
STUDY ON THE INDIAN MIND IN KEATS' POETRY

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Abstract:

John Keats, a luminary of English Romantic poetry, ventured into the realm of Indian thoughts in his odes and verses, encapsulating a synthesis of Eastern mysticism and Western Romanticism. His poetic oeuvre resonates with keywords emblematic of this engagement: "transcendence," "spirituality," and "intuition." Keats, under the influence of the Romantic movement, sought to transcend the boundaries of conventional European thought, delving into the mystic realms of Indian philosophy, particularly the Vedantic concepts of Atman and Brahman, through his verses. His poetry pulsates with a sense of spirituality, wherein he explores the interconnectedness of the human soul with nature, echoing the Eastern belief in the unity of all existence. The idea of intuition, a hallmark of Indian thought, is profoundly present in Keats' works, as he invites readers to trust their inner senses, akin to the Eastern emphasis on the wisdom of the heart.

Keywords: mysticism, philosophy, Romantic movement

INTRODUCTION

Keats believed that the greatest achievement that a man could do for himself was to realize the infinite spirit that is contained inside the form of beauty that was limited. This was the greatest accomplishment that a man could make. Keats is well aware of the fact that everything has a short lifespan and is fleeting; but, when he catches a glimpse of the gorgeous urn, he is attracted by its beauty, which has imparted a touch of immortality to the item. This is despite the fact that Keats is well aware of the fact that everything has a finite lifespan and is ephemeral. The urn itself, together with the piper, the trees, the lover, and the maiden that are inscribed upon it, have been granted immortality. In addition to that, the urn itself has eternal life. These are all items that may be discovered on earth, but for some reason, they have been given the gift of immortality merely because a place was set aside for them on an urn that has been preserved through the ravages of time.

ROBERT SOUTHEY AND INDIAN THOUGHT

Robert Southey was undeniably a fervent adherent to the concepts that originated in India. Other romantic poets found their muse in him, and he urged them to learn about Indian culture, particularly its mythology, religion, and philosophy. He was also an influence to other writers. The one who was most profoundly influenced by him

was P.B. Shelley, who was a later romantic and was one of the romantics. The poem "Modac" was written by the colonist Southey, who was also a poet. In it, he examines how India was governed by colonies and how the infection of commercialism, sensuality, and superstition was endemic to the British character. Specifically, he looks at how the British character was infected with these traits. Additionally, Southey perpetuates the preconceptions of both good and bad Native Americans. The book known as Modac was composed in the 18th century.

Southey had a powerful pull in the direction of the Indian subcontinent very immediately after he began his career as a writer. In point of fact, he told his close buddy William Taylor of Norwich that he resided in Norwich that he wanted to travel to the country of India. He had a Sanskrit accent and employed numerous Sanskrit terms, such as Ganga and the different Hindu ages. He also spoke with a Sanskrit vocabulary. The Curse of Kehama demonstrates both his interest in Hindu beliefs and his inventive use of mythology. He believes this work to be his finest masterpiece. The fact that Southey regarded it as his favorite poetry and that it serves as a storehouse for the breadth and depth of his study of Indian mythology, philosophy, customs, religious beliefs, and etiquette is evidenced by the fact that he believed it to be his favorite. It creates the idea that he is very antagonistic against the mythology of the Hindus since in the Preface to the poem he asserts that the religion of the Hindus is the most erroneous of all faiths.

The second time that The Gita is mentioned in The Curse of Kehama, it is in the seventh chapter of The Gita's thirteenth canto, which is called "The Retreat." This is where the reference can be located. In this part, we explored the libations that Kailyal makes to the afterlives of her ancestors in order to appease their spirits. It is clear that Southey was affected by Charles Wilkin in this specific case. Wilkin's addition to The Gita addresses petree, loka, narak, and mookti, thus it is easy to understand how Southey was influenced by Wilkin. After a person passes away in Petree Loka, Mookti is given to Narak, provided that all of the relevant formalities have been followed out.

