

Deciphering Non-Western Sources In Gandhian Political Philosophy

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Abstract

Gandhi, perhaps one of the most prominent leaders of our day, not only opposed foreign influences in the formation of his beliefs but also preserved his indigenous identity. He fortified his beliefs using traditional and indigenous materials. He came up with a one-of-a-kind conversion strategy in order to successfully translate a foreign concept into his own language. Because of this, he was able to modify the conflict between tradition and modernity in order to fulfil his paradigmatic criteria. In order to internalise the essence without adopting the framework of Western perspectives, Gandhi skilfully used non-Western resources as a kind of alchemy. This research article aims to examine how Mahatma Gandhi's ideas and actions were shaped by Indian intellectual heritage and how those influences have significance to our modern environment. Although Gandhi drew inspiration from Western authors such as Tolstoy, Ruskin, and Thoreau, the ideals and philosophy of India also had a significant impact on his life and work. The foundation of Indian philosophy, the Vedas, had an impact on Gandhi. The Vedas are sacred and holy and its essence lies in virtue like nobility, courage, honesty, chastity, humility, simplicity, forgiveness, and godliness. The Bhagavad Gita had an impact on him as well. Jainism, Buddhism, Yoga, and Vedanta all had a significant influence on Gandhi's thought. Quotes from these systems' underlying principles appear often in his speeches and writings. The ethical and spiritual principles of Indian philosophy had an impact on Gandhi, but he also reworked them to fit the religious, political, and social climate of his day. The research in this regard would analyse and elucidate Gandhi's core beliefs and the objectives he sought to convey via his Non-Western concepts and ideals.

Keywords: Gandhi, Non-Western, Indigenous, Tradition, Modernity, Satyagraha, Swaraj.

INTRODUCTION

Gandhi epitomises a unique individual who emerges seldom in history, leading a life marked by exceptional bravery, commitment, and action, serving as a guiding light for his peers and leaving a radiant legacy for future generations to emulate. Although not a philosopher, Gandhi's philosophy embodies a cohesive "system" in which his comprehensive concepts are intricately interconnected, existing in mutual harmony and

support (Habib, 1995). Due to their logical interrelation, they succeed or fail collectively. They constitute a mosaic, a meticulously conceived design distinguished by its comprehensive methodology. Gandhi was an avid reader and a prolific author. A substantial body of literature has emerged in reaction to and in response to his written and spoken words. The rapidly expanding extensive literature of Gandhi has created opportunities for further studies and exploration of its many implications. It is unsurprising that no author in this century has garnered the global recognition that Gandhi has. His personality and thoughts have been persistently exposed to diverse interpretations.

There is no clear conclusion or conclusive declaration of Gandhi's contributions to humanity as the theology of Gandhi transcended every basic premises of mankind. The distinctiveness of Gandhian thought is because of the unconventionality, creativity, and mysterious persona. It is crucial to acknowledge the significance of a comprehensive evaluation of his advanced study of the roots of his foundational concepts and theoretical structures pertaining to politics and society (Sharma, 2022). Gandhi amalgamated several roles, sometimes leading to his association with other celebrities; nonetheless, such approach inadequately represents the authentic Gandhi and his true personality (J. M. Brown, 1994).

Gandhi himself would probably disagree to the two main depictions of him, one as a politician and the other as a saint. Looking at him through the lens of a Mahatma ignores the core principles of his ethical philosophy. The idea of being called a 'Mahatma' was an unsettling proposition to him, as he always stressed publicly that he was just a regular leader/politician. He sided with the downtrodden and the defenceless. I find his political potential more interesting. Not to mention a Machiavellian politician, he hardly displayed any of the traits of a modern politician (Ling Lee, 2015). Gandhi's exemplary character exhibited no political attributes, since he was far from corruption, deceit, and the pursuit of power. He once said to Polak: Although I portray myself as a politician, at my core I am a man of faith; nonetheless, most religious people I have met are really politicians masquerading as religious people (Hendrick, 1956)."

