

**TRUTH IN LITERATURE OR LITERATURE IN TRUTH; REDISCOVERING
TRUTH THROUGH ORIENTAL AND OCCIDENTAL APPROACHES WITH
SPECIAL REFERENCE TO JOHN KEATS**

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Abstract:

In morality-based literature, the concept and application of Truth is prominent. In informal teaching system and the concept of Truth is accepted as a popular milestone. But what is Truth, actually? Is it a materialistic concept? Does Truth have any understandable shape or definition? Is the same concept of Truth accepted by oriental literature and Occidental literature? This research work is an attempt to understand the concept, application, and belief regarding the idea of Truth in two genres of literature, prominently in the oriental part and in the occidental part. The interrelation between literature and the concept of Truth is also studied properly to understand the priority of Truth in the process of imagination to form literature. Regarding this comparative analysis, John Keats and his ideas and reflections regarding the idea of Truth are also explored through different creations of this romantic poet. Therefore, this research work is an in-depth commentary and comparison between the old oriental concept of Truth, which is beyond any materialistic idea, and the occidental approach to the idea of Truth on the basis of consumerist communication and ideologies.

Keywords:

Truth, Satya, Eternal being, Mind, Atma, Keats, Olympian, Beauty, Deathless, Emotional, Pleasure, Hymn, Nature, Secondary imagination, Spontaneous, Passion, The Gita, Music, Mournful, Knowledge, Falling state, Aimless, Christianity, Absolute, Reality, Mystery, Self.

The word “*Truth*” does not have any single technical definition accepted worldwide. Generally, “*honesty*,” “*good behavior*,” “*gentleness*,” “*faithfulness*,” “*sincerity*,” “*reality*,” “*fact*” based incidents, and “*normality*” are treated as the mandatory features of applied Truth which will come out or revealed or expressed on the basis of the single of a joint venture of the pre-mentioned attributes. In a word, “*truth*” is universal. Etymologically, “*truth*” is the noun form of true (adjective), i.e., a fact that has been verified. In origin, the term “*truth*.”¹ is derived from the Middle English period-based words “*trivida*” (Old German) and “*tryggd*” (Norse). In ancient Sanskrit, “*Satya*” (Truth) was a popular term. “*Sob*” was synonymous with “*truth*” to Anglo-Saxon people. However, from the early past, people tried to reveal the true sense of “*truth*” in the way of religious inventions and scientific experiments. Before the medieval period, religion was not merely some beliefs or sacrifices, but it was the inseparable culture of the common mass's livelihood to lead their life to the point of satisfaction in spite of everyday calamities. In this respect, Truth not only leads to the highest Truth, “*God*,” but also a theory to get relief from the life cycle as according to Hindu philosophy, “*atma*” will further become a part of “*Paramatma*,” from which one fine moment “*atma*” comes on the earth to take birth. Circa 3000 B.C., regarding Arjuna’s dilemma in “*Kususkhetra*.”² War (the described war “*Mahabharata*,” an Indian epic and the biggest epic of the world, and its original version came out as early as the 10th century B.C. or maybe before that), Lord Krishna (seventh “*Avatara*” of Lord Vishnu) advises his fellow Arjuna, “*The eternal and immutable spirit of the Supreme Being is also called the Eternal Being or the Spirit. The inherent power of cognition and desire of the Eternal Being (Spirit) is called the nature of the Eternal Being. The creative power of the eternal Being (Spirit) that causes the manifestation of the living entity is called Karma*”.³ (Chapter: Line:: 8:30)⁴

So, here, the meaning is quite clear that through “*Karma*” i.e. good works and better human qualities like faithfulness, fidelity, sincerity, and honesty we can get the Knowledge of the highest Truth, i.e., “*Eternal Being*”, according to Lord Krishna. The poet John Keats finds a sense of aesthetic Truth in every sort of Beauty -----

“*Forlorn! The very word is like a bell to tell me back from thee to my sole Self. Adieu: the fancy cannot cheat so well As she is famed to do, deceiving elf. Adieu! Adieu! Thy plaintive anthem fades past the near meadows, over the still stream, up the hillside, and now 'tis buried deep In the next valley-glades; was it a vision, or a waking dream? Fled is that music – do I wake or – sleep?*”⁵ The sensuous poet Keats finds the Beauty of Truth in the factual fancies of the grasses of the meadow, the music like the sweet voice of the nightingale, and even the presence of the tree also comes in his dream-like condition, which is far away from the cruel of daily life and in his sensations, Keats feels the true-beauty in the

¹ Foundation Wikipedia. 1998-2009.23 Jun.2009.< www. wikipedia.com >

² Balla Hari: *The Bhagvad Gita*. New York. Gita International society:2009:Edited.

³ Balla Hari: *The Bhagvad Gita*. New York. Gita International society:2009.Edited.

