



The Absurdity of Hinduism: Gandhi's Ideas on Religion and Truth

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Abstract

This paper seeks to provide a renewed meaning to the idea of truth by enclosing it within Gandhi's rhetorical use of the term religion. The religion he seeks to present to us as Hinduism is absurd on all fronts, as argued here. It is through such absurdity that he infuses notions of validity and obedience on his own terms to take us to profuse criticisms of not only colonial but civilizational modernity as well. Further a newer meaning is given to Hinduism in a rather unexpected manner, even in the context of the Indian national movement. The point about political conservatism, the element of exoticism, and God takes us to adventures around the truth by a thinker-activist speaking as a colonial subject.

Keywords: Hinduism, Gandhi, religion, truth, deliberation, natural law

Introduction

Theories, as well as religions, could be absurd to each other. Further, they could have the same relationship within themselves, even when they could be relevant or/and useful in various situations and circumstances. This article proposes the idea of the absurdity of Hinduism in the socio-political philosophy of Mohandas Gandhi in being liquidⁱ, amorphous, and having no identity as such of its own. Moreover, it is understood to be absurd due to its departure from being a public religion and modern theories on relatively equidistant

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measures. However, along with such absurdity or rather due to the presence of absurdity, it could also get translated as being adaptable. In such terms, Hinduism comes across as a pun on what I seek to present here as Gandhi's ideas on religion and truth.

The path for this was paved by the already established what Gandhi could perceive as Hindu dominance by the extremistsⁱⁱ in the Indian society, as well as the lack of a fixed identity of the Hindu religion in the way Gandhi treats itⁱⁱⁱ. This can be questioned by the understanding of the caste system as the central characteristic of Hinduism—however, that was rather cleverly denied by Gandhi. Nevertheless, it needs to be understood that the existence of caste hierarchies backed by the practice of Untouchability is the central tenet of almost all forms of Brahmanism, in spite of its private and exclusionary character. While Brahmanism has been the lynchpin of Hinduism in its textual as well as in most of its socio-political history in pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial India (see Ilaiah, 2004); Gandhi manipulates such an idea of Hinduism and creates its hegemony by widely borrowing from the heterodox traditions^{iv}. Such hegemony could not have been created only by Brahmanism, at least due to its certain private and exclusivist character.

I. The Absurdity of Hinduism

Right from the time modernity was investigated for India by Rammohan Roy, it was done with some sort of consent between the colonizers and the most dominant community of the colonized, the Brahmins. While the notion of the rationality of modernity could find the idea of religion affecting public reasoning to be absurd, Hinduism could seem absurd from the vantage point of modernity and other religions. The above proposition is based on the fact that religion can be generally characterized as either ideologically or substantially in resistance against some or the other tenet of modernity. While Hinduism might seem to oppose modernity, it could very easily change its shape to agree with it. To take counter-examples, in their more benevolent forms, while Catholicism resists the ethical expansion of modernity, Islam fiercely resists the individualistic notion of community. Even Buddhism and Sufism resist modern ideas like that conquering the other through rationality, to say the least. Notwithstanding that, the interaction of

various religions with modernity has produced more cruel forms of resistance, misuse of religious doctrines as an alibi for terrorism, and, more commonly, religions becoming more parochial in their outlook towards modernity, as well as the other way around.

On the other hand, while there was no ideological affinity towards modernity in a highly ritualistic Brahmin-dominated society of colonial India, which was based on hierarchy, a cultural emptiness is exhibited for various reasons, one of them being the Brahmin way of life available to a very thin minority^v. While protecting the inner sphere or society (as this was where tradition was being preserved), the Brahmanic forces or Hinduism were absurd in offering almost no serious epistemological resistance in the public sphere to colonial modernity (see Chatterjee, 1993). Even when resistance was offered, right from Radhakant Deb (against abolishing Sati) to Bal Gangadhar Tilak (against raising the 'age of consent', for instance) (see Ray, 1975; Sarkar, 2000), it was not upon contesting the essential characteristics or philosophy of modernity. Instead, such resistance mainly varied from being racist to ritualistic to power-centric.