In his role as a religious person involved in social and political activities, Gandhi exemplified the Indian tradition of karmayogi, making him unprecedented (Giri, 2013). He was an outspoken supporter of societal and political norms that were based on moral principles. He looked at the Yoga Sutra by Patanjali and made it clear that it should be the guiding principle for all politicians and social activists. He was always led by his principles of honesty, conscience, and a desire to

know himself inside and out. Without any moral qualms, he would admit when he was wrong.

The fundamental principles of Gandhian thought were- satya, ahimsa, satyagraha, sarvodaya, aparigraha, swaraj, and swadeshi which can be seen more in terms of ethics and morality rather than a political affair (Power, 1963b). The principle of moral rectitude supersedes practical efficacy or societal utility. The primacy of ethics above politics is the ultimate good in Indian texts, including the Ramayana, Mahabharata, Sukra-Niti, Manusmriti, and Arthashastra (D. M. Brown, 1953). Gandhi has an inherent affection for religious knowledge and doctrines. Gandhi markedly diverged from the Western archetype as a leader or thinker. He did not fit the conventional mould of a religious speaker, professor, or well-educated schola as he once said that- 'I am not suited for academic writing'. Gandhi did not produce a coherent book on ethics, morality and political theory.

The two major seminal writings of Gandhi that were produced in reaction to the urgent demands of the day were Hind Swaraj and Niti-Dharma (Bitinayte, 2021). It is noteworthy that throughout his extensive body of work, Gandhi shows little regard for Western principles like as democracy, liberty, equality, justice, or the welfare state, while being raised in the Western culture and pursuing an English legal education (Das, 2020a). The essence of his ideology-focuses more on the basic principles of traditional means such as the use of charkha, adoption of khadi, following the principles of brahmacharya, and attaining self-realization through yoga which was in sharp contrast to the philosophical tenets of prominent western intellectuals of his day. Gandhi neglected to explore the metaphysical assumptions underlying his conceptions, resulting in his loosely articulated and unsystematic framework of "Gandhism," which bears resemblance to the provisional nature of Hinduism (Chatterjee, 1977). On the contrary, it is more like to a singular viewpoint on politics and society than it is to a methodically developed philosophy of political society. His compilation, which consists of more than eighty volumes, is both inconclusive and lacking in a conclusion. Additionally, they provide the fundamental components or raw materials that are necessary for the development of major theses on a variety of aspects of human conduct and experience.

The contempt and disregard for the modern-western civilization is most apparent in Gandhi's magnum work, Hind Swaraj (1909), a concise pamphlet that encapsulates his foundational views. Gandhi denounced contemporary civilisation on the basis that "its spirit is malevolent and simultaneously he offered a constructive alternative by propagating the notion of Ram-Rajya which is defined as an ideal condition in which spirituality and ethics take precedence over material and worldly activities (Das, 2020b). Gandhi cites

various western thinkers like Plato, Mazzini, Ruskin and Tolstoy in his supplementary works, using these sources to reinforce his natural appreciation for ancient Hindu principles (Pantham, 1983). He did not take their ideas but used them as benchmarks for self-validation.

Hind Swaraj was an innovative work, perhaps the first contemporary critique of materialism, technology, and the cognitive approaches of modern individuals. It was, in essence, an Indian assault on the West for its brutal brutality, self-destructive tendencies, erosion of human liberty, obsession with consumerism, and a psychological affliction that distances humanity from rationality (Jha, 2022). In an Upanishadic manner, Gandhi urged that religious teachings inspire active engagement in divine endeavours while fostering detachment from earthly attachments. The essential direction of human existence originates within rather than outside. The primary focus of Hind Swaraj is the Gandhian criticism of modernity. Gandhi provided a harsh assessment of contemporary civilisation and in his profound religious convictions and argues that the western civilisation disregards both morals and religion. Their proponents assert that their objective is not to provide religious instruction. Some see it as a superstitious phenomenon. Some don the guise of religion and discourse about morals. I have concluded that immorality is imparted under the guise of morality. This civilisation is characterised by irreligion, which has so profoundly influenced the populace in Europe that its adherents seem to exhibit signs of madness. They possess neither genuine physical strength nor bravery. They sustain their vitality via drunkenness. They are unlikely to find happiness in isolation. Women, who ought to be the sovereigns of their houses, roam the streets or toil in industries. (Gokhale, 1972).