⁴ (8:10) is (chapter::Page no.)

⁵ Balla Hari: *The Bhagvad Gita*. New York. Gita International society:2009.: Edited.

lap of pure nature and its celestial attributes like a nightingale. The philosophy regarding this "secondary imagination" of Self amid the nature of John Keats is quite the same as Lord Krishna's advice in "The Gita" episode of "The Mahabharata"-----

"Perceive the same Self (or spirit) abiding in every being, and all beings abiding in the Self (6.29). Those who see Me in Everything and see Everything in Me, are not separated from Me, and I am not separated from them (6.30)". Searching for Beauty in the breath of natural purity is synonymous with the inseparably of poet's Self and the ultimate Self, i.e., God and here "Me" strongly refers to the supreme Self of Truth, related to the eternity of Almighty.

Biblical Truth, as revealed by Jesus Christ, the highest prophet of Christianity, is based on the words, "Seek and ye shall find." In the same line of Bhagavad truth ("Truth," derived from the "Bhagavad Gita"), Truth, "seek" refers to the search for Self ("atma") in the supreme Self ("Paramatma") and therefore, finds the Beauty of Omnipresent's presence in the mortal identities of earthly creatures. This is the reason John Keats finds the Common presence of Beauty in every Truth of nature, i.e., the creation of God, the highest maker, the presence of the Almighty is eternal, and Keats discovers it through the help of his sensuous "mind" (according to words worth) or "secondary imagination" (according to Coleridge) in spite of the tyranny of mortal eyes and in this procedure of sensation, Keats is seemed different than the western philosophers like Mill who foretells, "mind is a clean slate," rather like his precursors, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Blake he believes "mind" as the sixth sense of human beings, and it is "mind" which controls the other five senses (touch, smell, see, hear, taste) in the way, Indian philosophers believes "Mind," according to Coleridge is "Secondary imagination" which is the special power to sense, much powerful than the "Primary imagination" of common mass in their everyday incident without any new excitements and curiosity. Through the help of "mind" or "secondary imagination", Keats wants to direct a message through the Greek urn in his "Ode on A Grecian Urn" (1818) to the perceptive people, born in the mournful earth as Graham Hough Speaks, also attains the inseparable flow of the sea of sorrow, i.e., our mortal life and in the unstoppable circle of change, the fixed portraits on the urn's body are the symbol of ultimate reality – the last Truth Keats, the pure lover of celestial Beauty says in Hyperion,

"This the eternal law That first in beauty should be – first in might."⁶(Line no.287) For, words worth, the imagination of his "mind" is the creator of a "tempest," comes out as poetry. Coleridge takes "imagination" as merely a creative power, and it can even produce negative odes like "Dejection, an Ode."⁷ Where he hears only the cry of a child who loses his way home in the "month of Shower."⁸ But, Keats upgrades the particular power of "imagination" as a holy way to Know the ultimate Truth of natural Beauty as he remarks, "what the imagination seizes, and Beauty must be Truth—whether it existed before or not." In

⁶ Keats, John: *Hyperion & the fall of Hyperion*. New Delhi: Rama brothers: 2006.

⁷ Coleridge, S.T.: *Golden Treasury and other poems*. Kolkata: Joy Durga Publication: 2009.

⁸ Rainy season.

the middle of worldly impermanence, Keats finds the oneness of Beauty and Truth along the same line as Immanuel Kant, the aesthetic philosopher who believes that Truth is beyond "mere verbal definition." The relation of "atma" (Self) and "Paramatma" (Supreme self) is discussed by Lord Krishna in "*The Gita*."⁹ Has been re-presented by Kant in a Western manner. According to him, one's Knowledge is true if it agrees with the particular Object to which his/ her Knowledge belongs. So, here, the Knowledge is supposed to be true on the aspect of that Object and not self-sufficient in the sense that without the verification of the real identity of the Object, there is no surety of One's Knowledge's truthfulness or Vice-versa. If we concentrate on this Kantian philosophy, the shadow of Bhagavad truth and the Biblical idea of Truth tell us to seek One's own Self ("Atma") in the Omnipresence of the Supreme self ("Paramatma") in order to unveil the true identity of ultimate Truth or the Almighty to feel his/her eternal presence in Everything in the form of an ever-applicable beauty which is the "*Universal beauty*" of a "rose" to Immanuel Kant.¹⁰

"*Aesthetic Truth*" is the idea based on the subjective, absolute, fact or reality-based philosophy of mortal and celestial sensation to explore the true, sincere, faithful form of "*Truth*" in search of Beauty with the ecclesiastical art of "Truth" in search of Beauty with the ecclesiastical art of "*aesthetic*," for beyond the selfish presence of five senses (see, smell, hear, touch and taste).

