The Ontology of Truth and Brahman in Gandhian Philosophy

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Abstract

Gandhi's "My Experiment with Truth" title reveals few key insights about this 'truth' even without diving into its source material, insights which seem to converge eventually with Gandhi's philosophy of truth - which is at once metaphysical (to the extent he describes the existence of an 'absolute & relative truth'), ethical, as in a means of doing in which truth manifests as an action of non-violence, but also epistemological - that one can be on the path of knowing the truth, which Gandhi himself claimed he was on. The insights seem to tell us that truth itself has a revealing nature, and by deduction, anything that is revealing must also be concealed first. After all, one only 'experiments' with something that has not yet presented itself to the observer. In this sense, truth should, methodologically, occupy a similar objective for philosophers as a natural phenomenon for science. John Marburger holds that nature is in the process of becoming. Scientific foundations rely not upon the logic of deductive logic alone but on inductions established through experiments. Such 'nature' reveals itself as more experiments build upon the previous ones, held together only by a few affixed symmetries which we have dubbed as laws of nature if such a similarity between nature and Gandhi-an truth is to be held feasible. And if nature is not some affixed point but a revelation to contend with, something to experiment and discover, which Gandhi also seems to hold similarly for truth, then to what extent is nature, with its noumenal and phenomenal qualities, similar to the truth? This paper attempts to analyse the truth in Gandhi, co-relating with his conception of the ultimate god, on a logical basis first, but also on a metaphysical-ontological basis.

Keywords: Wittgenstein; Complex/Molecular and Atomic Facts; Totality of All Atomic Facts; Absolute and Relative Truth; God as Truth and Truth as God; Reality-Class and Truth-Class; Brahman.

I

Accounts deeming Nietzsche's Beyond Good and Evil as being a work of banality and nonsense are scarce. If anything, one may consider it a work of madness, but to speak of the kind of madness that we associate with this German daredevil in a negative connotation would be a sign of naivety. Some critiques hold Nietzsche to have succumbed to the genius of his own intellectual prowess, as embodied when he stated, "It is my ambition to say in ten sentences what others say in a whole book" (Nietzsche, 1889/2005, p. 51). When discussing Nietzsche, one still strides cautiously when attempting to make any statement of the kind "Nietzsche was in-fact nonsense." Haters and lovers unite in their unfolding, and whether they agree with the propounder of Nihilism or not, at least his assertions contained sense and, thereby, a possibility of discourse. Another individual who is put to a similar taste (and I feel there wouldn't be many contentions here) has to be Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. It appears to me that Gandhi, in many senses, embodied truth, especially through the manifestation of non-violence as an ultimatum, which was a practical simulacrum of his ideation of it. By comparison, Nietzsche, on the other hand, took more to a theoretical commentary of truth. For Nietzsche, every will to truth was, in fact, a masquerading will to power. Every time a philosopher ever attempted to tell the truth of the world, Nietzsche saw it as an attempt to enflame the world in the way the individual saw fit. Implying that it was, in fact, a will to power. "The will to power is the most fundamental driving force in human beings, not merely the will to survive or reproduce" (Nietzsche, 1886/2002, p. 25).

It is my interpretation that the true spirit of Nihilism is not that nothing matters. Yet the better half of the 21st Century has modified it into a Neo-Marxist neologism that would depict the death of god and meaning in a capitalist society. However, in my reading of Nietzsche's Beyond Good and Evil, Nihilism appears to be less about a statement of the world that nothing matters. It is more an adoption of an attitude: the attitude that the self, after all, may not know what is the truth. Or perhaps the truth is bigger than our capacity for having access to it. The latter is an attitude I strive to explore in the words to come. Instead of coating one's will to power as the will to truth, the nihilist gives up all claim to it. Of course, it seems that a natural byproduct of assuming such a 'nihilistic' attitude may involve the derivative effect of "not caring" - a phrase often plurally associated with this school in modern culture. If one does not aim to claim the truth, why should any variation of the truth be meaningful to the individual? A certain disinterestedness is in due order when one