Gandhi vehemently condemned the western political framework. (Nikam, 1954) The representative democracy, economic structure of capitalism, and the lifestyle defined by materialism where accumulation of wealth become the prime motive of an individual (Srinivas, 1995). He characterises the whole of civilised existence as parasitic and effeminate. His anger at machines and industries may portray him as a Luddite, however his criticisms were more profound and significant. Gandhi sees false capitalism as the real enemy and uses the moral concept of Karma to get rid of evil and bring balance back to the world. Gandhi believed that civilisation was a threat, but it wasn't a disease that couldn't be cured. He believed that society's moral strength could fix it. (Buck, 1984). Hope resides in those who possess a fundamentally good nature and whose cognitive processes are not intrinsically unethical. In his struggle against Western civilisation, Gandhi increasingly relies on Indian philosophy and religion as both an offensive and defensive strategy (Srinivas, 1995). Through this approach, he

aimed to witness the demise of the soulless framework of contemporary civilisation founded on distrust, fear, and avarice. This perspective is uniquely his own, since he sought to provide an alternative to the deficiencies of contemporary civilisation.

Gandhi was inclined to explore the classical Indian mythological concepts like *maya*, *ahankara*, *moha*, *lobha* which affected the life of an individual in a variety of ways. (Chakrabarty, 2021) What seems beneficial in contemporary advancement is transient and misleading. Gandhi posited that the enhancement of the moral and spiritual aspects of individuals is essential for the eradication of widespread vices. The current epoch is *Kali Yuga*, the era of obscurity in which we are oblivious to truth and reality. According to Gandhi, *Ram Rajya* cannot be attained in the *Kali Yuga* unless virtuous individuals act as crusaders and adopt a monastic lifestyle to increasingly embody the essence of an ideal society as prescribed in *Ramcharitmanas* (Bajpai, 2020).

The most prominent aspect of his philosophy emanates from moral-spiritual viewpoint that is articulated via his critique of civilisational ethics, belief-system and values. The soulless and unscrupulous character of modern politics is reminiscent of a disease, given that both the state and the administration demonstrate a strong sensitivity to corruption and malevolence. According to Gandhi, the concept of power in politics is a result of materialism, and he expressed his disapproval of this idea. Throughout history, people have always been interested in acquiring power, and Gandhi contends that the ownership of property is the source of authority (Kumar, 2020). As long as the political revolution remained a fight of power acquisition and self-serving materialistic desires, he did not entertain any illusions about the possibility of political reform. For Gandhi, power is an inherent need of mankind, and he would decry it as an immoral effort until it was replaced with the objective of service. Politics must be imbued with spirituality to fulfil Gandhi's envisioned objectives.

A comparison may be seen between Gandhi's beliefs on politics and his viewpoint on civilisation. He disproved the idea that politics is inherently evil and cannot be changed, regardless of whether one is religious or secular in their pessimism. Another one of the beliefs that he did not agree with was the notion that politics had an inherent morality and that this political morality might be refined by religious or secular organisations or leaders. He did not believe in either of these concepts (Gokhale, 1972). Another one of the notions that he rejected was the notion that politics is fundamentally pragmatic and that any form of prudential or utilitarian reasoning, regardless of whether it is articulated in terms of religion or sociology, is sufficient in the long run (Nikam, 1954).

