Chapter 4

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When we talk about truth we, generally, assume that there would be proof or evidence behind it. But there could be truths which don’t need any proof.

Quinton’s version of the empirically given employs the version of the epistemic regress argument to show that there must be “intuitive beliefs”: “By an intuitive belief is meant one which does not owe its ... credibility to some other belief or beliefs from which it can be inferred ... if any belief is to be justified, there must be a class of basic, non inferential beliefs to bring the regress of justification to a halt. These terminal, intuitive beliefs need not be strictly self-evident in the sense that the belief is its own justification. All that is required is that what justifies them should not be another belief.”

We cannot gain any knowledge without already having some beliefs, presumptions and assumptions. Knowledge is also a belief, there is a belief factor in it, according to the Greek tradition.

A person cannot be held epistemically responsible in accepting the belief unless he himself has access to the justification. A reason for thinking that the belief is likely to be true and no reason for questioning this claim or belief has so far emerged.

If any beliefs are to be justified at all ... there must be some terminal beliefs that do not owe their ... credibility to others. For a belief to be justified it is not enough for it to be accepted, let alone merely entertained: there must also be good reason for accepting it. Furthermore, for an inferential belief to be justified the beliefs that support it must be justified themselves. There must, therefore, be a kind of belief that does not owe its justification to the support provided by others. Unless this were so no belief would be justified at all, for to justify any belief would require the antecedent justification of an infinite series of beliefs. The terminal ... beliefs that are needed to bring the regress of justification to a stop need not be strictly self-
evident in the sense that they somehow justify themselves. All that is required is that they should not owe their justification to any other beliefs.36

Directly apprehended truths become the basis of other truths, which are supported by evidences. Evidences or sufficient reasons are of two types: One which can be expressed as a statement, a proposition, i.e. a propositional belief from which the initial statement can be inferred with certainty or probability. The other sort of evidence or sufficient reason which cannot be expressed as a statement is “experiential, the occurrence of an experience or awareness of some observable situation”. One is “directly aware” or has “direct knowledge” of such an “observable situation”. Observable situations involves material objects, which can clearly be seen, like a red book on the desk which is justified by experiential evidence. As such directly apprehended truths are the basis of evidential knowledge and they can’t be supported by it. Direct apprehensions are certain cognitive states and experiences which justify themselves. One and the same cognitive state can be both the original cognitive apprehension of the contingent state of affairs and at the same time a justification of that apprehension, i.e. a reason for thinking that the state thus apprehended genuinely exists. Thus direct apprehension of empirical knowledge itself provides the standard or criteria of epistemic justification and also provides a metajustification of that standard or criteria of epistemic justification. That is there are good reasons for thinking that following the standard of direct apprehension will lead to truth in the long run.

The epistemic regress problem is four fold as there are four logical possibilities of the outcome of the potential regress of epistemic justification, assuming that one continues to demand justification for each new premise–belief offered:

(1) The regress might terminate with beliefs which are offered as justifying premises for earlier beliefs but for which no justification of any kind, however implicit, is available when they are challenged in turn.

(2) The regress might continue indefinitely “backwards,” with ever more new empirical premise-beliefs being introduced, so that no belief is repeated in the sequence and yet no end is ever reached.

(3) The regress might circle back upon itself, so that if the demand for justification is pushed far enough, beliefs which have already appeared as premises (and have themselves been provisionally justified) earlier in the sequence of justificatory arguments are again appealed to as justifying premises.

(4) The regress might terminate because “basic” empirical beliefs are reached, beliefs which have a degree of epistemic justification which is not inferentially dependent on other empirical beliefs and thus raises no further issue of empirical justification.37

Empirical knowledge requires foundation in order to avoid skepticism. The epistemic regress problem, is solved by epistemological foundationalism which is a two fold thesis:

1. Some empirical beliefs possess a measure of epistemic justification which is immediate or intrinsic to them, in the sense of not being dependent inferentially or otherwise on the epistemic justification of other empirical beliefs.