embarks upon the frontier of saying a true statement. I hint that Gandhi embodied this interpretation of Nihilism, made evident in his The Story of My Experiments with Truth. The title of his autobiography itself seems to lay to us the idea that for one ought to experiment with truth itself, in a similar fashion that a scientist may (for example) engage with reality, one has to keep oneself open. Any enquiry into the subject matter of truth calls for a certain surrender. Perhaps for Gandhi, the element of surrender came from his Vaishnavite upbringing, where I feel his capacity for surrendering to a higher structure found its origin. After all, one goes into an experiment with a hypothesis without any foregoing allegiances to particular result outcomes. In that sense, Gandhi was as great a scientist of reality as a philosopher, as much as he was a lawyer, amongst other things.

In the paper below, each section begins with some fundamental question and then proposes certain assertions that I hold to be true. Gandhi itself is less a subject of my discourse in the following first few sections, given that my attempt here is a generalised one, from sections I to IV- one which would try to first establish what truth can be and why the analysis of truth that I present through an intermediary analysis of language and reality is a similar truth that Gandhi also perhaps had revelations of. After section V, I make particular references to the truth in Gandhi.

Section II deals with the question of how an object can be described in multiple ways, dealing with the different relations that it enters with a multiplex of other objects.

Section III is dedicated to the ontological status of truth, where I attempt to define truth as a class. Section III.I is an extension, dealing with the objects that fill the necessary conditions as members of the class of ‘truth’.

Section IV takes a detour from the truth, temporarily asking what reality is. Asserting at the end that reality consists of states of affairs.

Section V explores one fundamental nature of reality, which seems to be its capacity for unfolding, revelation, and non-symmetry.

Section VI explores, finally returning to the members that fill the class called truth.

Section VII deals with God in Gandhi, and such god finds its roots in Vedanta, for which Brahman is all totality. It further explores the possibility of absolute truth, the totality of all

reality, being similarly a different sense for referring to some same reference, which is transcendental.

Section VIII Finally concludes the paper.

Of course, I look forward to the possibility of being misled and even wrong. Part of philosophy is its unfolding aspect, and such unfolding can only manifest within the structure of the philosophical debate. To attempt to make logical assertions in the Humanities comes with the professional risk of being misled because unlike in natural sciences, the ambiguities and vagueness in language give us philosophers a leeway into unravelling the arguments of another in unprecedented ways. Yet to build any foundation of knowledge, one must begin by affixing certain facts in the form of assertions, mostly following the pattern of "S is P", with logical connectives such as if-then, or, and, negation, etc being introduced to make the assertions more elaborate. Bertrand Russell, in one of his lectures, stated that one cannot help but speak of that which appears to him to be true. Given that the paper herein is written through the subjective lens of this self of mine (or, to put it in a Jacques Derrida-n way, the paper authored itself via me), I cannot help but assert that - that which appears to me, to be true. And before all knowledge became accepted normatively, collectively and socially, it was one of the private kind, the "It appears to be S is P" kind.

If this paper does, after all, accomplish anything by its end, it must be such that it would lay out an ontological but also logical analysis of truth itself. This kind also manifested through Gandhi.

II

Why can an object be described in multiple ways?

From a Fregian sense, 'sense' (or 'Sinn') is symmetrical to thought & is the context in which the 'reference' (or 'Bedeutung'), which can also be imagined as the content of a particular linguistic entity, manifests (Frege, 1948, p. 210). If reference directs ostensibly or hints towards an object or event of the world, then sense is the medium in which a particular object is hinted to. With this, we find an interesting assertion about the reality of this world - that a particular object, being the same reference, could be referred to in different mediums, contexts, or senses.

For a more homely example, Indian gods often are called in multiple denominations, Krishna alone can be referred to as Govinda (protector of cows), Gopala (beloved of the cowherds), Keshava (the one with beautiful hair), Madhava (Husband of the goddess of fortune, Lakshmi), Jagannatha (lord of the universe) and so on and so forth. Gandhi himself is referred to as the Father of the Nation. Surely, it would be nonsensical to say Gandhi is the biological father of the nation. The different names of Krishna seem to be pointing to different qualities and different manifestations with which the same reference can be referred. As a child, I used to introduce myself to relatives and the elderly with my real name, which I thought was my 'school name' (because I introduced myself as such in school), whereas my nickname was my 'home name'. How can the same entity be referred to in different ways?