Despite the fact that Gandhi maintains that politics is inherently dirty and involves corruption, which renders it impossible of being flawless, he believes that it is possible to purify politics and that it is necessary to do so. The elimination of any distinction between public and private, as well as between political and personal morality, is the first step that must be taken in order to accomplish this cleansing (Power, 1963a).

Gandhi aligned himself with philosophical tradition (Sanatan Dharma) by rejecting the modern separation of religion and politics, yet he surpassed most classical Indian philosophers by entirely dismissing the concepts of *raison d'état* and social necessity, asserting that the inherent corruption in politics can be effectively mitigated. He dismissed the potential for any clash, ultimately, between political expediency and moral ideals rooted in religious belief. He admitted that political judgements were tough and complicated, but compared them to religious or moral issues. Both circumstances require distinguishing between essentials and non-essentials, truth and desire, *sreyas* and *preyas* as defined in the Upanishads (Srinivas, 1995). Truth and lies cannot coexist because "all incompatible mixtures are destined to detonate." Life involves compromises over trifling matters and desired rewards, but these sacrifices should help us achieve our goal. Political concerns include power and morality, although it is generally perceived as a moral criticism of State activities.

Gandhi was primarily focused on contesting the traditional perceptions of politics, expanding the notion of power, and, most importantly, dismantling the distinctions between private and public ethics, religious principles and political standards, as well as moral values and political pragmatism (Panda, 2020). In a materialistic society, this necessitates a challenge to entrenched and prevalent beliefs on realism and self-interest, as strictly defined, which arise from the separation of genuine religion and power politics. In a materialistic society, the State is destined to be a fundamentally insufficient and not simply flawed tool, and its authority a perpetual indictment of societal corruption.

Gandhi proclaimed his objective "to spiritualise" political system, groups and institutions as it is as vital as religion; nevertheless, when separated from religion, it resembles a lifeless entity, suitable only for incineration. (Rajan, 2024). The separation of political and religious life leads the populace to comply with governmental demands while mostly acting according to their own preferences in other matters. In old India, the extensive caste system addressed both the religious and political requirements of the society. According to Gandhi, politics devoid of faith has no significance. Politics is an integral aspect of our existence and cannot be detached from other facets of life. It is essential to comprehend political structures,

while simultaneously need the unwavering illumination of religious faith, which resonates with both emotion and intellect. Gandhi said that his commitment to truth led him into politics, that his political influence sprang from his spiritual self-experiments, and that people who claim religion is unrelated to politics misunderstand the essence of religion (Srinivas, 1995). He was focused on the purifying of political life by incorporating the ashrama or monastic ideal into politics. He always asserted that politics cannot be divorced from the fundamental aspects of existence.

Gandhian political ideology has significantly been influenced by religion as it permeated his existence, and through which he desired to permeate the lives of others as well. He believed that anyone who said religion was unrelated to politics lacked an understanding of the essence of religion. He absorbed his perspective from infancy, and as he matured, his trust in Christian ideals also intensified. As a devout Hindu, he regarded the 'Rama-nama' from Tulsidas's Ramayana as his unwavering guidance. However, Gita served as his dictionary of daily reference. Gandhi says that the concepts like 'aparigraha' (non-attachment) and 'samabhava' (equanimity) captivated him (Bose, 1981). While I have great admiration for Christianity, I get a consolation from the Bhagavad Gita and Upanishads that I find lacking even in the 'Sermon on the Mount'. In moments of uncertainty, I seek solace in the Bhagavad Gita; my existence is indebted to its lessons (Singh & Singh, 2004).

