The last chapter on Mysticism leads us to the pivot of it. That pivot is none other than Truth. So, we should have a clear concept of Truth conceived by Gandhi. The concept of Truth is not all in all to know Gandhi's idea of Truth, so it calls forth our attention to deal with the auxiliary topics, without which we cannot have a requisite idea of Truth. The following points draw our attention to have a fuller view of Gandhi's idea of Truth:

The Nature of Truth; Gandhi's Definitions of God scrutinized; 'Is God, Good or Evil?' (Gandhi's conception scrutinized); God is Truth; Truth is God; Physical Calamities and Divine Chastisement; and Truth in Practice and its related topics. These topics are treated one by one, as given below -

1. The Nature of Truth -

The nature of truth is both relative and absolute. We cannot have the absolute truth unless we become perfect, so per force we have to follow the relative truth. But, the relative truth contains some degrees of truth. It is not sheer untruth. It cannot contain some degrees of error or untruth also. The sun seen by us is not what it is, but we
have the relative glimpse of the sun. The sun is seen differently by us all, according to the media of our mind; it is reflected in our mind. So we see our reflection of the sun and not the sun itself. Similarly, we cognize truth in that degree, as our media of minds allow us. There is no finality about truth, since the process of truth-making is a growing and continuing process. Moreover, what may be true to me, may be untrue for another man.

Gandhi observes: 'Well, seeing that the human mind works through innumerable media and that the evolution of the human mind is not the same for all, it follows that what may be truth for one may be untruth for another.' Gandhi does not throw the relative truth over-board but follows it and rests upon it. He observes: 'as long as I have not realized this Absolute Truth, so long must I hold by the relative truth as I have conceived it. That relative truth must, meanwhile, be my beacon, my shield and buckler.'

In following the relative truth, some may hold suspicion that the relative truth may not guide the man to his goal of Absolute Truth. Gandhi answers such suspicions when he observes that there is nothing wrong in every man following Truth according to his lights. Indeed it is his duty to do so. Then, if there is a mistake on the part of any one so following Truth, it will be automatically set right. For the quest of Truth involves tapas - self-suffering. There can be no place in it for even a trace of self-interest. In such selfless search for Truth nobody can lose his bearings for long. Directly he takes to the wrong path he stumbles, and is thus redirected to the right path.' Goethe says,
"Truth furthers things, error does not unravel, it only entangles." Truth is like the heat of the sun. It will melt the icy mountain of suspicion and distrust.

About the veracity of truth, S.K. Maitra observes that even the most faithful, unambiguous and precise utterance would fall short of veracity in the true sense if it were not directed towards the good of creatures. If the most truthful speech hurts, it should be reckoned among the forms of unrighteousness. This shows that truth is conditioned by non-violence. Briefly, the relative truth, though it contains error, by our selfless life, moves us from truth to truth, lessening the degrees of error and augmenting the degrees of truth. Truth, in a sense, is conditioned by non-violence, in our practical life.

2. Gandhi's Definitions of God Scrutinized -

When we believe and feel that God is, we should try to know exactly what God is by definitions. Now the above point crops up a root question in us: Can God be defined? The question is of serious consideration, because many a thinker has stated, after the laborious efforts at defining what is God, that He is 'That Indefinable Something.' But they feel that there is ultimately the 'Thing Itself.' Even though the human agency is not competent enough to define that Ultimate Thing or the Thing Itself, the human mind lingers to articulate it, so far it can do it. Now, the definitions will vary according to the capacity of the individuals' evolution. Inspite of the variant definitions, there will be something common throughout them as the root
Gandhi has defined God severally at several times. His definitions of God require us to fathom the depth of them. Gandhi in Young India (5-3-'25) mentions his several definitions. Let us observe critically one by one. He says, "To me God is Truth and Love." On reading this definition, one may raise a query in one's mind whether Truth and Love are co-ordinate, or one of them is sub-ordinate to the other, hence instrumental. He clarifies his position in Young India (31-12-'31) that as many say that God is Love, he used to say God is love, but in his heart he believes that God is Truth, and love is the means to know Truth, so love becomes instrumental to know Truth. Generally speaking the myriads believe that God is Truth, Love and Beauty. The conception of God as Beauty, it seems to us, is lost, in a sense, in Gandhi. So one can see that Gandhi lacks one of the important aspects in his definition of God. So the lack of beauty in his vision, one may afraid, may speak in Gandhi's behaviour. It was alleged, especially by the Europeans, that Gandhi's lack of beauty asked Miss Slade, who was called Mira in the Sabarmati Ashram, to show her head down-right. Her face thereby lost her charming womanly beauty. Now at this stage, we should know what the concept of beauty is. Prof. M.M. Shariff in explaining Plotinus' concept of beauty observes: 'Beauty is really a quality of things which the soul recognizes as akin to its essence, and ugliness is a quality of things which it regards as alien to its real essence, which is, of course,
Now we should know about the relation of beautiful things with the spiritual world. Prof. M.M. Shariff continues further: 'As beautiful things participate in forms which belong to the spiritual world, in recognizing beauty, we recognize these forms. The forms combine and unify the parts into a unity, and the unity so called is beautiful, and so are its parts.' At this turn, we should know the relation between beauty and goodness. Prof. Shariff still further continues; 'The good and the beautiful are the same.' Prof. Shariff states Plotinus' view of the importance of the good or the Supreme Beauty as thus: 'The good or the Supreme Beauty beautifies those who love it.' For proving this, he gives the notable example and for which he observes: 'Nature is beautiful because it participates in the forms of the spiritual world.' Here, Plotinus' warning to shut one's eyes to corporeal beauty in order to see the Vision is indeed notable. Prof. Shariff states Plotinus view: 'He who desires to see the Vision must shut his eyes to corporeal beauty, though he may train himself by contemplating noble things here on earth, especially noble deeds, and becoming beautiful himself; for the soul can see beauty only by becoming beautiful itself.'