It can be understood to be a racist resistance of the kind of a prejudiced one as the source or creed rather than the principles or functions of modernity was a problem. The ritualistic resistance must be attributed to the parochial critique of modernity based on its variance from particular conventions that religion could have formed. Such a pursuit could have wielded power for many groups explicitly and implicitly, in a political sense. The primary problem that cultural nationalism and/or Hindutva had was with the non-Hindus ruling over the Hindus. The difference with the colonial modernizers was neither on the issues of administration, nor on the structures of governance, nor even on an orientalist history for India. Even the Brahmanic texts were searched for the ideas of modernity, and absurdly modernity was found by the Hindu nationalists – with ancient Indian texts enriched with the details of the 'finest of the modern technology'!^{vi} It is such a state of Hinduism that Gandhi encountered as his primary opposition when he interacted with colonial India (represented by the character of 'reader', for instance, in his seminal work *Hind Swaraj*) (Gandhi, 2010 (1909)). Ashis Nandy (1983, 51) mentions: "In the 150 years of British rule prior to Gandhi,

no significant social reformer or political leader had tried to give centrality to non-violence as a major Hindu or Indian virtue”.

I take that idea further to argue here that Gandhi turns the existing idea of Hinduism upside down, which was encouraged by its epistemological emptiness^{vii} in the form of its social existence. Epistemological emptiness can contribute to characterizing the religious rhetoric of Gandhi as absurd as well. Such emptiness or absurdity could convey that a religion with a huge baggage of the caste system could co-opt the systems which had either emerged as a rebellion against the caste system or the caste system had come up in opposition to the same. I argue for the epistemological emptiness of Hinduism from Gandhi’s perspective as he could manipulate Hinduism relatively easily to get within it the components of the Srama tradition. This was ironic due to the contradistinction that existed between Brahmanism and Sramanism and when Brahmanism has at least been a central idea of Hinduism, even if arguably not the most essential component of its social existence. I call it epistemological emptiness and not tolerance due to the fixity of Varna on the basis of birth, with hierarchy forming the lynchpin of Hinduism in almost all forms, which was not opposed by Gandhi on either epistemological or metaphysical, and certainly not on intellectual or liberal grounds.

Gandhi opposed the social practice of Untouchability as he believed in the moral equality of humans. He did not accept the opposition to the socioeconomic hierarchy (in contrast to Ambedkar) to be legitimate or worthy to be fought. The moral dimension would have prevailed over the social inequalities even when the primary dimension of the practice of Untouchability was social, at least in being a literal bodily practice. Gandhi, in that sense, was working for the non-foundational aspect of the social ill. He could have taken that to become a crusader of Hindu religion as well as secularism in some senses due to the absurdity we are discussing here. Even while socioeconomic hierarchy could remain, that is inconsequential for Gandhi due to the existence of moral equality, which is there; so, it only has to be recognized by the heart and not be attained in the realm of the intellect.

Gandhi agreed with Untouchability as a rule for sanitation (Gandhi 1947, 211). He does not attempt a theoretical rejection as the

separation of people doing menial jobs could lead to the ideals of cleanliness for him. Untouchability is to be eradicated, but not because it leads to social denigration, as he presents the problem. For Gandhi, it is not possible for one person to denigrate the other as one's own feeling is what gives status to oneself. Untouchability is a problem for Gandhi as it hampers -love amongst humans, and the moral standards of the community and that of mankind suffer. It is always the consent of people because of which they are ruled^{viii}; so, in such a situation, non-violence can lead to the overturning of the situation (Iyer, 1973, p. 184-85). Non-violence can prove to be more potent than violence. For Gandhi, it is honorable to disregard the unjust command of the ruler (Iyer, 1973, p. 184-185). Following this, coercion has temporary results, while peaceful conversion has long-lasting benefits (Iyer, 1973, p. 184-185). It is absurd how Gandhi beholds all of the above within Hinduism. The rest of the paper deals with this enigma through his ideas on religion and truth.