The relevancy of this has to do with how the manifestation of objects and the state of affairs in which they participate occurs. But prior to the discussion of the objects themselves, we must make a note of the names we use to describe them, components which belong to language. If we know anything from the larger contributions of the Anglophone philosophers and some of their German inspirations, we do know that a word on itself does not assert something. They have to be components of larger linguistic entities, such as phrases or sentences. Even then, phrases themselves only carry meaning when they form part of a sentence in which they are used. Both phrases and words do seem to mean something. The word 'apple' in standalone refers to, at least in the normative understanding of language, some universal category of fruits which have red-coloured skin, taste a particular way, are juicy, etc. Then again, the word 'apple' is hardly ever found in seclusion in language. Even now, the word 'apple' appears as part of some larger sentence about it in my writing. When used in sentences such as "My Apple products cost a lot.", the reference could be entirely to something different (the electronic devices made by a particular company called Apple).

A black sheep is a phrase used to denote individuals who fall ill of the group, although in a more literal sense, it seems the phrase refers to a sheep with black fur. This point about phrases is driven home further by Russell, who asserts that "denoting phrases, by themselves, do not denote anything, but when used in a sentence, they contribute to the meaning of the sentence as a whole" (Russell, 1905, p. 480). Similarly, Wittgenstein also holds that no object manifests in seclusion, it always manifests in a particular state of affairs or fact of the world. (The words he uses are 1. Tatsache – This term means "fact." Wittgenstein uses it to refer to simple facts, asserting that the world is composed of these fundamental truths or facts, & 2. Sachverhalt – This term can be translated as "state of affairs" or "complex of facts." It refers to combinations of Tatsache-s).

What do the above instances hint us toward? If reality is held to be connected, part and parcel, and reflective of language (or vice versa), It appears, from our analysis so far, that each object participates with another object in some facts of the world, which are then represented by sentences of language because no object manifests in or can manifest in singularity, (even when we see just one object, they are simultaneously in contact with multiple other objects, such as our eyes, the air molecules suspended in the atmosphere, the ground upon which it lay, the bacterias which are in constant contact with it). Similar to how any singular word does not appear in seclusion but is always part of some formed sentences. Even when, for example, children's books on language learning contain individual words on a table, the table itself could be said to have a meaning, which can be represented in a sentence.

Assertion 1: Because an object is never in only a *dyad* but often in some plurality of relations with multiple other objects, thereby the object is capable of being described in plural ways.

III

What is truth?

It should not be fraudulent to say that truth is a universal category, a class, denoting certain objects or members (I do not intend to mean material objects, but objects as understood in the sense of, for example, as part of P in "S is P".) If we took anything from Russell, it is that the words themselves have to be placed within a larger linguistic entity (phrases or sentences) for them to have meaning (Russell, 1905, p. 479). So we cannot just write the sign 'apple' and intend to mean "What is it?" we always put it into a larger sentence, such as "What is an apple?". To ask what is the truth is too general, its scope far too wide. We may ask something of the kind, "What are material truths?" or "What are abstract truths?" which takes the simple word 'truth' and specifies its sub-categories further. I think what we mean when we simply only ask "what is truth" is actually asking "what is truth in general." The addition of in general would fulfil the condition of clarity.

Assertion 2: Truth is a class.

Usually, questions such as these are not at all easy to answer. Questions such as "What is goodness?" Or "What is beauty?", etc, have historically gone through arduous

processes of refining and transformation. So, I do not want to propose something extravagant and vague, such that "Truth is this quality and that quality." When treading the meadows that are abstract words such as truths and other similar adjectives, we have to find the one thing which we can indisputably say that it is. Such that one is not rejected altogether by analytical philosophers but also not taken down by continental metaphysicians. Hence, I hold that truth as a class is an acceptable assertion, for it merely defines its logical boundaries. We all know that all adjectives are classes, they denote particular instances. So, we can define what is good by noting a certain instance in which some goodness manifested. At least this much we know, for now.