Now in the above light of discussion with relation to beauty and goodness, one can see that Gandhi does not lack the beauty aspect in him, especially when he defines God in the same weekly as 'God is ethics and morality.' This requires further clarification. We may raise a question here: Does not ethics or morality contain Beauty? I mean Beauty has two aspects, one is the inner beauty that the Moral Beauty and the other is the outward beauty i.e. the physical one. If the physical case of the soul is not
impressed with the Moral Beauty, what is the use of it in one’s spiritual evolution? So Gandhi, though not advertently mentions Beauty, inadvertently mentions it in his definition, ‘God is ethics and morality.’ Moreover, God is formless, i.e. Amurta, there cannot be the idea of His physical beauty. So when God is seen in Beauty, it should be either the Spiritual Beauty or the Moral Beauty which is co-existent in spirit or God. Therefore when Gandhi does not mention the Beauty aspect of God, it does not mean that he lacks that aspect in him. Pointedly he observes: ‘All truths, not merely true ideas, but truthful faces, truthful pictures, or songs, are highly beautiful. People generally fail to see Beauty in Truth,...’ This clarifies further that Gandhi does not lack the beauty aspect in him. Prof. Benoy Gopal Ray of Visva-Bharti, Shantiniketan, rightly observes in his booklet ‘Gandhian Ethics:’ ‘To Gandhiji, the truth-value is the most important and he thinks that the others are only its corollaries.’

Gandhi further defines God as conscience. This definition requires deep thinking on the part of the readers to understand it precisely. Conscience in all men is not the same. One may have the conscience of an ass. So here, one can see that conscience referred to by Gandhi cannot be in all types of men. Those, who have undergone the moral training or spiritual discipline, have conscience. So Gandhi himself is seen not satisfied when he defines God as conscience, for he further observes: ‘And surely conscience is but a poor and laborious paraphrase of the simple combination of three letters called God.’

Gandhi further defining God states: ‘He (God) is the purest
Now this definition gives no information about God as one may raise the query: Of what is the essence referred to? The definition makes no clarification. Still, however, it may signify that God as the life is the purest one. But one may say that this definition is not clearly explicit.

Gandhi further defines God: 'He is in us and yet above and beyond us.' That is, He is immanent and transcendental. Now one may raise the query: Which aspect is predominant of the two? Do both the aspects carry equal weight?—simultaneously or alternatively? This is not made clear by Gandhi. When he refers to God as 'the still small voice' in one, I think the immanent aspect is relatively more important than the transcendent one. He further says that if God is not immanent, the prayer has no value. So, I think God as immanent is relatively more important than God as transcendent.

Further, Gandhi, in replying to Mr. Madkarni's 'clever' letter presents him with these definitions of God: 'The sum total of Karma is God. That which impels men to do the right is God. The sum total of all that lives is God. That which makes man the mere plaything of fate is God. That which sustained Bradlaugh throughout all his trials was God. He is the Denial of the atheist.' Now let us probe into the above definitions and scrutinize them as to how far they shed light on the path of our understanding the term 'God'. Gandhi says: 'The sum total of Karma is God.' In the sentence of this definition, we see 'is' is the copula which unites the two terms (1) 'The sum total of Karma' and (2) 'God'. Are these two terms the same or
different? If they are the same, we have no information. It is tautology. If they are different, the term 'God' becomes a complement and thus it throws light on the first term so we know about the first term and know nothing about the other term 'God'. So this definition, in any case, does not hold water.

Let us now scrutinize this definition, 'That which impels us to do the right is God!' What should we put for 'That which impels men to do the right'? It is not mentioned. So one may put anything for 'That .... right', e.g. the force of habit, intuition, convention. Is this definition pointed? What does it signify? It signifies explicitly nothing but signifies implicitly what we can guess at.

Let us now scrutinize the definition, 'The sum total of all that lives is God.' The pluralists like Leibnitz and the Jains will not agree with Gandhi for they believe that 'the sum total of all that lives' is the individual souls or monads. Jainism believes that besides individual souls, there are other substances which are eternal. So Gandhi's stand becomes individualistic and characteristic but cannot be said as the representative of all thinkers.

Let us now see Gandhi's another definition, 'That which sustained Bradlaugh throughout all his trials was God.' Now here 'That which .... trials' signifies no pointed thing. One may have the liberty of putting the force of character, the force of habits or any 'x' thing, good or bad or indifferent.
this definition also is not a pointed one and gives nothing in particular.

