannot break. Pativratas like Sita, Savitri, Uma and others are presented before, the Indian woman as the ideals to be emulated. Kamala Das was never attracted towards these images because these images are matchless in her philosophy of life.

Radha – Krishna is the ideal pair for Kamala Das. No one is as good as Krishna who lives in the heart of every Indian girl or woman. Radha is not a divine figure but a human being and has the same passions. Radha’s love for Krishna after marriage is unorthodoxical but she doesn’t fear and lose her faith. Radha is a supportive mythical image for Kamala Das to draw herself in different shades and colours.

In her interview with Eunice De Souza she explains her choice of Radha and Krishna:

I thought nobody would be as good as Krishna. I believed that until ten years ago, until I realized Krishna too could be myth. I’ve moved away from temples and religions, no edifice can contain God. Religions have an expiry date. If you move
away from religion, you go closer to God. The myths are like costumes, you don’t need them. Religion is not relevant. I love the character Radha …………. I always think of her waiting for him who never came back. I don’t think any love is completely reciprocated. In one of my stories, Radha smeared sandalwood paste on her breasts and fell asleep, and when she woke up, he still hadn’t come and the sandalwood paste was dry. She felt such was a waste of sandalwood. I understand her. I see her as a human being.  

Her choice of mythical characters is not presenting her religious mind. Religion and spiritualism are different things. Moving away from religion a person easily goes closer to god. She loves Radha. She is not a goddesses or a divine figure but a common woman who waits for an ideal lover Lord Krishna and surrender her life to him.

In ‘The Cobwebs’ she writes:

Do not look into Radha’s eyes O friends
For her soul lies dead inside
As cobwebs block the doorways, unused,
Grief now mars her lonely eyes
He has been gone for years, that Krishna who
Once was hers alone. Perhaps
Another holds him now, a lovelier and
More fortunate one. And yet
Poor Radha must live on, for life is long.

(OSKHS, 123)

According to Kamala Das for Radha Krishna is her’s but in reality Krishna is a lover for her Gopi’s but even Radha thinks only about Krishna throughout her life.

Love is a the soul of Kamala Das’s poem but due to the use of mythical figures her love poetry is divided into two phases. In the first phase her obsessive concern with physical love is quite prominent, in the second we notice her drift towards ideal love. By ideal love she means the kind of relation that exists between Radha and Krishna. She yearns for a love which does not obstruct the impulse to freedom. She emphasizes the concept of ideal love in a poem entitled ‘The Old Playhouse’:

……. love is Narcissus at the water’s edge, haunted
By its own lonely face, and yet it must seek at last
An end, a pure, total freedom, it must will the mirrors
To shatter and the kind night to erase the water(OP, 1 –2 )
In ancient mythology, Narcissus is a young handsome man. Who sees his reflection in water of a pool and falls in love with himself. He has a fruitless desire for a sexual union with himself. He becomes weaker and weaker till his death.

In the poem she uses this mythology of Narcissus to show the arrogant behaviour of her husband towards her. At every moment he tells her only about himself and his need of bodily pleasure. As she writes in her poem entitled ‘The Old Playhouse’:

\[\text{\ldots\ldots but every}
\]
\[\text{lesson you gave was about yourself, you were pleased}
\]
\[\text{with my body’s response\ldots\ldots} \quad (\text{OP, 1})
\]

His selfish treatment creates loneliness in her life. Mr. Das is responsible for his own unhappy married life just as Narcissus’s unnatural desire leads him to his own tragic death.

In the narcissistic phase, the lovers do not outgrow their ego, which stands as a hurdle preventing their merger. They are chained in self-admiration. But it is not a permanent phase as it must undergo water mutation of the mirrors and the drying of the seeking “total
freedom”. It is in the next phase of ideal love that the lovers transgress the boundaries of their ego or narrow selves to merge with each other; as such a merger ensures total freedom. The poet beholds such an exemplary relationship in the love between Radha and Krishna, the ideal lovers.

Kamala Das never finds the ideal love in her whole life. Everyone whom she loves, loves her physically. Both, her lovers as well as her husband are violent in sex. They are not lovers like Krishna but the seducers of her body. A poem ‘Convicts’ is the bitter criticism of animal sex. For them love is:

That was the only kind of love,
This hacking at each other’s parts
Like convicts hacking, breaking clods
At noon. (OP, 25)

She wants to escape from this world of lust. Due to these unbearable incidents in her life, her mind is shattered. She always lives simultaneously in two worlds, the actual world, where love is
usually lust, in her words “skin-communicated love” (In Love OP, 15) and the Mythical world of Vrindavan.