Now, what are the objects/members that fill the class called truth, like how individual apples of the world fill the class called "All material apple fruits"? Or how Apple products and material apple fruits, any drawing of an apple, all words of any language or symbols with the letter configuration of 'apple' in their respective signs, would belong to the class of 'Apple'. Our first hint at solving the question is thereby finding objects which would necessarily fall within this class.

III.I

How do we find the objects/members that necessarily fall into a particular linguistic class?

My first hint is to identify the constituent objects of the class 'Truth' by looking at the nominal uses of the word in language. My reasoning is supported by Jacques Derrida, who notes that it is the meaning of the words that determine the intention of the subject. He further suggested that "the text writes itself," emphasising the autonomy of language and the instability of meaning (Derrida, 1976, p. 159). For Derrida, the author class to which one or two or multiple author subjects belong is only a special case of the reader class (or vice versa). He says that every time one reads a text, they are actually reading their own interpretation of it. In some sense, the text uses the author to write itself. There is a certain historicity that abounds a text, and when an author writes it, he himself can never own the full significance of his own words. What does the historicity of language imply?

Language has been in an ephemeral process of being created, refined, redefined, changed, and transformed; it has existed much longer than we had, and therefore the historicity. If Wittgenstein is held rightly, then language represents the objects of reality (Russell, 1922, p. 8). At the same time, language must have emerged out of reality. And if that tells us anything, is that the ambiguities surrounding the meaning of words such as 'truth'

must have its investigation led by taking a look at how the language available to us in the present makes use of it. For if Language revolves around reality, then therein lies the key to understanding reality itself. Besides, the point of this paper also concerns the ontological status of objects in the real world out there. I take it for granted that reality uncovers itself in layers. Before we dive into the content of the class truth, perhaps a bit can be said about reality itself.

Assertion 2.5: To understand a linguistic entity, one must look into reality, from where language itself is derived, and which language represents through a description.

(How reality can unveil more meaning from an entity already understood will be answered in Assertions 5-7)

IV

What is (at least one) universal nature of reality? But also, before that, what is reality?

Facts can be complex, comprising components which themselves are facts, or simple facts which constitute no component which can stand alone as a fact. (Wittgenstein, 1922). The latter, for simplification, I call simply a fact or atomic fact, but the latter I propose to call states of affairs (and not affair, the atomic fact may be represented as a state of affair, while a complex of facts consists of multiple facts so 'affairs' is in plural). Russell would call the former molecular facts, while Wittgenstein himself may prefer the word 'complexes'. Reality, therefore, is a complex of state of affairs/molecular facts, or a complex of complexes. Each such state of affairs has some participating atomic facts, which then have participating objects. For a proper account of reality, I wish to mediate with some elementary mentioning of some otherwise non-elementary concept, primarily the concept of pres-absence in Husserl's phenomenology. Husserl introduces the concept of pres-absence or presence in absence to describe how consciousness perceives objects that are not directly present but still retain some form of intentionality or awareness. The friend who was explaining to me the full depth of the pres-absence used the following analogy: "I while engaging in this discussion, do not see your hand, which happens to be hidden behind and below/under the table across which you sit from me. Yet, within the frame of my mind, I do know intuitively that your hand is there despite not having access to its presence directly. A certain abstraction fills the absence of what remains of that part of your hand to which I do have access." Heidegger also touches upon this concept, noting how there is always the dark side of the tree to which we

do not have access. Heidegger explains, “The tree, seen from one side, has its other side, unseen, and yet this unseen side belongs to the tree in its entirety” (Heidegger, 1962, p. 125). Herein, I propose a clue to understanding reality itself: that reality is composed of complexes of facts/state of affairs, some of which to which we have access, some of which remain for us, wholly or partially absent. To these absent states of affairs, there are participating objects. So when we see only one part of the tree, the state of affairs involves the object tree, to whose certain part we have access, and still not to others. It seems, then, reality is also a class. Its objects are complexes of facts. My ultimate point would be to establish truth as also a certain complex of facts.

Assertion 3: By reality, I refer to a complex of (Wittgensteinian) facts of the world. Hence reality is also a class, similar to truth.