One other allusion to the Gita may be seen in Southey's poetry, namely in the tenth part of the nineteenth canto, which is referred to as Mount Calasay. This specific reference may be found in the petition that Greendover submits to Seeva,

O all-included ind,

You are in every place.

Whom everyone who looks for will find.

Listen to me, O Seeva. Listen to the prayer of the beggar.

It is clear that Southey had a major interest in the religion of Lord Siva since he substituted the name "Seeva" for "Shiva" in his writings. The second time that The Gita is referenced in The Curse of Kehama occurs in the fifteenth section of the poem, which is referred to as Padalon and is located inside the 33rd canto of the poem. This is the portion of the poem that so brilliantly recounts Kehama's triumph over the entirety of the Universe.

After Kehama's victory, to keep going

From world to world, heaven to heaven, and sphere

To circle, until Hemkoot is theirs.

And the Mer Mount and the Swerya-Bows of Indra. And the area of Brama,

Where the hours of heaven. Weave the big loop of his age-long day.

The fact that Southey incorporates the names Indra and Brahma throughout his writing demonstrates that he had an interest in Indian mythology. The Southey idea of Brahma is analogous to the Hindu concept of kalpa, which is claimed to span 1000 yugas and is comparable to 433 million years in the lifespan of humans. Brahma is also referred to as "the creator." The notion that the immense circle of his age-long day is preoccupied with the adulation of either Narayanan or Krishna. The final reference to "The Gita" is found in "The Amreet," which is the ninth chapter of the twenty-fourth canto of the epic.

Mine you must be, doomed to share with me

The Amreet-up of life after death,

When Southey talks about "The Amreet," he is talking about Amrit, which is something that can be found in "The Puranas." In Hindu thought, the Amrit is a symbol for the potential of achieving immortality by the ingestion of a certain elixir. There is a battle recounted in the Puranas that takes place between demons and God. The victory belongs to God, who was able to prevail against the demonic forces that opposed him. Sir Wilkins has presented an explanation that is historically true of the process of producing nectar, which entailed using a mountain to help churn the sea. As a result of Wilkins's observation, Southey was able to utilize the term in his epic, "The Curse of Kehama," in a manner that was more successful. In addition to the epic's connection to The Gita, the first section, titled "The Funeral," provides a depiction of some of the ancient practices that are followed in India. Bramins provides a description of a funeral procession in Cantos 3 and 4, which includes the casket of the deceased individual. Canto no. 6 contains the widow ladies' retelling of the events that took place after Kehama's demise, which they narrate in their own words. As a result, the Indian epic "The Curse of Khema" not only contains aspects of Indian philosophy, but it also demonstrates the numerous contributions that India has made to the world in the fields of culture and religion.

Indian thought and William Blake

Northrop Fry, an eminent critic on Blake, asserts that Blake was among the first of European idealists able to link his own tradition of thought with the other authority on Blake, locates certain striking similarities between the ideas of the Bhagavad Gita and the philosophical doctrines of William Blake. Northrop Fry also asserts that Blake was among the first of European idealists able to link his own tradition of thought with the other authority on Blake. Fry is of the opinion that Blake was successful in accomplishing this goal because he was able to successfully combine the intellectual traditions of his own culture with those of other European idealists. Because

of Charles Wilkins' translation of the Hindu Bible, which attracted the curiosity of the Romantics, the Gita inspired both the ideology and the transcendental perspective of the European mind.