Kamala Das’s futile exercise to search an ideal love in every partner turns her to the mythical world of Krishna and Vrindavan for lasting love and fulfillment. She imagines herself to be Radha and finds comfort in the arms of an imaginary Krishna. Her relation with Krishna is purely human. Further she experiences absolute liberty from the rigid social code and the constraints of super ego in the presence of Krishna.

Krishna, in psychological terms,

------- encourages the individual to identify with an ideal primal self, released from all social and super ego, constraints. Krishna’s promise, like that of Dionysus in ancient Greece is one of utter freedom and instinctual exhilaration.⁴

Krishna promises total freedom and releases a person from confused psychology. She is very faithful to Lord Krishna. The haunting image of Krishna is inscribed in her mind. She remembers him in every moment of her life – at bridal night, in pregnancy, in delivery, in sickness and also while playing with her son.
After seeking the immortal world of love and ideal lover Lord Krishna, she escapes from the selfish world and enters the world of innocence through her firm belief and recollection. Thus identifying herself with Radha and Meera, she is subconsciously finding a justification for her quest for love outside marriage. She wants to be free from all the human bondages like Radha and Meera.

In her serious illness Kamala Das recognizes the truth of life. Thoughts of Krishna console her and encourage her to live a peaceful life. In her autobiography ‘My story’ she writes:

Free from that last of human bondage, I turned to Krishna. I felt that the show had ended and the auditorium was empty. Then he came, not wearing crown, not wearing make-up, but making a quiet entry. What is the role you are going to play, I asked Him. Your face seems familiar. I am not playing any role, I am myself, he said. In the old playhouse of my mind, in its echoing hollowness, his voice was sweet. He had come to claim me, ultimately. Thereafter he dwelt in my dreams.\(^5\)

In her serious illness her tired mind turned to Lord Krishna. Hollowness of her mind was filled with her faith in Krishna. He dwelt in her dreams.
Kamala Das glorifies Radha’s eternal waiting for Lord Krishna and assumes that she has the same feelings and anxiety like Radha. Intensity of her love and that of Radha’s is described in ‘Radha’: 

The long waiting

Had made their bond so chaste, and all the doubting

And the reasoning

So that in his first true embrace, she was girl

And virgin crying

Everything in me

is melting, even the hardness at the core

O Krishna, I am melting, melting, melting

Nothing remains but

you. (CP, 68)

Kamala Das praises Radha who has been long waiting for Krishna and never loses her faith. She never fears the criticism of the society, because their bond is chaste and ideal.

Every woman’s “long waiting” is the waiting for the ideal husband which makes the marriage a chaste bond. She is a virgin in the embrace of her husband at first night. But she is crying due to the
painful sex act. Kamala Das never forgets her wedding night, which
gives her a lot of shocking experiences. She wants to be stable in her
mind so she prays to Lord Krishna.

In ‘My Story’ she writes:

---------- without warning he fell on me,
surprising me by the extreme brutality of the
attack. I tried unsuccessfully to climb out of
his embrace. ---------- I begged him to think
of God. This is our wedding night, we
should first pray to Krishna, I said. 6

Praying to Lord Krishna Kamala Das gets comfort and strength.
She recalls Lord Krishna to provide sufficient energy in order to bear
the pain in the act of lovemaking. The repetition of the word
“melting” heightens the sense of pain and suffering. She expects
emotional communion, which she never gets throughout her life. Her
husband has failed to prove himself an ideal lover. Marriage for her is
“skin’s lazy hungers” (The Freaks) which fails to satisfy the soul’s
lonely hungers. Her life is planned by her parents, relatives and the
society which she cannot avoid. ‘The Maggots’ harshly describes her
helplessness in the face of reality.
Sunset, on the river bank, Krishna
Loved her for the last time and left.
That night in her husband’s arms, Radha felt
so dead that he asked, what is wrong,
do you mind my kisses love, and she said
no, not at all, but thought, what is
it to the corpse if the maggots nip? (TD, 2)

The woman has a dream of warmth of relationship and a safe
place for her. But his contact with her is so hot that the woman’s
feelings as well as herself are destroyed.

The poet identifies herself with Radha, but unlike Radha, she feels a sense of boredom and loss with another male partner. She is reduced to the condition of a corpse. The male nibbler of the soul is compared to maggot, which nips at the cold, dead body of the beloved.