V

What is a quality of reality which can be generally seen in all the manifestations of its instances/members which fill its class category?

For the better half of human history, before philosophy departed from the endeavours of science, it often thought of nature as conforming to our human expectations. In a weaving of patterns (finding its origin in thought from way back to the Aristotelian era), scientists of then had conceived that all of reality conformed to some mathematical apriori laws, which can be rationally grasped first and later experimentally reaffirmed (Marburger, 2011). And perhaps that stood its test of time, reigning true for the better half of the early twentieth century. Newton’s laws of mechanics envisaged a world of predictability, where each atom could be accounted for and each motion measured. The certainty of physical laws gave men a much-required recluse. However, with the introduction of relativity within the domain of physics and the eventual emergence of quantum mechanics, things took an ambivalent turn. In one prospect, humanity had taken the enormous leap into the understanding of nature itself, yet on another pole, the leap itself was more like a firefly buzzing off into a dark forest. We suddenly became more aware of how much we knew and even more so of how much we knew less. Chaotic models overthrew otherwise relatively stable predictability tests such as the double-slit experiment, which, to quote directly, “When electrons pass through a double slit, they form an interference pattern characteristic of waves, indicating that they can exist in a superposition of paths until observed” (Feynman, 1965, p. 37) paved the way for an understanding of nature as being naturally unfixed and unpredictable on a quantum level.

Assertion 4: One general aspect of reality is that there is nothing that necessitates it to conform to our imposed models of structure of symmetry and order.

Assertion 4.5: If reality does not conform to our expectations and models, then reality reveals itself to us periodically through the march of time.

Assertion 5: A possible explanation for why reality is so chaotic may have to do with the sheer number of objects that have to relate to each other (Occam's razor).

Whatever stability and symmetry that humans had conceived of in nature had succumbed like a castle made in sands. The new conceptual schemes that then had to emerge were ones that contended with this kind of unpredictability. Philosophy of Science also evolved to deal with this apparent unsymmetrical symmetry of nature, among others. In Constructing Reality: Quantum Theory and Particle Physics (2011), John H. Marburger III, a noted American physicist, explores how nature often defies human expectations and intuitions, especially within the realm of quantum mechanics. Marburger emphasises the idea that the fundamental behaviour of nature does not align with our everyday experiences and expectations. "Nature does not conform to our expectations or intuitions" (Marburger, 2011, p. 6).

Assertion 6: All objects should be predicable, as in they can be formed within a linguistic structure of the kind "S is P".

Assertion 7: Taking from Assertion 1, all objects have a multitude of possible ways in which they may be predicated or described, in which they can have an attribute or be qualified of another object.

Assertion 8: Taking from Assertion 4.5, if reality does not conform to our fixed patterns, it indicates that reality can unfold in previously unthought-of ways. Once reality is discovered (as Newton did), it still is open to newer discoveries (as science holds witness) within that which is already available to us yet was not previously discovered.

VI

What are the objects that fill the class of truth?

Owning to the previous foundations so far laid, to investigate what object fills the truth-class, we must again turn to nuances that language provides us. I want to turn to very common-sense use of the word ‘truth'. Let us look at the following expression -

P1 - “I spoke the truth and paid the price”

This phrase is often a sentence used to describe some state of affairs. If anything, it tells us that truth can be accompanied by some other consequences or other facts within the larger molecular fact of ‘truth’. These consequences, we do not necessarily hold as being part of the truth to which we were referring, although they seem capable of becoming some objects of some other ‘truth’ class referred to in a different sentence.

Jordan B. Peterson often, in his lectures, calls upon the notion of truth. To him, one must speak the truth in order to burn everything that is not the truth. I seem to find it to be true that when you speak the truth, it seems to burn everything that is antithetical to it, everything that is a lie in its wake. “Truth burns off deadwood and leaves behind a little more of what is real and true” (Peterson, 2018)

P2 - “The truth sets you free.”