Let us now probe into Gandhi's last definition, 'He is the Denial of the atheist.' In this definition, there are two negative terms (1) Denial, (2) atheist. What do they signify positively? Can anyone argue that the combination of the two negative terms gives the positive meaning? Can it not signify, at least, the position between atheist and non-atheist? Then there is again the question: How much of atheism, and how much of non-atheism? This is not made clear by Gandhi. So it is not the exact definition of God.

Conclusively, Gandhi's definitions of God are not precise, but vague and mars the very beauty of the definition. Does it mean that all his efforts are set at naught? Not so! For he can appeal not merely through intellect but through heart also. He also says God probes our heart, and knows us. He also says that he can be floored on the ground of reasoning. Gandhi has one card in his sleeve, and that is appealing through heart. He wins his position there. Call a rose by any name, or dispute its conventional name, but it will not lose its scent. Similarly one may call God as God-head, or Godhood, or Person or Force or the thing Itself, but there is something perfect for which we imperfects, have the inner hunger and move thus in that direction. So Gandhi's efforts are not set at naught; his total efforts, we may say, totally move us on his side and thus we have, amidst difference, unity with him, not a Total Unity but a Shaded or Qualified One.
3. 'Is God, Good or Evil?' (Gandhi's conception scrutinized)

Gandhi considers God as Good and Evil both. He is not one sided as Aristotle is. Aristotle is severely criticized by Theodor Gomperz. He observes: 'Aristotle is here opposed, not only by the adherents of dualistic religions such as Zoroastrianism, but also by his own master (Plato), who in at least one phase of his development set an evil world-soul by the side of the good.'

The Zoroastrians also believe that there are two ultimate principles, Good and Evil at war since time immemorial. Gandhi does not consider these two principles warring with each other but reconciled in God. Gandhi's observation of Evil in God, or God as the author of evil, is noteworthy and it requires critical analysis. He observes: 'I know that He (God) has no evil in Him, and yet if there is evil, He is the author of it and yet untouched by it.'

Gandhi is confounded on the problem of evil. On one occasion he says that there is evil in God, on the other, he says that there is no evil in Him. When he considers God as purely benevolent, he considers Him there as the Supreme God, having no evil in Him. But when he considers God as the moral chastiser, who hurls the moral punishment to the world, he sees Evil in God. It seems that God uses evil as the instrument to chastise the people who have gone astray. But he does not give the account of it satisfactorily. If God is the author of it, how can He be untouched by it? If God is the author of evil, he must be responsible for it. Gandhi loses the equipoise in him, in being glad when the sinner suffers from Evil. Mr. P. Spratt, in his book, Gandhism:
An Analysis (1939), passes the remarks, at one place, upon Gandhi that he becomes glad when the moral transgressor suffers from evil. But evil is not the part and parcel of God, but it is the instrument in the hands of God. So is the belief of Gandhi. He observes critically: 'In a strictly scientific sense, God is at the bottom of both good and evil. He directs the assassin's dagger no less than the surgeon's knife. But for all that good and evil are, for human purposes, from each other distinct and incompatible, being symbolical of light and darkness, God and Satan.' So here one can see that Gandhi symbolizes the fact, and is not able to give the rational explanation of it.

When Gandhi gave his opinion to Mr. Nehru that the earthquake in Bihar (in the North India) was due to the sin of the people in Bihar (that they did not believe in Untouchability), Mr. Nehru was wonderstruck. Mr. Nehru rejoined him that when certain physical forces under the earth come together, the earthquake happens. So here Gandhi describes the fact, but in describing the fact, he has not given the rational explanation of it. Gandhi, in relation to Physical Catastrophes, observes: 'And since God is love, we can say definitely that even the physical catastrophes that He sends now and then must be a blessing in disguise. But they can be so only to those who regard them as a warning for introspection and self-purification.' So here one can see that Gandhi does not become a true exponent of the principle of evil. Suffice it to say now that, as this topic requires a deeper penetration, we shall see it fully developed, in the next point. So when Benoy Gopal Ray, Adhyapaka
(Professor) in Philosophy, Visva-Bharti, Santiniketan, observes that Gandhi's philosophy is 'the naive philosophy of a common man,' he is not far from truth. Benoy Gopal Ray remarks: 'From what has been said above, it may be gathered that Gandhiji considers God as the moral governor with evil as the instrument of punishment and bliss as the principle of reward. In this respect, his philosophy is the same as the naive philosophy of a common man.'

Some thinkers, like Leibnitz, consider that evil is necessary but they do not see evil in God but they reflect that evil is in the world order. As we progress upwards, evil is lessened and ultimately vanishes away. If we are on the wrong path, due to evil or moral punishment, we reflect and come to the right path. So evil is beneficial in some sense and necessary. But why should Gandhi put it in God? The 'Karma' order operates autonomously. Gandhi identifies the Law-giver and the Law, so his position with reference to evil becomes rather ambiguous. By doing this, he is entrapped logically. If he does not identify himself with Yajnavalkya in 'Brhadaranyaka-Upanishad,' he can absolve himself of the difficulty of giving the explanation of evil. There is another school of thought that believes firmly that the 'Karma' order operates autonomously. H.D. Bhattacharya observes: 'the Karman order operates autonomously and not according to the prescription of an ordering mind, the imperishable, as conceived by Yajnavalkaya for cosmic phenomena in the Brhadaranyaka-Upanishad.'