Radha’s revolt against the social constraints attracts the attention of the poet. Radha braves social storms to get the love of Krishna. She is never frightened to express her love for him. Kamala Das also crosses the bonds of the society and seeks love outside
marriages. She takes the support of mythological figures Radha and Krishna. She does not necessarily propagate the institution of infidelity, but seems to be merely searching for a relationship, which gives both genuine mythical framework to her search of true love, and identifies it with the Radha – Krishna syndrome or with that of Mirabai relinquishing the ties of marriage in pursuit of Lord Krishna, the true divine lover.

Human relationships are temporary and complicated. Her unsatisfactory married life, unsuccessful love affairs and repeated illnesses make her think about the meaning of life, love and God. She understands these things in unbearable situations as she writes in ‘My Story’:

In actuality who is he? Who am I? Who are these three boys who call themselves my children? We are burdened with perishable bodies which are also unreal, and perishable. The only relationship that is permanent is the one, which we form with God. My mate is He. He shall come to me in myriad shapes. In many shapes shall I surrender to His desire. I shall be fondled by Him I shall be betrayed by Him. I shall pass through all the pathways of this world, condemning none, understanding all and then become part of Him. Then for me there shall be no return journey …
After considering the mortality of the body and momentary relationships finally she concludes that God is her mate and comes to her in different shapes. Once a man is involved in the spiritual world, he never turns to temporary worldly things therefore she writes that there shall be “no return journey”.

Kamala has a tremendous courage to accept her guilt in the Indian context. Changing the sex partners is an act of sin from the point of view of the society but she never hides it. In a poem entitled ‘The Descendants’ she writes:

We have spent our youth in a gentle sinning
Exchanging some insubstantial love and
Often thought we were hurt, but no pain in
Us could remain, no bruise could scar or
Even slightly mar our cold loveliness (CP, 44)

She admits that she has sinned in her youth. She has had extra-marital relations with many persons. She is conscious about this but she never tries to protect herself from the bitter comment of society.
Because whatever she has done is her spiritual quest. In ‘An Introduction’ she says:

I am sinner,
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. (OP, 27)

The lines portray her personal crisis. Her preoccupation is entirely with her self-distress as well as the darker sides of her passion. She is conscious of her divided ‘self’. She is “sinner” because she has had an extra marital relationship. She is a “saint” because she is in search of true love. Therefore, she seeks a happy relationship in future by accepting herself as both a sinner as well as a saint.

Having accepted her sins, unconsciously her mind turns to metaphysical issues. Her inner voice recognizes her own mistakes. Getting an ideal lover through physical relationships is wrong as she writes in ‘Drama’:
I am wronged, I am wronged, I am so wronged --------- (OP, 49)

The repetition of the word “wronged” suggests her consciousness of fruitless love for which she goes door to door and makes herself “a coin” in the hands of many. And further she requests in ‘A Souvenir of Bone’:

---------if I am sinner, please
Forgive my sins. If I am innocent, forgive my
Innocence. In his wild arms where I rest today
There will once be the gross air, nothing else. They will
Burn me then on a log and pick for each grieving son
A souvenir of bone. (CP, 33)

Her adultery is a sin from the social point of view. So she requests them to forgive her sins and innocence. She is aware of the mortality of the body which is burned after the death and kept as a reminder. She is conscious that she has committed sins for the body
pleasures are momentary. Which will end with the destruction of body.

Due to the realization of unforgivable adultery, agonized failures in life, her frustrated mind leads her to think of committing suicide. But her faith in God prevents her to do that. It is the time when she needs to balance her disturbed psychology. In fact, God is the psychological necessity of every man. So, man has kept God alive and God is the part of man’s consciousness. It happens with Kamala Das as well. Whenever she thinks of Krishna, Radha and Meera she feels relaxed. She tries to glorify her search of love as nothing but the spiritual quest like Radha and Meera. Meena Surjit Singh says:

--------her Krishna poems assume a greatest significance as embodying not a desperate plea for sexual communion, but for Krishna’s ethics of self – reliance.

She is crazy to achieve love beyond body, beyond a transistoriness of lust. Almost a transformation has taken place in her attitude of life, love and her vision. In ‘Krishna’ she celebrates her spiritual love:
Your body is my prison, Krishna,
I cannot see beyond it.
Your darkness blinds me,
Your love words shut out the wise world’s din. (CP, 75)

Lord Krishna’s body itself is her prison. She is a prisoner of him. Now her painful body and soul are never ready to think of lust, she cannot go beyond it. Krishna is everything for her. His love and support closes the world’s weary things. She alerts herself from the dull things and temptations.