P2 is another expression often used. I like to think that it does set you free, but not until it is done with you. And it is done with you only after it has burnt all the dead wood in you, so to speak. If this is held true, a few things are revealed: firstly, one characteristic of the class of objects falling into truth seems to be that it can only exist in the absence of its negation. If I tell a lie, L1 - that the numeric series starts from 1 and goes 2,3,5,6,7,9,10, then I am lying about two numbers but lying about the series as a whole. I can say the numeric series starts from 1 and goes 2,3,5,6,7,9,10, whereas the T1 - alphabetic series goes A, B, C, D…, where I am mixing one lie with one truth. It seems logical that where the truth exists, its negation cannot simultaneously co-exist, a simple law of contradiction. Secondly, it does not remain contained within the absence of its own negation, its presence radiates toward everything else which is false in nature, even if it is not directly a negation of itself. As seen

in the case of the above conjunction of L1 * T1, if one truly grabs the nature of chronological ascension in any number series, they are highly unlikely to not see that the numerical numbers for 4 and 8 are missing (assuming the script in which this person to whom I am attempting at convince the lie, has a different numerical than the common one, otherwise how could anyone with literacy be deluded with this lie?). They would then be able to deduce that the number series is, in fact, not wholly true. How did this lie get found out? Through the larger structure of understanding chronology in any set of items. So what this thought experiment implies is -

Assertion 9: That which is true has a greater ontological status than the lie. For a lie is a misrepresentation of the state of affairs, while truth is the proper representation of states of affairs and therefore, of reality itself (from Assertion 3)

Assertion 10: Truth manifests in varying degrees.

Assertion 11: The class of 'truth' is filled with a multitude of complexes of atomic facts which form reality.

This raises more important issues, such as whether every claim of physics and other hard sciences that have ever been made and was later outdated or reformed used to be a lie. I would like to think that if truth truly manifests in degrees, where we move from lesser details of a representation to higher definitions with time, evidence, and effort, then the different degrees of truth are in fact true until proven otherwise. But once proven, they do become relatively false. Similarly, how motion is measured in relative terms, truth also seems to have a relativity, such that it is truth in definition to what is untrue. And until a new light sheds the former as being untrue, the former retains its glory as the truth. Gandhi also seems to hold this similarly and stated that "There is no such thing as absolute truth. Truth is relative" (Gandhi, 1927/1993, p. 123). However, in his later periods, Gandhi did acknowledge the absolute truth, which to him had a spiritual and religious context as well.

Herein, we find a fundamental clue to Gandhi's truth, which is made evident in the title of his autobiography. To experiment with truth reveals that truth is something that reveals itself. And If truth is a class whose occupying entities involve facts of the world, which in turn involve objects of the world, then from the previous ten assertions, we should hold that truth reveals itself to men. And perhaps when science tries to discover nature or philosophy tries to discover existence, both are aiming at entities of the class 'truth'. Relative

truth still seems to find some leeway, for it is more contextual, more present-in-the-now. But what about an absolute truth? For Gandhi, absolute truth had a certain religious and spiritual significance despite being grounded in the sheer reality of the empirical world. Gandhi held absolute truth to be the totality, in some sense, and his vision: that of aligning each instance of relative truth with that absolute. So far, we seem to have established that reality and truth are both classes and contain similar objects (facts, both molecular and atomic). I am not saying that all the constituent of the class 'reality' is shared entirely by the class 'truth', but as far as states of affairs are concerned, both are co-sharing. What can possibly even be there other than states of affairs (and also the participating objects of those affairs) is a metaphysical question: one to which, in contemporary times, the answer seems to be unknowable. But I would like to keep this assertion open-ended, to the degree possible. Perhaps reality also contains nothingness or no states of affairs, while truth is only directed towards the proper representation of states of affairs.

The word absolute, looking again into the world to understand its meaning, gives us the idea of a definitive boundary. Such as something that has reached the apex outer reaches of its boundary, beyond which it cannot be. Absolute power and absolute good, are similar terms. What can absolute truth look like? From our logical analysis, for the truth to be absolute, it must contain in it all possible facts. From a Wittgensteinian perspective, that would be similar to saying "the sum total of all atomic facts". Yet such a state of affairs must surely be uncountable in quantity, even if not infinity. The limits of human cognition would not allow us, then, to glance at absolute truth in its entirety. Enter faith. Perhaps what made Gandhi such a staggering force was his relentless commitment to principles through an even more staggering quality of having faith.