Gandhi himself says: 'I cannot account for the existence
of evil by any rational method. He continues: 'To want to do so is to be co-equal with God.' In this way, he tries to fly away from the rational ground. He further continues: 'I am therefore humble enough to recognize evil as such.'

To conclude, Gandhi is not happy in giving the rational explanation of evil. This shows clearly that Gandhi is unable to explain evil on the rational ground and takes it granted.

4. God Is Truth :-

Now let us see what the concept of Truth is. What does Gandhi say about this? Is the concept of Truth clearly defined by him or is it ambiguous? What Gandhi observes sheds some light on our point. He observes: 'Truth in Sanskrit means Sat. Sat means Is. Therefore Truth is implied in Is. God is, nothing else is. Therefore the more truthful we are, the nearer we are to God. We are only to the extent that we are truthful.' Now in the above quotation, one can see that there is a quibble about Truth. Does Gandhi consider 'Truth' having the capital 'T' and 'truth' (from 'truthful') identical? I think they cannot be so, for Truth which is derived from 'Sat' (Is) is eternal, absolute, foundational, whereas truth in 'truthful' relates to the relative truth, that which is in process. This quibble reminds us of the quibble, met in the Greek Philosophy, about knowledge. Knowledge, with capital 'K' as Nous is far different from knowledge as one of the elements distinguished in psychology. Does Gandhi include 'truth' in 'Truth'? It seems so when Gandhi observes: '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.' The quotation makes clear that Gandhi knows the distinction between the absolute truth in 'truth' and the relative truth in 'truthful' and also that the absolute truth includes the relative truth.

Now the question crops up in one's mind: Can one cognize the relative truth or the absolute truth? As we are imperfect, we can cognize the relative truth. Only the Absolute Mind can cognize the Absolute Truth. We, the imperfects, have no Absolute Truth but conceive the Absolute Idea. Our affirmations concerning the Absolute Truth, God, do not qualify Him at all; they qualify Him in relation to us. So we cannot cognize the Absolute Truth, i.e. God but we may have the relative truth about the notion of the Absolute. But our notions will vary, as we have different media of evolution. Here, what Gandhi observes is noteworthy. He observes: 'Well, seeing that the human mind works through innumerable media and that the evolution of the human mind is not the same for all, it follows that what may be truth for one may be untruth for another.' The quotation makes it quite clear that the opinion about truth varies from head to head: 'M e J u s t i c e Te J u s t i c e.' We know the Protagoras's dictum: Man is the measure of everything. The human mind evaluates the different processes of mind. There is not one man but there are men so the evolution will vary from mind to mind. So the cognition of truth will vary from mind to mind. The mind does
not think in vacuum. It has the data of experience and embarks upon that data to find the principle. But as the data of experience will vary from stage to stage of the human mind, there is no possibility of reaching at the final truth. Binayendranath Ray, M.A. Ph.D. observes: 'Truth is not an eternal character of things revealed in direct insight, but is created by human operations on the data of experience. There is no finality about truth since the process of truth-making is a growing and a continuous process.'\(^{30}\) We have the relative truth to act in the life. This again crops up a query in our mind: should we act according to the relative truth then? Gandhi solves the riddle by stating: 'But as long as I have not realized this Absolute Truth, so long must I hold by the relative truth as I have conceived it.'\(^{31}\) Though 'Man is the measure of everything,' we should not forget that there is a common man running all the while in different species of man. So there is the possibility of arriving at a universal principle. Though the thinking is individual, still there is the possibility, which logically involves actuality, of arriving at the principle. N.G. Damle, M.A. in expounding Royce's Philosophy states: 'The truth seems at first to be an individual fact, but it transforms itself into a universal principle.'\(^{32}\)

But how can we arrive at the universal principle? The man must turn from the outside to the inside, he must look within. The books (the outside means) will give him merely the opinion but no truth. So man has to know truth by intuition. Unless he relates objectivity with his subjectivity and enters into the field of subjectivity, purer and purer, there is no possibility of arriving at the truth. Ras Vihary Das, in explaining the
philosophy of Kierkegaard states: 'Man too has truth and becomes truth to the extent he becomes pure subjectivity or a spiritual person.' So there is the possibility of arriving at the truth which may bring the glimpses of the Absolute Truth, though darkened and becoming brighter and brighter in degrees, not through the discursive reason but through intuition, not divorced from reason but based on it. Where reason ends, intuition begins. By becoming purer in hearts, man can have intuition. It is the question of discipline of the mind and of the heart. In intuition the Absolute Truth may reflect and thus one may have the glimpses of Absolute Truth. Gandhi observes: 'Often in my progress I have had faint glimpses of the Absolute Truth, God, and daily the conviction is growing upon me that He alone is real and all else is unreal.'

Briefly, we have seen, in our above discussion, that a number of points crop up in tackling that God is truth, viz. the truth is relative as well as absolute. Truth is relative to different men at their different stages of evolution. Truth is both subjective and objective. The subjectivity of truth is relatively of more importance than the objectivity of truth. Through the individual truth one can reach the universal truth or principle not through mind but by heart, wherein we can develop intuition which is not beyond against reason but which is beyond it. By becoming purer we enrich our intuition and make it patent what is latent in us. One thing of importance is Gandhi has the glimpse of the Absolute Truth and that gives us the confidence to train our hearts to get the glimpse of the Absolute Truth, though darkened in the beginning.
But Gandhi does not merely say that God is truth. He says also Truth is God. So we touched the former half of his whole dictum, 'God is truth; truth is God.' So let us next see its latter half.