Lord Krishna impresses every Indian virgin. He is a protector of virgins; he saves their life from Satan, Narakasur. It is the mythology about him, which impacts on the mind of every woman. Kamala Das is in a similar condition. She is not ready to come back to her lustful world. Her imaginary world of Krishna and His love provides her permanent sense of fulfilling love and secured life. She says in ‘Ghanshyam’:
Ghanashyam,

You have like a koel built your nest in the arbour of my heart. My life, until now a sleeping jungle is at last astir with music. You led me along a route I have never known before But at each turn when I near you Like a spectral flame you vanish The flame of my prayer lamp holds captive my future I gaze into the red eye of death The hot stare of truth unveiled. (CP. 93)

Kamala Das tells Ghanshyam that he has built a nest in the garden of her heart and that her life is now stirring with the sounds of music. Ghanshyam she says has been leading her along a route, which she had never known before. That every time, when she thinks of come close to him, he simply disappears. She goes on to say that life is bearable because of him.

Again her mind turns to the thought of death. It is the eternal truth no one can escape from. In ‘My Story’ she asserts:
I have been for years obsessed with the idea of death. I have come to believe that life is a mere dream and that death is the only reality. It is endless stretching before and beyond our human existence. To slide into it will be to pick up a new significance. Life has been, despite all emotional involvements, as I ineffectual as writing on moving water. We have been mere participants in someone else’s dream.9

In the same poem ‘Ghanshyam’ at the ending lines her mind turns to Ghanshyam:

Shyam, O Ghanshyam
You have like a fisherman cast your net in the narrows
Of my mind
And towards you my thoughts today
Must race like enchanted fish …… (CP, 94)

Krishna is like a “fisherman” in whose net of spiritual love, her mind is trapped. She humanizes the image of Krishna as her lover. Whenever she lies with her husband and her lovers she imagines that it is Ghanshyam who is making love to her. It is this fantasy which used to console herself during the painful relations, her restless psyche
involves in the various imaginative shapes of Krishna. Niranjan Mohanty writes about her feminine sensibility and her diversion to mythic character:

Das tries to reveal her personality genuinely feminine – through her poetry. But the personality is likely to be influenced and shaped by the forces the deposits of culture lie sedimented in her personality and hence she tries to rise to a height of mystical union with the invisible lover Lord Krishna. Such a willing acceptance of the ideal transcendental lover Lord Krishna is no doubt the result of the impact of the oriental vision of transcendentalism and mysticism. This is perhaps, one of the many avenues of life which help overcome the problems of life.¹⁰

In ‘A Phantom Lotus’ Kamala Das writes:

------------- I

seek but another way to know

Him who has no more a body

To offer, and whose blue face is

A phantom lotus on the waters of my dreams ...(CP, 92)
Her spiritual quest is indicated in her poems and her autobiography from time to time. She is a unorthodoxical woman but her inner ‘I’ never parts from the belief in Lord Krishna.

Meera is a married woman but emotionally she is married to Lord Krishna. Running through all scandalous and promiscuous relations with Him, she never thinks to depart and never forgets. Her unshaken soul binds herself with Him. Kamala Das weds him as Meera weds. Her passionate feeling is expressed by her in ‘My Story’:

Through the smoke of the incense I saw the beauteous smile of my Krishna. Always, always, I shall love you. I told him, not speaking aloud but willing him to hear me only you will be my husband, only your horoscope will match mine …

Kamala Das’s choice of Radha and Meera focuses on her psychology. She gets her psychological comfort when she compares herself to Radha and Meera. She never highlights the mythological ideal women like Sita, Savitri who are well known as Pativratas. Draupadi a character from Mahabharata is wedded to five pandavas but she is considered to be a pativrata like Sita and Savitri. Radha becomes a great symbol of Abhisarika. Radha is recognized for her
extraordinary devotion for Krishna. Having married the other man against her will she never lets her love for Krishna diminish.

Kamala Das has an inner urge to rise above the more earthly love and find the way of eternal love. Coming out from the physical and the carnal lust the poet finds the love of Radha and Krishna in a poem entitled ‘Radha-Krishna’:

This becomes from this hour
Over river and this old Kadamba
Tree, ours alone for our homeless
Souls to return someday
To hang like bats from its pure physically ...(SC, 37)

She compares her solitary mind with “a homeless soul”. In the physical world the soul forgets the way. It needs purity and nobility. Physical lust traps her person and destroys her life. Kamala Das’s soul is trying to get spiritual satisfaction, she fills her heart with the divine love of Lord Krishna.