Truth is synonymous with Beauty, as Truth itself can form a sense of Beauty. Suppose, in a judicial procedure, after a number of negative hurdles, an influential corrupted murderer is given the sentence to punishment as the investigation department unveils the real Truth along with some strong proof this revelation of Truth will bring a sense of relief and satisfaction that in spite of stronghold in power corridor, a criminal Can't escape from punishment. Now, the after-effects of this incident (exploring the Truth) have come in the form of relief and satisfaction, the sensuous feeling of Beauty. "A thing of beauty is joy forever" is the soul of Keatsian¹¹ Search for Truth in his "*Complete fragment*," "*Hyperion*," where the revelation of Truth that Olympians (Zeus and his sub-ordinate Greek Gods) are much more powerful than the Titans (Saturn and older generation of Greek Gods) in physical, creative, artistic power that brings a celestial portray of heavenly sense of Beauty in Clymene's¹² (the ex-goddess of music in "*Hyperion*" of Keats) heart as she finds out the Truth that Apollo's sort of pleasurable warm music can scold the heart with a magnificent, unique combination of joy and sorrow and make the island (the birthplace of Apollo) full of peaceful solitude. Here, in spite of getting mournful due to her falling state, Clymene feels excited, derived from the sense of Beauty, which comes through the exploration of Truth that the future God of music is much more powerful in the sense of sensation. The same feeling

⁹ Balla Hari: *The Bhagvad Gita*. New York. Gita International society:2009: Edited.

¹⁰ Foundation Wikipedia. 1998-2009.23 Jun.2009.< www. wikipedia.com >.

¹¹ The particular philosophy of John Keats.

¹² Keats, John: *Hyperion & the fall of Hyperion*. New Delhi: Rama brothers: 2006.

happens for Oceanious (the previous Greek sea god) after Neptune (the Olympian sea god); the new sea God is seen by him. Like his preceptors, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Blake, Keats looks beyond the tyranny of mortal eyes to give the relative silence of Truth a voice during his travel in the lap of natural Beauty. In a broader sense, it is the craving for the ultimate Truth, i.e., "God," according to Indian philosophy, but not in the marked way of the Bible.¹³ But by creating a true heaven out of this mournful world in this way means society also can form a sense of Beauty, through which its inhabitants can get rid of everyday life's caricature for one more time through the imaginative and applied quality of "mind," human beings will gain back the lost "paradise," i.e., the blessing of highest Truth of the Almighty. The philosophy of great Indian philosopher Swami Vivekananda¹⁴ i.e., "to serve man is to serve God" is similar to the Keatsian way of getting the trait of Truth by serving the human society under the discipline of nature to purify the nature of human beings. The expression "nature of human beings" is the term "dharma" of common masses, described by Lord Krishna, the highest philosopher, as he speaks, "All work is done by the energy and power of nature, but due to delusion of ignorance people assume themselves to be the doer" (3.27). According to "The Gita"¹⁵, Keats is right and does not go against reality as the pseudo-doers are wrong due to delusion. None but nature is the real doer, and Keats, being a worshipper of nature through his "mind" or "secondary imagination," just does the right and the original, realistic, ethical work to reform the corrupted social structure, obviously not like a technically defined social reformer but like the lover who wants to implement his true Love, nature her (nature) loveable discipline amid the "dirty" society to purify it. In this respect, the young lover Keats is not aimless at all, but the ambition is quite interesting and full of the direct impact of the eighty-nine's "French Revolution"(1789 AD), which forms an ultimate measurement unit of romance (in the sense of adventurous revolution) which is the purification of corrupted dictatorship of a small number on the large common men and this aim, intentionally and meaningfully comes under the romantic beams of young Apollo the literary figure of Keats. In a letter to his brother George on 19th March 1819, John Keats writes, "I am ---- straining at particles of light in the midst of a great darkness."¹⁶ (Line no. 5, Page no.28) This remark supports the predefined explanation in the same line of his senior, William Blake, --- "I must create a system of be enslaved' by another Man's." Prof. Bhabatosh Chatterjee remarks, "As Keats abandoned the metaphysic of religion, and doctrinal Christianity had little relevance for him, he desperately needed new symbols, and his youthful imagination was stirred by the beauty and the richness of classical theology that

¹³ Owen, Tecwyn Morgan: *Glad tidings*. London: The glad tidings publishing association (A registered charity): 2009.

¹⁴ Vivekananda, Swami: *His Call To Nation*. Haridwar: Aditya Asrama: 2005.

¹⁵ Balla Hari: *The Bhagvad Gita*. New York. Gita International society:2009: Edited.