5. Truth is God

We have seen in the last point that Gandhi says that God is Truth. Then he says that Truth is God. If we conjoin 'God is Truth' with 'Truth is God', it will be then 'God is Truth: Truth is God.' We cannot have the meaning of it for it appears to be a petitio principii (the argument in a circle). It is not so in reality for Gandhi says first, "God is Truth". Then two years later, he revises it and says that 'Truth is God' which is more correct than 'God is Truth' (cf. Hindu Dharma, 1958, p.221)

Having critically seen Gandhi's dictum, 'God is Truth', we shall now critically see his another more potent dictum, 'Truth is God'. It is more potent than the former one, because the former one is corrected by him. Let us now see what Gandhi means by 'Truth is God.' According to the derivation of Truth, which is S a t, truth means I s; we mean thereby, ever: it is, i.e. everlasting. Now from this, one can say whatever is everlasting is truth. Now if we take 'whatever', it does not mean that there is only one, in 'whatever', but there may be a few (or many). One can say Law i.e. God's Law, or Nature's Laws are as truth. Gandhi in replying to Mr. Madkarni's letter, states: 'The sum total of karma is God'. This shows that
there is not one thing but there may be a few everlasting things that can be, either collectively or severally, called God. Now from the above, one may conclude that God may be termed severally. Gandhi identifies Law with God when he says God or God's Law is truth. This dictum, Truth is God, is the broad definition of God which includes many faiths, e.g. Jainism, which does not believe in Godhead, and Buddhism, which holds silence on God. It has become so much broad in its aspect that those who do not believe in God as the Creator of the Universe, nor as the doer, are included within the compass of the dictum, Gandhi, in this connection, observes: 'However, anyone may, if he likes, say that God is neither the doer nor the cause. Either be-be... is predicable of Him.' Truth has become a measuring rod to know whether the particular religion, or 'S h a s t r a ' or the rule of conduct is right or wrong. Here Truth is in the sense of That which is Eternal. It also includes the particular truth embodying in the conduct of man. Gandhi, with reference to Truth as a measuring rod, writes: 'In Hinduism we have got an admirable foot-rule to measure every S h a s t r a and every rule of conduct, and that is truth.'

To conclude, the dictum 'God is Truth' in the sense that God alone is Truth does not hold water, if taken severally in the sense of individual existence, as besides God, there are a few everlasting things or Substances which are Truth, in the sense of Eternal, i.e. The Law of Karma, The Atman, the monads, etc. Whereas, the dictum, Truth is God, a correction made by Gandhi later on, is so broad enough in its aspect that it includes in its compass, anything, personal or impersonal, which has the category of being Eternal.
6. Physical Calamities and Divine Chastisement:

Gandhi believes that there is an interaction between matter and spirit and he himself says that he is not able to give the scientific explanation of it. But he argues that if one is not able to give the scientific explanation of any physical event, it does not mean that it may not be rooted into the other arises, viz. the Mind. This point is certainly a bone of dispute from the time immemorial. It was branded as h y l o z o i sm in times of the philosopher, Thales.

Gandhi is eloquent enough in the following quotations. He observes: 'Visitings like droughts, floods, earthquakes and the like, though they seem to have only physical origins, are, for me, somehow connected with man's morals. There is an indissoluble marriage between matter and spirit. Our ignorance of the results of the union makes it a profound mystery and inspires awe in us, but it cannot undo them. But a living recognition of the union has enabled many to use every physical catastrophe for their own moral uplifting.

'With me the connection between cosmic phenomena and human behaviour is a living faith that draws me nearer to my God, humbles me and makes me readier for facing Him.'

When Gandhi connects the earthquake occurred in Bihar with the sins of the Biharis and points that the Biharis committed sins of untouchability, Jawahar Nehru and Rabindranath Tagore dissent from Gandhi's opinion. They say that the roots of events should be sought in physical physical ones, otherwise it will be unscientific. Rabindranath
Tagore is eloquent enough in his dissent in this paragraph quoted by V.B. Kher. Therein Rabindranath Tagore critically remarks: 'It has caused me painful surprise to find Mahatma Mahatma Gandhi accusing those who blindly follow their own social custom of untouchability of having brought down God's vengeance upon certain parts of Bihar, evidently specially selected for His desolating displeasure..... I keenly feel the indignity of it when I am compelled to utter a truism in asserting that physical catastrophes have their inevitable and exclusive origin in certain combination of physical facts.'

Here I wish to point out in the quotation that while Gandhi is humble enough to own that there is a mystery or ignorance of the interaction between matter and spirit, Rabindranath Tagore asserts that it is a 'Truism.' He further asserts that physical catastrophes have their inevitable and exclusive origin in certain combination of physical facts.' I point out humbly that Rabindranath Tagore, a great thinker (for whom I have a great respect) owns more than he can. He should be more cautious to use the assertion for a great mystery immemorial. I think he should use 'may' or 'perhaps' or 'most probably' in his language. Vivekanand is of opinion that there are no water-tight compartments of body and of mind: at some level, the mind series become an off-shoot of the ethereal form of the body series, e.g. the physical form of the body i.e. the gross body is related to the subtle body and thus there is an interaction between the gross body and the subtle body. The pleasant mind makes the good effect upon the appetite of the body. And the unpleasant mind does lower or sometimes ruin the appetite of the body.
The healthy mind lives in a healthy body. There is a Latin proverb for it, "Mens Sana in Corpore Sano."