Every woman has the same feelings like Kamala Das who dreams about the ideal husband like Ghanshyam. She expects her
husband to become Krishna who protects her life and makes love to her. Her poem ‘Vrindavan’ justifies the hidden, inexpressible emotions and the will of every woman about her husband.

Vrindavan lives on, in every woman’s mind
and the flute, luring her
from home and husband ...(OSKHS, 101)

Every woman’s love for her husband is more than physical but he takes interest in her body without understanding her emotional needs. Every woman is like Radha who depicts the picture of her Krishna. The ideal picture of husband like Krishna is deeply rooted in her mind. Kamala Das clarifies the dream of every virgin in her article “I Studied All Men”:

I was entirely without lust. I hoped that someday as I lay with a man, somewhere beneath the bone, at a deadend spot, a contact would be made and that afterwards each moment of my life became meaningful. I looked for the beauteous Krishna in every man. Every Hindu girl is in reality wedded to Lord Krishna.\(^\text{12}\)
Kamala Das’s endless waiting for love is futile. Her desire of getting spiritual union is not fulfilled. So that she consciously selects the mythical characters Radha, Krishna and Meera.

Devindra Kohli explains the reason of selection of these images by women writers:

In searching for mythic ancestresses women poets reject images glorified by the male imagination, such as Aphrodite, Helen and Eve – those dual natured archetypes of Beauty, Virgin, Seducers and Purveyors of man’s joy and destruction. Instead they find their psychological lies with such figures as Leda, Cassandra and Lot’s wife – all victims of the gods or society struggling to comprehend their circumstances and to express themselves.13

Kamala Das’s intention is to focus on her spiritual quest. But the Indian readers are interested in her body poems and neglect her spiritual development. Her nervousness is expressed in ‘My Story’:

…….. I turned deeply religious. I had shed carnal desire as a snake might shed its skin. I could no longer pretend either. I was no longer bed – worthy, no longer a charmer of lecherous men. But my poems had been read by several people. My articles on free love had titillated many. So I continued to
get phone calls from men who wanted to proposition me. It was obvious to me that I had painted of myself wrong image. I was never a nymphomaniac.\textsuperscript{14}

Her writing on “free love” labelled her “a nympho”. They never keep in mind that her love poetry is the celebration of body as well as her spiritual quest. Regarding this Irshad Ahmed writes:

\ldots\ldots\ldots the notion of the parallel existence of two worlds is also structurally similar and is reminiscent of Plato’s theory of Ideas granting the poet an interesting posture of feminist – Platonist – an idea which can be illustrated by examining her treatment of two worlds of imaginatively transmuted reality, one archetypal, the other an imperfect, imitation a distorted reflection. The former represented by Radha and Krishna, luxuriating in a serene state of sublime fulfillment and the divine adultery …\textsuperscript{16}

Kamala Das’s concept of “divine adultery” is not approved by the society. Her poems ‘Radha’, ‘Krishna’, ‘Vrindavan’ and ‘Radha-Krishna’ lead towards her self – realization, feeling of love, ardour, and self-surrender. The romance of God with every soul is a unique reality.

Her Krishna poem ‘Ghanshyam’ highlights her emotional trapping. The “koel” building a nest and the image of “fisherman’s
net” stress the sense of suffering and redemption through the discernible.

Her other poem ‘Lines Addressed to a Devadasi’, shows signs of exhaustion, almost on the stage of indifference to the worldly objects, a stage of widening mental horizons and glory. The image of the “silent Devadasi” acquires a sharp focus in the light of her gesture of withdrawal. Kamala Das’s obsession with Krishna is keen enough and elsewhere, she identifies herself, rather obliquely with Radha and Meera, Sita and Sarswati of her novel ‘A Doll for the Chief Prostitute’. The ironic focus deepens since these innocent girls named after the Goddesses of Hindu religion traffic in flesh.

Her quest is leading her to Krishna and the extracts quoted from her poetry and autobiography confirm her progress. Through the changing circumstances, changing partners and defiled life promote her to think of the eternal truth of life. She confirms that the lure of Blue God is constant. Everything else follows and derives its value from this truth, and mere conjectures have no validity in matters of life – divine.
**END NOTES**


6) Ibid. 92.

7) Ibid. 197.


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