II. Religion and Truth

For Gandhi, religion means a spiritual commitment that is total but intensely personal (Iyer, 1973, p. 45-50). That is how religion is taken out of the clutches of the organized mission, and it looks to be absurd from that perspective as well. What is religion if not seeking to provoke and propagate? Gandhi's notion of religion is, however, passive and receptive. Regarding religion, Gandhi can be understood as liberal (in a loose sense, and not in that of liberalism) and radical, rather than conservative, as he invoked religion against all authorities and was not in support of the state or church (Iyer, 1973, p. 44). This could be done relatively effortlessly to the absurd idea of Hinduism, and God is reduced to truth in the political thought -of Gandhi. According to Ramashray Roy (1984, p. 71), Gandhi's God is the norm of being, which regulates the course of events or thought, and in that, it (God) resembles *Dharmakaya* of Mahayana Buddhism. God is the natural law on which human existence is dependent. That is the ultimate truth of God for Gandhi.

It is in this spirit that for him: "Truth... has necessarily to be followed and that at any cost" (Gandhi, 2010 (1909), p. 69). This is how, for him, Hinduism becomes a "relentless search after truth" (Rothermund, 1986, p. 297). As the author argues here, Hinduism

loses any identity that it could have and passes into the realm of absurdity in the political thought of Gandhi. Moreover, he seems to have based his idea of belief in Hinduism due to its (Hinduism's) ubiquity, which can be understood as a linguistic context of Gandhi's unshakeable belief in Hinduism. According to Quentin Skinner, authors can pick terms from contemporaneous debates but can change their meaning to use them in an entirely different sense (see Skinner, 1969). While Skinner gives the example of the term *virtù* being used by Machiavelli in 16th century Florence, in a sense explained here, Gandhi's term could be Hinduism, where a renewed meaning is sought to be attained by the author.

Gandhi manoeuvres with the idea of the dominance of cultural nationalism to manipulate the most exclusive feature of Hinduism, exhibited in the system of permanently segregating human beings. He formulates such a religion, where it is absurd, yet again, to be the most tolerant and inclusive (even though) in his own terms. This is substantiated by his fight against Untouchability. Gandhi understood—what probably was the core—as the peripheral perversion of Hinduism that had no sanction in the *sastras* (see Gandhi, 1947, p. 211). In 1920, in a debate on Untouchability with the religious head of Vallabhacharya Vaishnavites of Bombay; against the religious head, he specified his stand that even the most orthodox version of Hinduism did not sanction Untouchability, according to the *sastras* (Hardiman, 1981). However, it should be noted here that *Manusmriti*, of which Gandhi was an admirer, advocated the pouring of molten lead in the ear of an 'Untouchable' on hearing even the slightest sound of the Vedas, for instance (see Doniger and Smith, 2000). In this way, Gandhi gives a renewed definition of religion, of course against the liberal tradition and the cultural nationalists of India. Getting influenced by the syncretic traditions of devotion, Gandhi juxtaposes the truth to be located in the human heart. That is the only evaluation of truth—religion becomes dependent on that.

III. Truth, Suffering, and Deliberation

In this manner, Gandhi aspires to rescue truth from imaginative and subjective versions of religion as well as from the monopoly of sciences and so on (Rudolph, 2006, p. 36-37). While modernity argues for the inherent violence in a religious assertion of truth as a

belief in the supremacy of the supernatural, Gandhi goes further than such proponents or questions such proponents in their optimism about modernity. He views that the structures of arguments have a component of self-assertion, and that is how (as well) they are violent. As Bindu Puri puts it, for Gandhi, "...truth or certainty can only come from a suppression of an exaggerated individual sense of self, and from the related freedom from self-deceptions generated by the individual ego: in other words, from the practice of Gandhian ahimsa/non-violence as humility and selflessness" (Puri, 2016, p. 235).