William Wordsworth and the Philosophy of India

Wordsworth in particular was inspired by Rousseau's trumpet call for equality, liberty, and a Return to Nature, and it is a fact that both Coleridge and Wordsworth were eyewitnesses to the French Revolution. This is a truth that cannot be disputed. This is a fact that can in no way be called into question. However, there is a significant aspect that has been blissfully overlooked, and that is the fact that Wilkins' translation of the Gita was published in 1785, which is four years prior to the beginning of the French Revolution, and that academics who study Wordsworth have not discussed the influence of Indian philosophy and spiritual thinking on Wordsworth's poetry very much. Wilkins' translation of the Gita was published in 1785. This is four years prior to the beginning of the French Revolution. The well-educated critic of William Blake known as Northrop Fry asserts that Blake was one of the first European idealists to be able to combine his own conventional ideas with the Bhagavad Gita. Fry bases this assertion on the fact that Blake was able to do so.

Indian Thought and Coleridge

Wordsworth's personal friend and Southey's brother-in-law, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, was largely regarded as the most insightful, thoughtful, and gluttonous reader of any of the English romantic poets. Coleridge was also a personal friend of Wordsworth. Charles Lamb, the Prince of English essayists, praised him as a "Metaphysician Logician, Bard." It is astounding to observe how far Coleridge has dived into the subject matter of eastern lore and philosophy. The poet was well-versed in the intellectual traditions of India as well as the classical history of India, and he had read The Gita when he was still a very young age. During the philosophical lecture that he delivered on the 11th of January, 1819, he made the following observation:

Socrates seems to have gone in the same direction.

We were told that his bad mood was caused by

Calanos, an Indian scholar, had some kind words of criticism.

who was talking about "Socrates, Diogenes, and other great men"

Given that Coleridge makes reference to an Indian thinker by the name of Calanos, it is not hard to deduce that he had some kind of relationship with the subcontinent of India.

The fervor that was evident in the study of Indian philosophy and religion in Germany inspired Coleridge to explore the concepts and beliefs of India with greater care and seriousness than he had previously. When he moved to Germany in September 1791 with Wordsworth and Dorothy and stayed there until July 1799, the literary culture there was profoundly inspired by Indianism. This was the case from the time he arrived there

until the time he left. This was the situation for the entirety of his stay in Germany. He read out loud a translation of the Sakuntala order of the Entscheidende Ring that had been done by G. Forster. This work, which was originally authored by Kalidasa and published in Germany, was later translated and published in Germany.

KEATS'S NEGATIVE CAPABILITY AND THE ART OF DISINTERESTED ACTION

Negative Capability constitutes another significant contribution of John Keats to the realm of art, poetry and philosophy that deserves a thorough discussion in the light of Indian theory of detachment, both Hindu and Buddhist. It is the capacity to negate things that are personal and then remain calm and composed during uncertainty. One who possesses negative capability usually nourishes the habit of reconciling with difficulties, complex and contradictory aspects and develops a solution for closed and justified phenomenon without irritating the reader. Negative Capability strengthens one's capacity for facing hostile and belligerent situation and in the process allows a person to endure all adverse circumstances of all kinds so that human beings can realize the supreme reality. It may be understood as a positive capability of enduring negative personal feelings.

Keats defines negative capability in the letter written in 21st December 1817 to his brothers George and Tom Keats;

“I spent Friday evening with Wells and went the next morning to see Death as the Pale horse. It is a wonderful picture, when West's age is considered. But there is nothing to be intense upon, no woman one feels mad to kiss, no face swelling in reality, the excellence of every part is it's intensity

INDIAN THOUGHT AS REFLECTED IN KEATS'S POETRY

John Keats was one of the greatest romantic poets, who were a pure artist and worshipper of beauty- beauty in body, woman and art. He worshipped strongly the goddess called Imagination. But it would be unwise to call him only the worshipper of beauty and imagination. He was also a truly religious man with a holy mind and a pure heart. He worshipped many mythological gods of various countries especially Greek mythology and his worship of Apollo is significant indeed. Further, in his writings one locates an engaging interest in Indian philosophy, mythology and culture as a whole.

India's bewitching beauty and glittering charm had attracted Keats's mind and soul and this is evident from his letter to Miss Jeffrey of Teignmouth, Devon on 31st of May, 1819. In this letter, Keats confessed with utmost honesty and sincerity.