2. These “basic beliefs,” are the ultimate source of justification for all empirical knowledge.

The main thesis of empirical foundationalism is that some empirical beliefs have a degree of non-inferential epistemic justification, justification that does not derive from other empirical beliefs in a way which would require those beliefs to be antecedently justified.

The fundamental concept of foundationalism is the concept of a basic belief. It is by appeal to basic beliefs that the threat of an infinite regress is to be avoided and empirical knowledge given a secure foundation. A basic empirical belief is in effect an epistemological unmoved (or self-moved) mover. A basic empirical belief is able to confer justification on other beliefs,

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but in spite of being empirical and thus contingent, apparently it has no need
to have justification conferred on it.

The fundamental role which the requirement of epistemic justification
serves in the overall rationale of the concept of knowledge is that of a means
to truth. A basic constraint on any account of the standards of justification for
empirical knowledge is that there are good reasons for thinking that following
those standards are, at least, likely to lead to truth. Thus if basic beliefs are to
provide a secure foundation for empirical knowledge, if inference from these
basic beliefs is to be the sole basis upon which other empirical beliefs are
justified, then that feature, because of which a particular belief qualifies as
basic must also constitute a good reason for thinking that the belief is true. If
this were not so, foundationalism would be unacceptable as an account of
epistemic justification.

Foundationalists argue that the believer’s cognitive grasp required for
the justification does not involve further empirical beliefs, which would then
themselves require justification. What is involved is rather cognitive states
which do not themselves require justification, despite having the capacity to
confere justification on beliefs. Thus, these cognitive states are the ultimate
source of epistemic justification.

But the basic beliefs are not to be confused with the basic cognitive
states. There is a difference between them.

The basic cognitive states are intuitions, immediate apprehensions,
direct apprehensions or direct awareness, and the objects of such states are
usually said to be given or presented.

The view of given provides an answer to the elusive and nagging
problem of how the system of beliefs achieves that input from or that contact
with non-conceptual reality.

The central thesis of the doctrine of the given is that the basic
empirical beliefs are justified, not by appeal to further beliefs or merely
external facts but rather by appeal to the states of “immediate experience” or
“direct apprehension” or “intuition.” These states allegedly can confer
justification without themselves requiring justification.
One can understand this by considering the basic belief whose justification is at issue. If that belief is P, then this basic belief is justified by appeal to an immediate experience of the very fact P. It is because one immediately experiences the very fact P, which would make one’s belief true that one is completely justified in holding it, and it is this fact which is given.

Thus immediate experience brings the regress of justification to an end by making possible a direct comparison between the basic belief and its object. The justificatory appeal is directly to the objective world, to the relevant fact, while avoiding the need for any appeal to further beliefs which would perpetuate the regress of justification rather than solving the regress problem, hence the regress problem is solved.

The doctrine of the given does not hold that the mere existence of some appropriate objective state of affairs is sufficient for justification. The objective state of affairs must be experienced or apprehended by the believer, and it is this experience or apprehension, and not the objective state of affairs itself, which constitutes the primary source of justification. But the question arises - What is the nature of such an experience or apprehension? The main account about the nature of such an experience or apprehension is suggested by the terms, employed to describe such an experience, like “immediate,” “direct,” “intuitive” and “presentation”. Wherein the underlying idea is that of ‘confrontation’. In an immediate experience mind directly confronts the object without intervention of any kind of intermediary. It is in this sense that the object is simply given to or thrust upon the mind.