While knowledge is posed as a source of the power of modernity and, of course, of its subset, colonialism^{ix}; Gandhi anticipates postmodernism in suggesting knowing the truth as rid of grand narratives; rather than understanding it as a belief i-n own version without the worry of getting it on the platform of arguments as its test. It is so as humans know partial and contingent truths (Rudolph and Rudolph, 2006, p. 5). The powerful suffer from the habit of writing history; they pretend to study the manners and customs of all the peoples of different civilizations. Moreover, with theoretical tools of their own, they manage to convince people of their own version of the truth. On the contrary, for Gandhi, while one's own knowledge of truth is only a version of it, that nevertheless doesn't stop oneself from holding it tight till death, even though knowing that one may be wrong, even from all others' perspectives (Iyer, 1973).

According to Gandhi, rather than finding and enumerating reasons for others, one should suffer for the truth which has emanated from the heart as a result of the vow that one has taken. Forming one's vow is a path to *swaraj* – such a process begins by reasoning with oneself. While you formed, you checked the various aspects of the vow based on truth in the public sphere. Then it is Gandhi's pursuit not to bow before the violence of reason as it is an outward expansion; rather keeps giving reasons to oneself and appealing to the passion of others. According to Gandhi, this is the responsibility that people have towards others in a dialogical world that is not necessarily governed by reason. .

Gandhi can be understood to be on the lines of the Stoics' principle that there is natural law within us, so there are natural

preconceptions (*emphytoi prolepsis*) of good and evil (Sorabji and Jahanbegloo, 2015, p. xi). The *mann*^x shall then uphold that truth. Upon suffering for the truth, it is to be r-ecognized by the other *manns*, of other human souls. Here the idea of truth is neither a given nor deemed to be backed by a theory, instead seems to be a parrhesiastic act, as put forward by Michel Foucault (2001). He discusses four essential themes of the same. First is the very act of speaking the truth. The second is to speak the truth even when there is a danger for the upholder of truth. The third theme is understanding the truth as a form of criticism, even towards oneself, essentially coming from the powerless. Finally, parrhesia is regarded as a duty rather than a right. So, there is a personal relationship to truth as understood to be a parrhesiastic act (see Foucault, 2001).

Rather than triumphalism, Gandhi speaks of the accompaniment of fear and courage along with truth, which is considered to be, on the lines of Hans-Georg Gadamer, a part of one's rather than a method to be utilized (see Gadamer, 1960). Here, the different versions of truth get into negotiation, not in a liberal competition, with each other. Gandhi writes in *Young India* in 1931: "The conviction has been growing upon me, that things of fundamental importance to the people are not secured by reason alone but have to be purchased with their suffering... The appeal of reason is more to the head, but the penetration of the heart comes from suffering. It opens up the inner understanding in man" (cited in Appadorai, 1987, p. 54).

According to Gandhi, the human connection is not established through a capacity to reason but a capacity with which all human beings are intrinsically endowed. Such capacity is not for getting engaged in an intelligent argument as, in all probability, intelligence and talents have a larger component of social construction, but the capacity to emote, to get in sync with spectacles. While in a liberal, theoretical race to truth, the powerful emerges as the victor; in the process not of arguments but of suffering, the one version closest to the truth resists the most by suffering the most. So, according to Gandhi, the truth could not have been argued for as it always exists in one's heart as well as in the collective heart (what is God for him)^{xi}. Truth is examined by the sufferings that it could bear. Here, the idea of truth has to correspond to the natural law of humanity, love, and compassion.

The idea of a 'rational' discussion of Gandhi does not have the component of argumentation and validation (Parekh, 1997, p. 64-65). According to Bhikhu Parekh (1997, p. 64), the 'rational' discussions of Gandhi can be operated under two conditions: first, human prejudices are understood to be an overwhelming and legitimate source of resistance over the force of reason, thus expanding the ambit of rationality or to provide it with various horizons. Second, one's own self has to be regarded as fallible and partial, so each should make an effort to know the others' viewpoints. Having a detached state of mind, it is possible "to step in the shoes of even our adversaries and understand their standpoint" (Appadorai, 1987, p. 56). According to Gandhi, understanding human beings as solely guided by reason is a matter of blind faith (Parekh 1997, 65).