Tagore further argues: 'As for us, we feel perfectly secure in the faith that our own sins and errors, however enormous, have not enough force to drag down the structure of creation to ruins.'

I think Gandhi would retort, in his reply to Tagore, that the whole world does not go to ruins as good is balanced, in a happy way, against evil and that there may be more good relatively than the evil in the world. I take a serious note and make this a polemical study especially when the physical events occur at those places, which are inhabited by the people and they affect them. I think that there is a certain truth in Gandhi's position especially when he says that there are sins which affect not only individuals but groups and nations, too; and as a desert for those corporate sins, the physical catastrophes occur and ruin the particular groups, and at the same time some individuals among those groups are saved by the Lord. With regard to this, I can mention the example of the train accident and the people affected therein. Sometimes, it so happens that the particular traveller or travellers in the train on the way are requested to get down from the train and halt at their relatives' places. In this way, they are saved by the Unseen Power from a bad lot suffered by a group of railway passengers due to the train accident. That shows that there may be 'group sins' and the particular persons may not be aligned in that group. Their group sins may not be 'ripe' in those individuals. Sometimes good deeds and prayer may avert the imminent physical catas-
Here is the quotation quoted by Gandhi at some place, which should be pondered over. (The example is from the 3rd chapter of Jonah of the Bible). 'The prophet had foretold that Nineveh, the great city, was to be destroyed on the fortieth day of his entering it: "And he (the king of Nineveh) caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and the nobles saying, 'Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; let them not feed, nor drink water. But let men and beast be covered with sack-cloth and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn everyone from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. Who can tell if God will turn from his fierce anger, that we perish not? And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not."

There is a notable event, with reference to our point, which took place in the life of Gandhi, when he was sailing with his family from Bombay to Natal. On the way, when Gandhi was nearing Natal, near Durban, there was a strong gale on the sea. The whole ship, in which Gandhi with his family was sailing along with other passengers, mostly Indian, was caught in that strong gale. All were at the mercy of God. They all prayed to God; even the captain of the ship joined them. Gandhi at that time, was the hero of the situation. He gave consolation to the passengers nervous. Only Gandhi was fearless; the remaining passengers trembled at that time. God heard the mass prayer, led by Gandhi, and saved them in that critical hour from the physical
catastrophe. This physical catastrophe was a moral chastisement more to Gandhi than to other passengers of the ship as they, after that critical hour, engaged themselves in merry-making and eating. Gandhi observes: 'There were of course the usual namaz (the prayer prescribed by the Koran) and the prayers, yet they had none of the solemnity of that dread hour.'

The upshot of the above discussion is that though we may not know the interaction between spirit and matter, or mind and matter, and thus it is a mystery to us, we cannot assert that there is no inter-connection between them. Let it be a mystery till it is resolved! So one should be cautious in speaking on either side and Gandhi as a whole is cautious in his language and terms. But I take an objection when he links the earthquake occurred in Bihar to a particular sin, untouchability. In this case, Gandhi shoots too high. In this point, a great section of people at least in India is with Gandhi and strengthens his position. This fact, the interaction of mind and body, though may not be explained on the rational grounds, is believed not only in the east but it is believed in the west, too.

7. Truth in Practice:

Truth in practice requires that it should be studied in details. It encompasses a great field which includes a variety of topics, such as -

1. Truth and Ahimsa

ii. Truth and the four cardinal vows

iii. Satyagraha
iv. No compromise
v. In practice, the principle of truth not modified
vi. No secret,
vii truth in thought, speech and action.
viii. truth, in war.

Let us now deal with the above topics one by one -

i. Truth and Ahimsa-

Gandhi says that there should be no sense of abackness in telling the truth; and in telling the truth, one should not think of its material consequences. Gandhi observes: 'Seekers after Truth will never waste a thought on the material consequences of their quest, which is not a matter of policy with them, but something interwoven with the very texture of their lives.'

With reference to the relative importance of truth and Ahimsa, we have to probe the problem. Gandhi says that truth and Ahimsa are just like the obverse and reverse sides of the same coin, and we cannot say which is first and which is second and it is practically impossible to disentangle and separate them. Still, however, he holds that ahimsa is the means; and Truth is the end. He also says that we can know ahimsa or love though it is very difficult to follow it, while we know a fraction of truth only. Gandhi states that we can derive non-violence out of truth and adds that love is derived from Truth and further adds that gentleness flows out of Truth.

Thus, it shows that truth is the end, while non-violence is the
means.

(ii) Truth and the Four Cardinal Vows -

The traditional five vows are the vow of (1) non-violence, (2) of truth, (3) of Brahmacharya (purity), (4) of non-possession, and (5) of non-stealing. Gandhi follows these five traditional vows which are called yamas in Rajayoga. These five Yamas or controls are prescribed by Patanjali for the students of yoga. R.R. Diwakar observes: 'The five yamas are as old as the Upanishads and were ordained in one form or the other by the Jains as well as the Buddhists.' The object of observing the five cardinal vows is the realization of God.

