

# PREFACE

आनन्दात् खल्विमानि भूतानि जायन्ते 'Ānanda' is the core of this creation, ānanda is the most cherished desire in every human heart. Ānanda is the summit and limit of human achievement, aesthetically, cognitively, morally and spiritually ānanda is spirit's splendour, it is the soul of all literary creations.

My work springs from ānanda, as it is the joyful union of three universally acclaimed joyous creations such as 'nāṭya', Śṛṅgāra and "Rāmakathā". Going through this work is a consecration in the "triveṇī saṅgama" of nāṭaka, śṛṅgāra rasa and Rāmakathā.

In the commencing chapter, I offer a fairly comprehensive interpretation of nāṭya the living literature, it's different elements and components, it's pro-people and democratic nature and it's influence and place on Indian life and literature. I seek to extend the tradition of interpretation of rasa, the essence, in the second chapter. Trying to unfold the enigma of emotions (rasa), I have reached at the overflowing influence of 'rasa' in nourishing and nurturing the nature and character of human beings and nation-building at large. So the social value of 'emotion' or 'rasa' is most intimate and essential aspect of it which is dealt with utmost care in the second chapter.

Śṛṅgāra reigns supreme among all rasas, so it is treated as 'Rasarāja' by the Indian aestheticians. It's effect and influence on world's culture and literature is over whelming and incalculable. In India, śṛṅgāra or kāma is treated one among the four 'puruṣārthas'. From Ṛgvedic period till contemporary creations kāma waves it's flag of victory above all spheres of literature and life.

The small compass of human perception can not hold the formidable issue like love or śṛṅgāra. Human life is born out of love, is supported by love, nourished and nurtured by love. We are continuously reeling amidst love. This is the mystery of the crude materialistic world that it's existence is on love's grace. The effect of love is so deep that almost three fourth of world's literature is resting on love.

There can not be an element of comedy without love. There can not be an element of tragedy without love. So love can be treated as the breath of the literature.

Love has two broad aspects, physical or crude aspect and emotional aspect. Both the aspects of love have been shown very vibrantly in our literature. These are the examples - such as *Pururavā-Urvaśī*, *Dusyanta-Sakuntalā* many many more. Love as an emotional exuberance is existent in the world of aesthetics and literature. Both the physical and spiritual aspects of love are defined and dealt with utmost care and concern by Indian Rhetorians. From Bharata upto Rupa-Goswāmi, have treated '*śṛṅgāra*' from different modes of consciousness. I have analysed some of the great theories on *śṛṅgāra* of different authors. From the intensive presentation of the different definitions the core nature of *śṛṅgāra* is revealed radiantly. I have also delineated the different dimensions of *śṛṅgāra* in the sub chapter sixteen dimensions of *śṛṅgāra*. Not a single creative work has been possible without love. So *śṛṅgāra* is the soul of creative activities.

When love enters deep into the heart of a person that happens to be the first vibration of soul and there begins the return journey. Love is the journey from darkness to light, from falsehood to truth, from inconscience to consciousness. It is the journey towards absolute.

As a soul needs a body for it's existence, rasa requires a plot-element or *Kathāvastu* as a medium for it's manifestation and relishment. At the root of Indian culture and literature, *Rāmāyaṇa* stands as the substratum. For the poets and aestheticians Vālmiki has not only spread out the joyous path of expression, *madhumaya bhaṇiti* but also has provided them with the most popular plot-element. Throughout the centuries, authors, poets, dramatist and performers have produced diverse tellings of the *Rāmakatha* in numerous ways. In the fourth chapter, I have explored the diversity of *Rāmāyaṇa* traditions and it's cultural extension. So this chapter can be called as a celebration of the great and vast world of literature based on *Rāmakathā*. Along with *Vālmiki's Rāmāyaṇa*, there are hundreds of other tellings of the story of Rāma in Indian soil that diffused all over the world. The story of Rāma has not only bewitched the Asians generations

that has hypnotised the whole world through its religious, cultural and literary traditions. I have tried to reflect the influence and popularity of *Rāmakathā* in this chapter.

This chapter seeks the diversity of different tellings of *Rāmakathā* in genres like *mahā kāvya*, *champu kāvya*, *Sandēsha kāvya*, *citya-kāvya*, *stavas*, *Gitis*, etc. The fifth chapter concentrates on the plays based on Rāmāyaṇa story. The social significance of the epic-dramas are most important from the point of evolution of culture in India as these plays reflect and highlight the Indian cultural growth and tradition of ancient performing art. These plays possess freshness in their own imaginative wealth, social richness and cultural reflections. Finally I seek to demonstrate the position of *śṛṅgāra* as pre-dominant emotion in these plays.

The 6th chapter is an intensive study of the play *Maithilikalyāṇam*, a splendid work of the 13th century poet Hastimalla, elegantly written with *śṛṅgāra* as the pre-dominant emotion, having language appropriate to the *aṅgīrasa*. The poet, essentially can be called a psychological poet, as he narrates the deep emotional states of his characters with enchanting softness and subtilities.

Finally, last but not the least, the 7th chapter deals with 'aṅgīrasa' its definitions, given by Indian rhetoricians, its essential elements, diversity and its place and importance in the world of rhetoric. This chapter examines *śṛṅgāra* as the *aṅgīrasa* or pre-dominant emotion in the play *Maithilikalyāṇam*. It also unfolds the psychological and emotional conditions of this *rasa*, how they are expressed and how deeply the poet Hastimalla has committed to his craft-manage to honour the traditional conditions of love-literature and to express the particularities of a man's emotional response to his particular experience of love.

It has been very consciously attempted to balance all the chapters without a human bias. It is for the readers to evaluate this work.

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