In this way, Gandhi is come across as a critic of arguments and reasons when they become overarching, as they are held to be the most significant forms or the most readily available metaphors of violence. Reason proceeds on the assumption of surety, so does violence. Violence generally has irreversible consequences. Irreversible deeds require infallible knowledge which is not possible for humans (Parekh, 1997, p. 66). Though Gandhi acknowledges that when taken to its logical extreme, 'relative truth' undermines the very basis of human action (Parekh, 1997, p. 66); he still advocates it (the idea of relative truth) as at the level of the *atman* the distinction between action and inaction is not there. Moreover, even in theoretical disjunction with the above, one should act for her beliefs, even though the beliefs may be unsure, as surety is not a reason for self-inflicted action. The *satyagrahi* is ready to suffer for her beliefs. The action seems to be an essential component of Gandhian thought, in such a framework, to the extent of being understood as suffering, and it is in such a framework that the components of action and patience coexist with each other.

In Gandhian thought, action is means of self-realization, not of self-interest (Roy, 1984, p. 75). In this context, Gandhi calls himself a *karma yogi*. His epistemology is rooted in "truth in action", where truth is located in particular facts and circumstances (Rudolph and Rudolph, 2006, p. 5). Such truth is the funnelled version of the absolute, which removes the dominance of argumentative structures. While arguments seek to outplay one another, feelings for one

another are not in conflict as they are directed by natural law. While passion is inherent and ever-going, the reason is adapted and consequential to compare in the framework of Gandhi. In this manner, the conflict between the absolute truth and its various versions is resolved.

IV. Religion and Natural Law

According to Gandhi, human life aims to be at rest through the soul taking command over the body. Gandhi calls this the journey from the *dehin* to the *atman* (from the body to the soul). The other way that this division can be understood is between *Karma yoga* and *Buddhi yoga*. While *Karma yoga* is heroism defined as skill in action, which happens at the level of bodily supremacy, *Buddhi yoga* can be defined as humility as the virtue of effortlessness, which happens when the mind, what Gandhi implies as the heart or the soul, takes over the body (Iyer, 1993, p. 6). The above two ideas don't seem to be coming from mainstream Hinduism, but from the tradition of Srama, as all the Hindu ideas have to be conceptually subsumed under Dharma. However, following the Gita, for Gandhi, humility is understood as “the natural accompaniment of true heroism” and ahimsa as “the necessarily correlate of fearlessness” (Iyer, 1993, p. 6).

While this world is *avidya* (or false consciousness), in the knowing of the higher truth (travelling on the road of *Dharma*) or *vidya* the distinction between action and non-action goes away (Rothermund, 1986, p. 303). In this manner, the text of Gita was to celebrate the path of righteous action (while it may be in its parochial chauvinist sense), according to earlier commentators like Bal Gangadhar Tilak; for Gandhi, it becomes a text of renunciation. Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay, in the first half of the nineteenth century, seems to have created this legacy (which the cultural nationalists like Tilak inherited in its more extreme form) when he envisaged Gita as the central text of Hinduism. He understood Gita as capable to give principles akin to the scientific method and the power of reason. Hinduism is sought to be redeemed by Bankim of its moral and ‘worthless aspects’ (Gowda, 2011, p. 12).

Gandhi puts this idea upside down and uses Gita to critique Western scientific and rationality. However, for him, the Gita is not seen as having ideas antithetical to the rational; instead Gandhi recovers the idea of passion from the baggage of enlightenment. Against Bankim,

the realm of the moral is evoked for this purpose. Gandhi delinks passion with liberalism (as that of the pursuit of desires), and it is displaced with the idea of love for fellow beings, founded upon love for God – the source of truth, or vice versa. In any case, an action laden with passion is not the correct course of action in the Gita. While Bal Gangadhar Tilak interprets non-attachment as that with the fruits of action, Gandhi takes the non-attachment to be at the very root of all actions. For Gandhi, humans (should) have only one attachment to truth or God. Truth constitutes the highest being (*Sat-Brahman*) (Rothermund, 1986, p. 304). It is the attachment to truth, indeed, that leads to non-attachment from everything else (Rothermund, 1986, p. 303).