Sometimes, Gandhi considers the vow of poverty instead of the vow of stealing as one of the five cardinal vows. "Therefore," observes Gandhi, 'we have the belief based on the experience, that those who would make individual search after truth as God, must go through several vows, as far instance, the vow of truth, the vow of Brahmacharya (purity) for you cannot possibly divide your love for Truth and God with anything else- the vow of non-violence, of poverty and non-possession. Unless you impose on yourselves the five vows you may not embark on the experiment at all.'

Truth, Ahimsa, Non-stealing and Non-possession were the basic virtues of the Chaturyama Dhamma of Parshivanath. Mahavir added Brahmacharya in its widest sense of 'sense-control' and 'self-control'. It then developed into Pancha-
sheela, the five disciplines. * But what is new in Gandhiji,* remarks R.R. Diwakar, 'is that the vows contain a comprehensive discipline for spiritual attainment as well as for bringing into existence a community according to his ideals.'47

If we want to observe one of the above five cardinal vows, we cannot observe it singly. They are interdependent of one another. They are so interwoven that if we follow one of them, the others are also practised along with it. If we increase strength in one, that affects, the other four also.

(iii) **Satyagraha**

When we perceive the truth of a certain fact, we hold it at any cost. This is Satyagraha. Gandhi says that he came to Satyagraha from the observation of non-violence i.e. Satyagraha flows out from non-violence. We cannot go into the manifold forms of Satyagraha at this stage for we shall see them later on in the chapter IX (Non-violence In Practice). At present, suffice it to say, Gandhi has designed Satyagraha as an effective substitute for violence. He admits that that use of Satyagraha is in its infancy and therefore, and yet perfected. He humbly admits: 'as the author of modern Satyagraha I cannot give up any of its manifold uses without forfeiting my claim to handle it in the spirit of a humble seeker.'48

(iv) **No Compromise**

Agreement is an essential element in the objective of Gandhian Satyagraha. In a conflict situation, which may involve aggressive non-violence, agreement is achieved through non-violent persuasive
Agreement in the Gandhian philosophy is quite different from compromise. Agreement is in the nature of adjustment.

Where conflict has not become explicit and the basic principles are not involved, compromise in the Gandhian philosophy is not excluded as a device for the accommodation of differing positions. In the course of conflict, when the conflict materializes, the Gandhian technique takes a course qualitatively different from compromise. At this time, due to Satyagraha, what results from the dialectical process of conflict of opposite positions is not a compromise but a synthesis. The Satyagrahi is never prepared to yield his position which he holds as true. He is prepared (and this is essential) to be persuaded by his opponent to see the truth of his position. At this time, there may not be the perfect truth but there may be the approximate truth which is very near to truth in the opposite side. The Satyagrahi thinks over this because he is prone to make the best use of the truth on the opposite side in the synthesis which the Satyagraha thinks to effect. In the working out of the Gandhian dialectical approach, each side may yield through persuasion any part of its position. But this is not compromise as through persuasion, what was once the position of the opponent becomes now a position firm of both the antagonist and the protagonist. There is no sacrifice of the principles, nor the concession to the opponent with the idea of buying him over. Here, in the conflict non-violent resistance continues until persuasion has carried the conflict into mutually agreeable adjustment. In this adjustment, each side has not to concede any part of the truth only to have any way the adjustment. There is no lowering of the de-
mands, but an aiming at a higher level of adjustment which creates a new, mutually agreeable and satisfactory resolution, in which the moments of the conflict are resolved, permanently with an honourable position on both the sides and neither of them suffers from a sense of defeat.

(v) In Practice, the Principle of Truth Not Modified - 

We have seen in the above topic, that in the resolution of the conflict, the Satyagrahi does not modify the principle of truth. What he modifies, when the necessity in the conflict arises, is the second rate truth, not the first rate truth which is the principle. The second rate truth is the relative truth which is more particular to the time and place and is true only in certain conditions. If the conditions vary, it may continue or may not continue as true. We have to look over it in the new or changed circumstances.

(vi) No Secret-

The Satyagrahi has no cards in his sleeve but keeps his cards open, to be seen by his opponent. On the part of the Satyagrahi, there is neither intentional deceit, nor indulgence in meaningless words. He does not indulge in half truths, evasions, subterfuges. He is unequivocal in speech. There is not an iota of deceit in the speech, manner and action of the Satyagrahi.

The Satyagrahi does not want to take the undue advantage of the position of his opponent in his bad circumstances, for he has no idea of defeat and loves his opponent and gives honour to him. He tries to glean truth from the opponent's position and
makes the truth on the opponent's side as his own for he stands for truth only. So there is no secret in his dealings with his opponents.

(vii) Truth in Thought, Speech and Action -

Gandhi believes that the true Satyagrahi says what is in his heart, and acts what he says. He does not say what he does not think. He does not act what he does not say. That is, there is harmony in the thought, speech and action of the Satyagrahi.

It may be that whatever thought may not be translated into speech. This is the question of inability but not the question of motive. His motive is true. Similarly, whatever spoken may not be literally translated into action. Here also is the case of inability due to certain circumstances. But there is no question of his motive.