In this section, I will try to comprehend and assess few Hindu scriptures that Gandhi adopted to formulate his philosophical and moral understanding of life. As illustrated in Bhagwad Gita, the focus of individuals should be only on action, and not in its outcomes; thus, do not allow the results of your actions be your motivation, nor should you associate inactivity with your thoughts. Lord Krishna says- Engage in activity, O Dhananjaya, while remaining united with the divine, relinquishing attachments, and maintaining equanimity in both success and failure; this state is referred to as yoga. The cognition of one whose senses are entirely restricted from sensory items is well-balanced. Karma-yoga is the dedication of physical energy to the divine, including the utilisation of one's faculties of action only in service, obedience, or obligation.

Gandhi's existence aligned more closely with the characterisation of a Karma-yogi than that of a Sanyasin. When Gandhi was bestowed with a title of 'Mahatma' by Rabindranath Tagore, Gandhi felt that he is more of a karmyogin than a mahatma. While contemporary politicians like Ambedkar refused to call Gandhi a 'Mahatma' because of his ideological differences on the basis of caste system. Gandhi possessed the selfless and desireless practice of karmayoga as he believed that it profoundly benefits both the individual and

society. A karmayogi, who adheres to his swadharma, secures his sustenance. Moreover, his diligence contributes to his physical well-being and purity. His job also enhances the welfare and prosperity of the community in which he lives. A karmayogi farmer will refrain from cultivating opium or tobacco to increase profits. He associates his job with societal wellbeing. Actions undertaken in the pursuit of swadharma will yield only beneficial outcomes for the community. A merchant committed to the welfare of the populace will refrain from selling foreign textiles. Consequently, his enterprise will be advantageous to society. A society that includes karmayogis who prioritise the welfare of others above their own self-interests would experience wealth, order, and peace. It is said that the senses are significant; beyond the senses is the mind; exceeding the mind is reason; yet, above reason is He. Therefore, comprehend Him as superior to Manas and Buddhi, and by mastering the self via the Self, vanquish the adversary represented by desire, which is difficult to conquer. The wise refer to him as a sage, whose creations are devoid of the influence of desire and whose acts are consumed by the flames of insight. It is true that active participation in yoga is more beneficial than the practice of Sankhya, which is the abstinence from activity; a Sanyasi is someone who gives up everything. An ascetic is similar to a Yogi in that he is someone who acts in accordance with his responsibilities, regardless of the consequences of his activities.

There is a strong resonance between Gandhi's philosophy and the idea of letting go of wants while continuing to be engaged in constructive activity. There is a major connection between the Gandhian idea of responsibility and the concept of self-realization of inner consciousness that becomes the paramount feature to guide and dictate one's action (Herman, 2018). Gandhi preached what he practiced as he embodied his own existence, by practicing renunciation by eliminating all sorts of desires and greed, thereby aligning himself with the most impoverished individuals regarding worldly wealth.

Hinduism

Gandhi identified himself as a Sanatani Hindu because he upheld the Vedas, Upanishads, Puranas, and other Hindu scriptures, thus endorsing concepts of avatars and reincarnation. He adhered to the Varanashrama Dharma in a manner he considered strictly Vedic, diverging from its contemporary, simplistic interpretation (Shah, 2015). He advocated for the protection of cows in a broader context than commonly perceived and did not reject idol worship. It is evident that Gandhi intentionally avoided the phrase divine origin while discussing the Vedas or any other writings. However, Gandhi never claimed that my religion is the superior religion, nor he boasted the fact that there is supremacy of Vedas and one should follow it to tooth and nail. Rather he,

advocated followers from every religion to ascribe to their religious texts and scripture like Bible and Quran. Gandhi considered Bible to be as divine as Gita or Quran (Herman, 2018). It was clear that he had a theosophical viewpoint towards religion and the essential principles that lie inside it. It was unacceptable for him to support a traditional interpretation of texts if it was in conflict with reason or morality.