It should be noted here that such a notion of truth is akin to the idea of natural law, as discussed by Edmund Burke (1791), for instance, where everything else is subservient. It is the blanket law that connects all humanity. It should be noted here that these are the lines on which Burke is also a critic of the British colonial rule, for not following the common law or the law (what is being referred to as natural law here) which is common to all humanity in colonies, that had given the Britons the burden to civilize (see Burke, 1999). While the natural law for the liberal tradition is the law of reason, Gandhi finds that violence to the extent of at least understanding the physical self (represented by reasons formulated by humans) of humans as the ultimate self, hence violent upon the soul, the *atman* and then to the truth, the *Sat Brahman* – the ultimate self or God.

The reason for liberalism is intrinsically connected to the self-pursuit of desires. Gandhi seeks to delink principles from desires and gives a renewed idea of reason by linking it to human will. Desires cannot provide the basis of any normative order since they lack stability and uniformity over space and time. For Gandhi, the source of normative order has to be sought in 'reason or will' and not in the 'rational' pursuit of desires, of sense explained above (see Roy, 1984, p. 184). For Gandhi, freedom does not consist of the elimination of desires but of controlling them. In controlling, the individual does not follow any external law but only the laws that she has imposed on herself, which is a result of will (Roy, 1984, p. 187).

It is only upon giving up one's self that one reaches that point of non-violence, from where truth can be understood. The problem with the

contemporary world (as exhibited in colonialism) was the domination of the material or the body over the spiritual or the mind (or of untruth over truth), according to Gandhi. He then can be understood to suggest the natural law not to be the law of reason but the law of passion. The law of reason is unnatural for him, as it is violent in its pursuit to expand. Colonialism is a problem as it does not follow natural law. Only truth, represented by our own vows, should rule over us. Any other idea in command, one self-ruling over the other, is a problem for Gandhi; one nation ruling over the other is merely an implication of the same (see Gandhi, 1993). Thus, Gandhi formulates the idea of subservience of the body under the mind, a process of ruling that does not involve the interaction of selves.

It is the duty of the body to obey the mind, and then in the higher realm, various human minds are to follow the natural law or the path of truth or God. The mind becomes an instrument to control and does not remain an entity to be endowed with ultimate freedom. For Gandhi, no religion overrides the natural law (Gandhi, 1993, p. 75). Truth rules the whole universe, so it can be equated with natural law (Gandhi, 1993); what can be understood as God in Gandhian thought, as I have argued here, infuses the public sphere in India^{xii} with the hegemony of absurdity of Hinduism. Gandhi manoeuvres with the existing idea of religion to suggest that an ethical outlook is needed in religious thought (Gandhi, 1993) – such an ethical framework is akin to the natural law tradition of Thomas Aquinas and Saint Augustine^{xiii}. Such natural law tradition is different from the liberal tradition of natural law, which is understood mainly as natural rights and hence ends worthy of human achievement. Here natural law governs human actions and is not to be attained via them (human actions).

Conclusion

This paper concludes by elaborating upon its primary finding of Gandhi's unique idea of truth. Truth cannot be theorized; instead, it must be realized and recovered. It is here that the principle of detachment becomes the key. As remarked before, non-attachment to everything else (that could include religious particularities as well) is the only way to be attached to truth. So, the overarching idea of

truth, which can precede (particular) religious truths, overwhelms everything else; the supremacy of religion sometimes remains a metaphor for truth for Gandhi. He writes in *The Bombay Chronicle* in 1919: "When the religious sense is awakened, people's thoughts undergo a revolution in a single moment" (Gandhi, 1993, p. 366). Truth stands out above pure consciousness (Gandhi, 1993). For him: "Truth is the law of our being" (cited in Rothermund, 1986, p. 304), or the law of nature. He writes: "For me truth is the sovereign principle, which includes numerous other principles. This truth is not only truthfulness in word, but truthfulness in thought also, and not only the relative truth of our conception, but the Absolute Truth, the Eternal Principle, that is God" (cited in Prabhu and Rao, 1967, p. 42). Rejection of all external authority becomes possible as and when such absolute truth is recognized (Iyer, 1973, p. 176). This is when humans become free by ruling over themselves – when the mind is free of all external impediments and realizes the truth – the body becomes subservient to the mind.