In cognitive enterprise propositions fundamentally depend on certain truths which are directly apprehended. Doubts regarding directly apprehended truths can be removed or clarified by intra sensory observations and experiences and by intra subjective observations and experiences. Moreover, for certain and true knowledge, certain other conditions also need to be satisfied so that direct apprehension really takes place. For example, in order to see something with eyes the light should be accurate as well as the eye-sight should be normal so that one gains true knowledge by direct apprehension by one’s eyes.
Types of Directly Apprehended Truth

Directly apprehended truths are of various types. Most common of them, with which we are all familiar are the truths of the world around us which we directly come to know by our senses. Like by touch, smell, sound, sight, taste which we come to know by our sense organs like skin, nostrils, ears, eyes, tongue respectively. For example: the colour of rose is red, while that of marigold is yellow, that sugar tastes sweet, that ball is round, etc. There is family resemblance between different shades of the colours blue, red, yellow etc. respectively. Sense experience is the most private but it is basically objective.

Human beings come to know these truths because they are human beings. It is because of empathy that one comes to know that other human beings are also just like him. Human experiences, pain and pleasure are human feelings. They don’t vary from person to person. The content of all these are directly apprehended.

Even our internal senses like hunger, thirst, pain are directly apprehended. They are directly experienced by us and the truth of propositional claims like “I am hungry” is known directly. No medium is required for making or confirming such a claim, at least not for the one who is experiencing hunger pangs. The object of hunger is not outside. Hunger, thirst, pain are combined with biological sensations and can’t be reduced to physical sensation alone.

Other truths which are directly apprehended are the content of anxiety, memory, happiness etc. Happiness or anxiety is a feeling which is experienced by a person. It manifests immediately by our facial expressions or body actions from which others directly come to know that we are happy or sad. Truths about one’s immediate memory are known directly. Anyone who remembers something of his immediate past, knows it directly only. There is no other way of knowing one’s immediate past. It (one’s immediate past) could be verified by some other means also but that is not the way one knows it. Content of immediate memory is only directly apprehended. It is so private that it could not be known by any other way.
Still other truths which are directly apprehended are higher order intuitive truths like in mathematics. These cognitive truths have some kind of universality within them. Here one enters into a different dimension, a different aspect of internal perception which is internal but not psychological. It is not private, not personal, but universal. Universality is seen in it and through it. They are true even if there is no man on earth or no man understands them. They exist in the world of ideas. Like $2 + 2 = 4$.

Knowledge of moral values also come in the realm of directly apprehended truth claims which one gains through an moral experience which is a direct experience. It is not just a personal and psychological experience although it involves a cultural backdrop and certain cultural training. Moral principles are universal and surpass all cultural boundaries and to recognize a principle as a moral principle is a direct apprehension. Moral principles are not created by cultural upbringing or training. Cultural conditions and training only help in the direct recognition of these principles.  

Aesthetic experience also contain within it its content that is directly known. Apprehension of beauty is a capability with which all (normal) human beings are endowed. It is not just a personal and psychological experience but also a cultural experience. It involves a cultural backdrop, a certain cultural training and aesthetic taste. One has an aesthetic experience in the aesthetic.

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8 While moral training is not possible in the sense that one can’t be trained to be moral, to be good, or to do good. One can at the most be told and impressed about what the moral ideals are, what the moral norms are, what moral principles or virtues are, what morality is, what being moral is. The process of moral education, if any, may be viewed as one in which the young are helped in forming their norms and ideals. The process of moral education, viewed psychologically, consists mainly in the formation of norms and ideals. The norm is formed by the influence of example and by contact with social organizations, when the young grow up under the influence of persons who have high moral standards. These ideals are the object of aspiration, which must be aspired and attempts must be made to achieve them. For if one does not know the ideal of good or is not told what is good one may never do good actions. One can at the most be exhorted to be moral, but one can’t be trained to be moral or to act morally. Now, one may ask the question – What is the use of ideals if they do not actually regulate conduct? Well, though they may not regulate conduct, they influence the development of conduct, and express certain tendencies which ought to be expressed. Ideals are least practical in earlier conditions of society. But ideals have utility even if unpractical, especially in less mature communities. As society improves, the ideals which are current in it tend to be less protestant, less uncompromising and romantic, and more practical. When it becomes possible for moral practice to change, the prevalence of the ideal helps the change to go in the right direction. The Stoics taught that man has worth and dignity merely as man, and that slavery is contrary to nature, and it contributed to the abolition of slavery at a later time.
world which is a part of the real life world in which man lives. An aesthetic object or an aesthetic creation has suggestive meaning in it towards which it shows.