VII

What was god for Gandhi, to what extent do the concept of God in Gandhi align with his concept of Truth, and if so, to what extent is such a good the totality of all atomic facts?

In his formative years, Mahatma Gandhi was deeply influenced by the cultural and religious traditions of ancient Hinduism. Raised in an orthodox family environment that emphasised devotion to religious practices, Gandhi was exposed early on to texts such as the Bhagavad Gita and Ramayana, which played a foundational role in his spiritual and moral development. Belonging to a Vaishnava background, he not only engaged with Vaishnava literature but also explored Jain texts, which further shaped his outlook on non-violence and

compassion. Gandhi regarded his mother as a profound moral influence; her piety, simplicity, and commitment to religious discipline, including rigorous fasting, served as exemplars of perseverance and spiritual devotion in his life (Gandhi, 1927/1993). His exposure to the play Harishchandra also profoundly impacted him, inspiring his dedication to truth as an ultimate value.

Gandhi's encounter with other religious traditions expanded significantly during his time in England, where he was introduced to Christianity through his interactions with intellectual circles. In one account, he describes a powerful emotional response to a statue of Christ in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, where he "burst into tears" upon encountering the figure of Jesus. Gandhi admired the Christian principles of love, compassion, and forgiveness, yet he struggled with the monotheistic doctrine that defined the religion (Gandhi, 1927/1993).

The works of Leo Tolstoy, particularly The Kingdom of God is Within You, had a lasting influence on Gandhi's understanding of Christianity and reinforced his ideals of non-violent resistance. Tolstoy's interpretation of Christian teachings inspired Gandhi to develop his philosophy of Satyagraha—the power and dignity of suffering in pursuit of truth (Tolstoy, 1894/2003). Additionally, Gandhi was influenced by the American philosopher Henry David Thoreau, whose essay Civil Disobedience sparked Gandhi's belief in the potential of nonviolent resistance to address social and political injustices (Thoreau, 1849/1993). Gandhi's worldview was further broadened by his engagement with Islam, Zoroastrianism, and the works of other thinkers such as John Ruskin, whose ideas on social justice and moral duty contributed to Gandhi's ethical and philosophical framework.

Gandhi's commitment to non-violence led him to call off the Non-Cooperation Movement following the violent incident at Chauri Chaura, stating, "The nation was not yet ready for non-violent struggle" (Fischer, 1954, p. 152). If this is interpreted right, Gandhi could be said to be motivated by the philosophy that "the ends do not justify the means". To have faith in a principle is to admit that one does not completely understand the full workings of reality. To have faith in the ideation of absolute truth is to admit that one helplessly falters when attempting to enamour truth in its whole entirety. Therefore, the element of faith is assuming that the pathway in which we are attempting to enact the absolute is right. It is different from a hypothesis to the extent that a hypothesis assumes something and attempts to see if it is proven rightfully or falsely, and it includes a certain sense of 'giving-up-of-the-biases'. However, with faith, the element itself is of assuming the conclusion to be true, and then acting it out. That Is what Gandhi displayed when he stopped the non-cooperation movement during Chauri Chaura. He assumed that the highest ideal of

truth being enacted into the world is through non-violence, and the regression into violence calls for the calling off of the entire movement altogether.

For the elements of the absolute, the access to which we are lacking, we make up for it in the ideal, in the realm of the mind. In some sense, the conception of the absolute truth must remain within the imaginative faculty of the mind in a state of presence-in-absence. So while we have some access to the absolute whose elements appear present to us, we at the same time are omitted of those elements of it which remain absent. For the totality of the absolute cannot be grasped, such is the nature of the absolute. Gandhi's relentless attempt at maintaining principles was an overt sign of showing faith. Faith remained a quintessential element of Gandhi despite also having equal roots in reason.