While the liberal idea of freedom is influenced by as well as influences the idea of enlightenment of the supremacy of human rationality, which was sought to be brought by colonialism to India and other colonies (at least in their justification of ruling over the other); it is generally agreed that such an idea, what can be commonly called as "colonial modernity", could not enjoy hegemony over the Indian subcontinent. From such a perspective, the caste ridden Indian society needed a pun of religion to sustain itself in the intellectual realm so that continuities in the social realm remain and many times eased the process of such change. The idea of resistance to modernity finds a suitable space in the moral-intellectual realm in colonial India. The idea of moral equality could have enormous influence to the extent to have subsided the social transformations, which it (moral equality) may not theoretically equip to be. Gandhi, indeed was not looking for theoretical consistencies. The pun of religion connoting truth, argued here, is to get to the point of political conservatism^{xiv} for colonial Indian society. I have argued that such a pun was possible due to the absurd interpretation of Hinduism. For Gandhi, on the lines of truth, freedom is not to be achieved; it is a state of being. It is in such state that Gandhi is "dreaming the dreams of men" (Iyer, 1993, p. 3); that

Martin Luther King Jr.^{xv}, a devout Christian would also have, almost a couple of decades after Gandhi was killed by a Hindu extremist.

ⁱ The word liquid is used to connote that it does not have a fixed shape.

ⁱⁱ Gandhi elaborates on this in the beginning of *Hind Swaraj* (see Gandhi, 2010 (1909)).

ⁱⁱⁱ Gandhi practices sheer eclecticism so far as his choice of appropriating anything religious to be a part of Hinduism.

^{iv} While Brahmanism could be the orthodox tradition; Indian tradition also has heterodoxy in Jainism, Buddhism, Tantrism etc. While orthodoxy advocated status quo and return to originality, heterodoxy was a tradition of questioning and examining. Gandhi breaches the orthodoxy of Brahmanism by primarily combining it with Jainism and Buddhism and calling it Hinduism (Gandhi, 1947, p. 214).

^v Such ideas have been rather clearly envisaged by the subaltern approach to Indian history (see Chatterjee, 1993).

^{vi} While the Hindu right wing press such rhetoric for endorsing Hinduism as modern, their ideas have continued to be really archaic and dictatorial when it comes to, for instance, women's liberty or even human rights.

^{vii} I call it as epistemological emptiness due to its non-public existence for most of its existence. What constitutes the knowledge about Hinduism was never an issue, rather the location of power was the mode of its dispersal. This is substantiated by the ease with which Gandhi could overturn its tenets connoting violence to ideas of non-violence.

^{viii} Gandhi writes in *Hind Swaraj*: "You can govern us only so long as we remain the governed..." (Gandhi, 2010 (1909), p. 61).

^{ix} "If Lenin connected colonialism to capitalism, Gandhi went one step further and connected colonialism to modernity itself" (Parel, 1997, p. xxi).

^x Neither mind nor heart seems to be the appropriate translation of this word.

^{xi} Here Gandhi follows Vivekananda, who borrows from the tradition of Vedanta where human souls are understood to be a part of the God, where each part is equal to the whole (see Vivekananda, 2007).

^{xii} The public sphere in India was different from Europe as it did not emerge as a consequence of liberal thought, but as a result of the tussle between colonialism and nationalism.

^{xiii} The difference of the natural law tradition of conservative thought from the liberal thought is suggested by Peter Stanlis (1958(2003)).

^{xiv} Gandhi's argument is that politics is not a means to bring change; rather it has to work under the directive of ends/truth. For Gandhi, means and ends are connected to each other as seed and tree are (Gandhi, 2010 (1909), p. 58).

^{xv} In the American civil rights movement of the 1960s, King Jr. gave the famous speech "I had a dream..." He is one of the most famous leaders who followed the Gandhian methods (King, 1963).

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