The aesthetic truth is not separate from the experience.

Judgment about the beauty of an object (natural or artistic) result from person’s aesthetic experience. The experience of beauty is a direct apprehension. Standards of art-appreciation varies from culture to culture but they don’t generate the aesthetic experience. Beauty is objectively given in the sense that when a person, having the natural capability to apprehend beauty and cultural training for its appreciation, looks at an object (especially art object) then he finds beauty in that. A person does not impose beauty on an art object by his imagination.

Beauty is, thus, directly apprehended in aesthetic experience. There is no other way to know beauty.

Kant supports the objectivity of aesthetic judgement on the plea that feelings of pain and pleasure are similar to all mankind.\(^{39}\)

There is some truth and some cognitive content in it and not just our subjective likes or dislikes on which we may agree or not agree with others while making an aesthetic judgment, for example, “This painting is beautiful” or “Taj Mahal is beautiful.” The proposition that – “Taj Mahal is beautiful” is true, the proposition is about beauty. It may not be necessarily true as beautiful is value loaded and the standard of beauty may be disputed. There are some bases for making such an aesthetic judgement. The cultural and aesthetic training which we must already have for making such an judgment is nothing but the learning of certain truths upon the basis of which we judge other truths or make an aesthetic judgment about a certain artwork like a painting. That is we must already know or learn some truths to know still others. It is similar to saying that we must first know or have an experience of Ishq Mazazi (love of this world) to know or have an experience of Ishq Haqiqi (divine love). Without having an experience of Ishq Mazazi one can’t know what Ishq

Haqiqi is. Once an object of beauty is created, whether it is a painting or a Taj Mahal, it is out there for the public, it is objective, it is no more private and any copy of it would be as beautiful no matter who makes it.

**Truth of Religious Experience**

In religious experience also religious persons come to know (or recognize) certain truths. These truths also fall in the category of directly apprehended truths. They are very important in many respects. They give a community its cultural foundation and give the individual its identity and moral strength. In fact truths of religious experience form the most fundamental class of the directly apprehended truths. There is nothing deeper than them from which they could be deduced or inferred. All operations of inference or deduction ultimately depend on them in an existential sense. It is necessary, at this point, to elaborate the nature of religious truths (that means Truths of Religious Experience) and to explain the way of their direct apprehension.

Although Religious Truths are ultimately the foundation of a community, a discussion about their nature has to be done in some of the cultural presuppositions. Given this condition Religious Truths are to be discussed in a broad conceptual frames of Theistic Religious Truths and Non-Theistic Religious Truths.