This is exemplified by the fact that Gandhi's parents, despite being conservative Vaishnavites, agreed to let him go abroad for his studies, showcasing that both reason and spirituality co-existed for him from an early age. Perhaps this prevented Gandhi from falling into the otherwise dark corners of dogmatism, for truth and god to Gandhi being one found manifestations in practical life, which had to be enacted via non-violence. Reason balanced the otherwise irrational elements of faith, while spiritualism nurtured the one-sightedness of reason for Gandhi. He stated, "I have no special revelations of God. My firm belief is that He reveals himself daily to every human being, but we shut our eyes to the still small voice" (Gandhi, 1927/1993). Let us analyse this a little further - unlike spiritual sages who claim to have had direct correspondence with god, there are very scarce accounts of Gandhi describing any experience that is transcendentally religious for Gandhi. He embodied his faith in god through the actions that he transpired, actions themselves, which were influenced by Western rationalist literature. In Gandhi, we find a harmonious blend of reason and faith, one which seems to be entirely omitted in most modernist continental philosophers. Yet the elements of the divine manifested in the form of conscience within man, for Gandhi. Tracing his earliest influence of spiritualism leads us to Vaishnavism, which itself thematically revolves around the same goal as Visistadvaita Vedanta (Qualified non-dualism) in which the Advaita's non-qualified Brahman is taken into a qualified form.

If traditional accounts, including the Gita, are to be held reliable, the most elementary account of Brahman is that it is all totality. In the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna speaks of himself as the absolute, infinite essence of all existence, emphasising his divine, all-encompassing nature. A key verse that reflects this idea is from Chapter 10, Verse 20:

"I am the Self, O Gudakesha, seated in the hearts of all creatures. I am the beginning, the middle, and the end of all beings" (Bhagavad Gita, 10.20).

Another well-known verse is **Chapter 10, Verse 8,** where Krishna declares himself the origin and the end of all that exists:

"I am the source of all spiritual and material worlds. Everything emanates from me" (Bhagavad Gita, 10.8).

In **Chapter 9, Verse 19**, he further describes his infinite nature, emphasising his presence in all aspects of life:

"I am immortality and also death. I am both spirit and matter" (Bhagavad Gita, 9.19).

My take from the above substantial accounts is that Krishna is everything. Krishna is the Brahman; he is the totality. And logically speaking, any totality in the universe must contain within it the totality of all atomic facts. Therefore,

Assertion 12: Brahman is the sum total of all atomic facts, and from Assertion 11, we can conclude that Brahman, the totality, must contain all truths.

Assertion 13: If absolute truth is also the totality of truths, then absolute truth refers to the same as that which is referred to by Brahman.

VIII

The conclusion I am trying to reach at is the following: God was a major theme in Gandhi-an philosophy, which he himself equated to be on equal levels with the theme of truth. If the analysis provided above is true, truth has a revealing nature, also implying that it has a concealing nature. With the cross-comparison made between truth, reality and the nature of the Brahman to which Gandhi seems to have thematic inspirations, we may as well state that the germination of truth in Gandhi's life was the result of the early ideation of the Brahman in Vedantic and post-vedantic thought. If the cross-comparison between truth, reality, nature and god exhibits anything, it must be that all seem to point toward something similar. Taking from my Section 1, the same thing can be referred to in different 'senses' Therefore, it might

not be contradictory to assume that, given the scope of the absolute truth, of the productive relentless forces of nature, reality, and the Brahman idea deriving from Vedantic thought, all are mere different senses in which it is referring to some same superstructural structure. Whether that structure is qualified, with consciousness, or without a recluse of qualities are philosophical questions altogether not easy to answer.

Gandhi's enactment of truth into practical action against the tyranny of the British Raj finds its origin in Vedantic thoughts. And if the Wittgenstein-ian connection between reality and language is held feasible, then the structures in which Brahman is conceived have something in common with reality itself. Wittgenstein held that what is common between language and reality cannot itself be part of language and represented linguistically. I wish to end this paper by only raising a question, without answering it: is the truth in Gandhi, the Brahman whose thematic inspiration also led to Gandhi-an philosophy, reality and nature, the same transcendental absolute and the commonality itself which exists between reality and language? If so, and if Wittgenstein is right, perhaps attempting to talk of all these four apparently different words, pointing towards the same reference (if at all), would prove to be a futile endeavour. For such objects are not to be spoken of, only shown (Wittgenstein, 1922, 7).

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