This shows that sometimes a man may act differently from his speech and may speak differently from what he thinks, because he has to see not only truth but the good also. S.K. Maitra critically observes: 'Thus even the most truthful speech which hurts or injures creatures is to be reckoned amongst the forms of unrighteousness, not as the virtue of truthfulness.'

Thus truth is conditioned by goodness. Whenever the truth is to be uttered, it should pass through four conditions, viz. the truth should be one which does not hurt but does good (Hita). It should be moderate (Mita). One should not speak that which is not asked or one should not utter it too long. The speech should be in moderation, otherwise the man who
speaks and speaks and does not think of time becomes a bore to others. The third condition for truth is that it should be welcome (Priya) otherwise the one who utters truth may come in distress as the bird, in the Sanskrit allegory, in telling truth, (often) was killed by the monkeys. Then the last condition for speaking truth is that it should be wholesome (pathya). If the truth does not become wholesome to the man, whom it is said, it may create troubles. So there is a proverb, 'Where ignorance is bliss, it is folly to be wise.'

Briefly, one should mind that in principle one should hold harmony among thought, speech and action but, in the practical life the man should observe the four conditions namely, Hita, (Good), Mitra (moderate) Priya (towards or liked) and Pathya (wholesome). If he breaks this rule, he may cause injury or invite injury on himself needlessly. Thus, we have to follow Truth as one of the principles of life and not as the only principle in the total life of the man.

(viii) Truth in War -

Most of the persons who are at the helm of conducting wars do not observe truth in the conduct of war, for they think that everything is fair in war and in love. They think that to tell lies is a strategy, so that when the enemy is unaware, he may be ruthlessly attacked as the wolf attacks his prey.

Gandhi gave us a good example by observing truth in war. He used to say to his enemy by giving in the press that at the particular place and at the particular hour, he will do a certain
thing. Gandhi kept the cards open and he was fearless. Who made him fearless? This query may come to us. Truth made him fearless. The enemy coming in time tried his level best to undo what Gandhi wanted to do. The enemy failed in the public. He lost his prestige and Gandhi had on his side a number of Satyagrahi increased. Gandhi became successful in his technique of using non-violence and Satyagraha against violence.

Though Gandhi is no more, his technique as to how the enemy should be dealt non-violently survives. Gandhi's technique of 'ahimsa' is a great asset to the whole world. The statesmen in some countries of Africa used Gandhi's technique of non-violence and truth and made their countries free. In the United States of America, Martin Luther King Jr. freely adopted the technique of Satyagraha in ameliorating the bad conditions of American Negroes. He made some strides toward freedom. His pioneer work for the freedom of the American Negroes is appreciated by the world.

Briefly, with reference to Truth in Practice, though truth and Ahimsa are the twins, truth is the end and Ahimsa becomes the means to achieve the end. Truth is one of the five cardinal vows and is the foremost of all, as without truth, the remaining cannot be practised. All the five cardinal vows are not held separate in air-tight compartments; they influence one another. So, if we want to practise one perfectly, we cannot do so without observing the remaining four ones. Satyagraha is a good technique in which truth and non-violence are required as the moments of Satyagraha. With reference to non-compromise in Satyagraha, the Satyagrahi does not give away the principle of truth in resolving
the conflict. In practice, Gandhi did not modify the principle of truth, but for a majority, to be prudent, the truth should pass through the four conditions, viz. Hita, Kita, Priya and Pathya. There should be no secret or under-dealing in the practice of truth. The cards of Satyagrahi should be kept open on the table. There should be no card in his sleeve. There should be no subterfuge in the practice of truth. There should be harmony among thought, speech and action but, this harmony should not come in the way of observing non-violence. Truth should be practised with a view of non-violence. Truth in war should be practised as it is a good technique to be used in the resolution of conflicts.

In Conclusion of the whole Chapter, with reference to the nature of truth, we cannot know Absolute truth. Only we have the glimpse of the absolute truth, which is a relative truth in process to the absolute one. The relative truth is dynamic and we move from the less knowledge to more knowledge and the error correspondingly lessens. In this way, we move towards the Absolute truth. When Gandhi's definitions of God are scrutinized, we know that the definitions cannot serve the purpose, as the concept of God should be realized more by the heart than by the mind. Gandhi's definitions of God give us not a Total unity, but a Shaded or Qualified one. With reference to the query: 'Is God good or evil?' Gandhi is unable to give the rational explanation of evil. When Gandhi says God is Truth, a number of questions crop up and it is very difficult to give the solutions of all. So, the better conception of Gandhi is that Truth is God, as it includes not only one
thing eternal but several things eternal, e.g. the Law of Karma, etc. This dictum of Gandhi, 'Truth is God' is so broad enough that it not only encompasses other faiths besides Gandhi's one but also atheism, if it is not bereft of moral life or moral effects. Gandhi has the peculiar belief that the physical calamities play their role, which we may not correctly ascertain, as divine chastisement. Both Jawahar Nehru and Rabindranath Tagore differ from Gandhi in this respect, so it is a characteristic belief of Gandhi, participated by the majority of Indians. With reference to Truth in Practice, there are topics related to it. Truth in practice is done keeping Truth in theory, that is, the Principle of Truth in our mind. By going through the discussions of the number of topics, related to Truth in Practice, we get the broad lines as to how truth should be practised in life.

The practice of truth cannot give us the full idea of how to practise it unless it is aided by non-violence.