¹⁶ Inglis, Fred: *Keats, Literature in perspective*. London: Evans Brothers limited: 2001.

had been left almost untapped by the neo-classists."¹⁷(Page no.109; Line no.7) The matter to concentrate on is his re-presentation, rather the re-moderation of the classical character of Greek literature; Apollo is much more beautiful than his character in "*The Iliad*"¹⁸ or "*Odyssey*"¹⁹ or "*The Aeneid*"²⁰ of Roman literature; Saturn is much more sensible and meaningful in "*Hyperion*" than Greek mythology. The search for the new Beauty of Keats means in the lap of pure nature, and the utmost will replace the celestial natural Beauty in the place of bell-like human nature. O.P. Malaviya²¹ In "*Critical Guide on Keats*," he remarks, "*No other poet of the English language is such an inveterate lover of Beauty as Keats is, and no poet talks so frequently of Beauty as Keats does. In his letter, he uses such phrases as 'Essential Beauty,' 'the hieroglyphics of Beauty,' 'The eternal being, the principle of Beauty' and finally 'the mighty abstract idea of Beauty in all things,' and 'the principle of beauty in all things'.*"(Page no.12; Line no.9) ²²The imagination and the spontaneous passion of the essential Beauty, for Keats, is the application of Truth in reality. The Truth of imagination is the holiness of the heart's affection as he reveals that he has the same idea of all their passions as of Love; those are all, in their sublime, creative of essential Beauty. Truth, like Beauty, is deathless and eternal. That's why the poet's realization of the fact that he may die soon and his poetical romanticism may remain unfinished in the poem "*Hymn to Apollo*," John Keats can still expect,

*"When, who – who did dare,
To tie for a moment thy plant round his brow,
And grin and look proudly,
And blaspheme so loudly,
And live for that honor, to stoop to – thee now?*

*O Delphic Apollo!"*²³

(Line no. 31-36)

Here lies the Truth for which Keats searches for his whole life and ultimately finds in the attempt to win over the mortal time span by an unremovable mark, not by the huge span of a lifetime, and this process of achieving the Beauty of absolute Truth is continued throughout his life span of twenty-six years. Though a city child of London, Keats does not want to be a city-dweller with the material aspects; rather, he wants to bring the touch of the disciplined pure nature amid the chaotic condition of city life to invite a deep breath of satisfaction that we still have a hope to change the dull, monotonous city life into the pleasant, pure life in the lap of nature –

¹⁷ Chatterjee, Bhabatosh: *A Study on Keats*. Allahabad: JayPrakash publication: 1976

¹⁸ Homer: *The Illiad*. New Delhi: UBSPD:2008

¹⁹ Homer: *The Odyssey*. New Delhi: UBSPD:2008

²⁰ Virgil: *The Aeneid*. London: Words Worth Classics:2008

²¹ Malaviya, O.P.:*Critical guide on Keats*.Meerut: Asha Prakashan: 2009

²² Malaviya, O.P.:*Critical guide on Keats*.Meerut: Asha Prakashan: 2009

²³ Sen, S: *Odes of Keats*. New Delhi: Unique Publication:2008

“Away! Away! For I will fly to thee,
Not charioted by Bacchus and his parts,
But on the viewless wings of poesy,
Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:

...

Save that from heaven is with the breezes blown
Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.”²⁴

(Keats, John: *Hyperion and the fall of Hyperion*: Line no. 113-119)

Again, Keats’s “sensory–emotional” delight is ‘close-linked with after-thought – the pleasure with pang.’ The initial mood of joy induced by the song is mixed up with a pathos that springs out of the contemplation of life, a “richly meditative one”. The poet, John Keats, soon passes from the world of sensation to the sphere of thought. The view of Truth, expressed here against the background of social reality, is highly tragic, and this finds concentrated expression when he speaks of the weariness, fever, and fret, the changes of life, the transience of youth, Love, and Beauty. It is the bird's freedom from these sorrows that fills the poet with a longing to escape into the dim forest of the bird and wants to be absorbed in it. The spell is complete, and for a few moments, the poet remains in a paradise of joy. But the spell is soon broken; he is awakened to the reality of life. Thus, the rich emotion and thought content Keats's Love of nature, Love of romance, and Hellenism (the Love for the land of Helen and its influence in his works). But, in spite of all the features of this nature like hopefulness, enjoyment, life after death, etc., refer to the mystery of the silent yet very much active force of natural Truth. John Keats finds that, ultimately, sorrow becomes the hard Truth for a mortal, and maybe for this reason, “Here lays someone whose name is written in water.”²⁵ It is written on the tomb of his graveyard. But, the time for whom he wait eagerly in the short span of his life(only twenty-six years long) brings joy and sorrow both for him, and he defines “Time” as the super Truth (“*Param-atma*”) in the true sense.

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²⁴ Keats, John: *Hyperion & the fall of Hyperion*. New Delhi: Rama brothers: 2006.

²⁵ Dutt, Chandril; “*Prastuti*”. 23Jul 2001: <*Anandabazar Patrika*>

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