“I have the choice, as it were, of two Poisons (yet I ought not to call this a Poison) the one is voyaging to and from India for a few years.” That Keats was very much interested in political affairs between India and England becomes obvious from his letter to Georgiana Keats, the wife of his younger brother on 13th of Friday, 28th of Jan 1820. In this letter, he mentions about the event that took place at Calcutta in 1756 between Siraj-ud-daula's Bengal and East India Company .At the same time, Keats was fully sensitive to the dark episode in Indian History which is known as ' The Black Hole 'tragedy' : “He is making now one of an Ode to the Nightingale which is like reading an account of the B (l) ack hole at Calcutta on an ice berg”.

Keats's eagerness to know about India- her philosophy and religious ideas- got through the works of such Orientalists as Sir William Jones, Charles Wilkins and Colebrooks. That he was interested in Hinduism becomes clear from the perusal of his letter to George and Georgiana Keats. In this letter, Keats evinces his knowledge of the Hindu doctrine of 'Avatarvada'-the theory of Incarnation. :

In the poem 'Endymion', Keats describes the progress of Bacchus, the god of wine, in civilizing mankind from Egypt to India. In line 265 of the poem, the poet mentions about Bacchus's victory over 'Brahma'.

*"The kings of Ind their jewel-sceptres veil,
And from their treasures scatter pearled hail.
Great Brahma from his mystic heaven groans,
And all his priesthood moons;
Before young Bacchus' eye-wink turning pale"*

References to Indian mythology in the above lines are numerous. In the first line of the quotation, 'India' has been mentioned by another of its name: 'Ind' which is a diminutive form of 'India'. In the 3rd line, there has been mentioned the name of the Indian God.

That Keats is a lover of Indian Vedantic philosophy is evident from the poem 'Hyperion'. In this poem the concept of 'sthita prajnata' or stable mindedness, as a means to salvation has been beautifully exploited by Keats:

*"Now comes the pain of truth, to whom 'tis pain
O folly! For to bear all naked truths
And to envisage circumstances, all calm.
That is the top of sovereignty."*

The doctrine of 'stable mindedness' which is strongly recommended in the above lines are evident in 'The Gita'. He, whose mind is untroubled in the midst of sorrows and is free from desire, pleasures, and for whom passion, fear and rage have passed away, he is called a sage of settled intelligence.

In the poem 'Hyperion', Keats describes the joys and sorrows of Nature. In view of the Vedanta philosophy, joys and sorrows are due to the mysterious change of Nature, her three strands or modes called gunas. The phenomena of pleasure and pain, joy and grief are evident in the following lines:

"We fall by course of Nature's law,

not force of thunder, or of Jove.”

Thus India plays a very significant role in Keats's poetry and other writings. Had that not been the case, he would have never raised the Indian Maid to the status of a goddess (moon) in the 'Endymion' where he speaks of his ardent love for India, her cultural traditions and her philosophy. He also makes numerous details through out his writings, the rivers of the country (Ganges), its greatest mountain (The Himalayas), its mythology and some of its Vedantic philosophical concepts in his philosophical poem 'Hyperion'

CONCLUSION

A poet is more sensitive than the ordinary person. He feels every moment intensely and expresses it in a different way. He is able to express his feelings in such a way that it seems impossible for a common man to catch the absolute meaning. Various factors play their role in creating such kind of profound thinking ability. Bitter experiences in his life made him grave in nature. His family life was not good enough as his mother's infidelity after his father's death broke his heart into pieces. His dear and younger brother Tom died early because of consumption. His mother also died of consumption. Throughout his life, he had faced financial crises. He also died of this fatal disease of consumption, which had engulfed most of his family members. Keats's reflections on his family history and by implication on the damage done to him in childhood suggest a deep personal crisis. All these disasters changed his life and thought process altogether.

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