**Theistic Religious Truths (Truths of Religion as seen in Theistic Religions)**

In most Monotheistic religious community the religious believers have an emotional relation (generally the emotion of reverence) to an almighty creator who protects them who take refuge in Him. The mental pictures of such a God varies not only from community to community but also in the minds of different persons of the same community. But all the persons of a community have a similar type of emotional relation to the God of their community. All the persons of different theistic community are almost similar with respect to the general feeling of creatureliness and existential dependence that they have towards their images of God. This feeling is the core of the presence and function of religions in the world. It is generally asserted that
religious persons believe in some image of an almighty creator. This is not the adequate assertion either about the religious believer or about the object of their faith. He feels some sort of emotional attachment with the object of faith. There may be wide variety of this emotional attachment but it is felt by the believer in any of the varieties. The believer is different from a person who only thinks about God. One who only thinks about God may have an image of God but he does not feel any attraction for that image. A believer, on the other hand has an emotional bond with his image of God. He feels an attachment towards that image. This is one of the most important features which helps in understanding the nature of the belief, believer and the object of religious belief. The image of God of any religious believer is not merely an object of thought; it is essentially an object of his emotions and he feels an attachment to that image of God. From the standpoint of the believer the image of God, to whom he feels attached, is not an image but a partial revelation of the supreme almighty creator himself. But even from an onlooker’s standpoint the image of God, to whom a believer feels attachment, is not merely the pure creation of his imagination. In fact, an onlooker (if not already biased against theism) understands from the close observation of the way of the believer’s life that he does not refer to any imaginary object when he talks about his (image of) God. He notices that the believer gets filled with a sense of reverence or awe or deep love towards his (image of) God while talking about Him. Acceptance of this fact paves the way to understand the nature of religious truths. Feeling of such emotions by the believers indicate that they actually enter into an experience. The vivid, full fledged religious experience, which is generally referred to as mystical experience, is not available to all believers but a week – a very low intensity of the same experience occurs to most religious believers. So the believers, while referring to God, talk about what they actually experience (not about what they imagine). Religious truths are the truths which the believers actually experience directly. This is a unique experience (even in its low intensity) that is identified unmistakably by its content, which is felt by the believers as – piousness, rising above the touch of materiality, being overwhelmed by ecstasy, etc. The believers pass through these
experiential contents as an indirect but distinct manifestation of the Divine. The word ‘Divine’, therefore, has an indirect but distinct experiential meaning for the believers. As the ecstasy felt by an overwhelming musical performance is distinctly recognized by the person as an experience of melody, the ecstasy felt by the believer is distinctly recognized by the believer as the experience of the Divine. Although melody is not separable from the feeling of ecstasy, the listener of music distinctly knows that the melody is the locus of the ecstasy. Similarly the ecstasy felt by the believer is not separable from the experience of the presence of the Divine, the believer knows that the latter is the locus of the former. This is such a direct awareness that doubt can’t creep into it. Truths of (theistic) religions are directly received (or revealed) in such a direct awareness.

In the light of above discussion the truths of Religions need to be grasped as the truths that are directly experienced by the religious believers. When a believer says that God is benevolent, it is to be conceived as the overwhelming experience of being helped in a situation of utter helplessness. This experience gives the believer a direct awareness of ‘The Divine’.

It is important to note in this regard that the believer may get the unexpected help from a human being or material conditions, but in the feeling of deep gratitude that emerges in his heart is that in which he gets the awareness of the Divine.

**Non Theistic Religious Truths (Truths of Religion as seen in Non Theistic Religions)**

In Non Theistic Religions like Buddhism and Jainism also one comes to know about truths of Religion by Religious Experience. Such truths are directly apprehended in experience. Such truths are basic and experiential. The experiencer has a non rational (emotional) attachment to the truths that one gains in religious experience, the experience of Nirvana or of Kaivalya. A person who cannot feel the pain (of oneself and of others), is just like a stone, such a person cannot come to have Nirvana (or religious experience), for Nirvana (religious experience) one must have the capacity to feel the pain, the suffering (of others). For religious experience one must look inside one’s
heart, mind and/or soul. One cannot have Nirvana (religious experience) by reason, intelligence, books, teachers, or by any other methods. In Jainism too people have the feeling of love, sacredness, reverence towards other beings, from smallest micro-organism to the largest living being, and not just only to human beings. They see the Divine in all beings and do not dare to kill them. They feel the Divine presence all around.

Feelings others pain is an elevated feeling which one has when one is at an elevated level of consciousness. An ordinary Jain also feels that he is not a body. A Jain is sentimentally attached to Jain metaphysics. If we say to a person who is a practitioner of Jain religion that there is no such thing as soul, he reacts very strongly, such a reaction is because he feels and believes the truth, and not just because he is under the influence of the metaphysics of that religion.

To our experience, we owe the impulse to metaphysical speculation, and also limits to metaphysical inquiry.