Gandhi challenged the religious head of institution's claim of being the sole interpreter of Vedas, for example he was against the Shastris who propagated wrong means and deeds in the name of Hindu rituals. Gandhi was a true rationalist so he believed that there must be logical interpretation of the mythologies and shastras. Although Gandhi knew that to understand and comprehend such sastras requires one to follow principles of Satya, Ahmisa and Brahmacharya; and at the same time one should renounce all acquisition and ownership of riches (McLain, 2019). He approached the Biblical assertion that the gates of paradise are barred to the affluent and the prosperous. He believed in the institution of Gurus but recognised that millions in this world must go without one, since it is uncommon to encounter a synthesis of absolute purity and comprehensive knowledge.

Gandhi said that one should not lose hope in comprehending the reality of one's faith, since the core principles of Hinduism, like those of other major religions, are immutable and readily comprehensible (Parel, 2010). According to Gandhi, all Hindus believe in reincarnation, salvation, God as One, and the concept of God's unity. Even more so than its Varna-ashrama structure, Hinduism's stress on cow preservation was what distinguished it from all other faiths. According to him, varna-ashrama was always a part of human nature; Hinduism only codified it scientifically. Birth was linked to Varna. A person's Varna cannot be changed only by making a choice. One must not disregard the notion of heredity if they stray from their Varna. He found that the division into many castes was an unreasonable departure from Varna-ashrama doctrine. The four social strata, in his view, were intrinsic and could continue to exist independently. A man's natural dignity is not reduced by intermarriage or interdining, according to him. Although the four divisions defined man's role in society, they did nothing to control or limit interpersonal communication. While the divisions did outline duties, they did not provide any special privileges.

Hinduism fundamentally opposes the appropriation of superior status by individuals or the relegation of others to an inferior position, as all are born to contribute to God's creation; a Brahmin through knowledge, a Kshatriya through protective power, a Vaishya through commercial acumen, and a Shudra through physical labour (Singh & Singh, 2004). His birth

rendered a Brahman primarily a scholar, well suited by lineage and education to disseminate knowledge to others. The Shudra had no barriers to learning all knowledge, should he want to pursue it. However, a Brahmin's assertion of superiority based on his knowledge was as fallacious as that of others who took pride in their unique attributes.

Gandhi condemned the hierarchical nature of the caste system. However, he endorsed Varna-ashrama as a framework for self-discipline, conservation, and energy efficiency. Nonetheless, Varna-ashrama remained unaffected by inter-dining or inter-marriage; yet, Hinduism strongly disapproved of these behaviours among castes. Hinduism attained the pinnacle of self-discipline as a faith centred on the abandonment of the corporeal, facilitating the liberation of the spirit. A Hindu was not obligated to eat with his own son; by limiting his choice of a wife to a certain group, he demonstrated exceptional self-restraint (Johnson, 2005a). Hinduism did not see marriage as a prerequisite for salvation. Gandhi regarded marriage as a descent, akin to birth being a descent.

Gandhi markedly departed from the Gita's principles of Karmayoga, which asserted that a karmayogi transcended a sanyasin, that salvation entailed liberation from both birth and death, and that prohibitions on inter-marriage and inter-dining were essential for the swift advancement of the soul (Chandhoke, 2008). Nonetheless, this self-denial did not function as a measure of Varna. A Brahman maintains his position as such even if he has a meal with his Shudra brother, provided the Shudra performs his duty of service (Srinivas, 1995). Gandhi said that a Hindu who refrained from dining with another due to a sense of superiority violated his Dharma (Sarma, 1980). Gandhi was fastidious about his food, strictly sticking to vegetarianism in accordance with his Hindu belief that meat consumption necessitates the killing of animals, which he denounced (Nikam, 1954).

Dharma: The concept of Dharma is the fundamental tenants of Hinduism and Buddhism as and has considerable significance in India's social-political framework. Gandhi rejuvenated this notion as a moral catalyst in politics. He based all activities on morality, denouncing expediency in both political and business pursuits, seeing morality as a derivative of religion. He believes that any dissociation of politics or economics from ethical goals will result in a conspicuous struggle for power and wealth.

According to Gandhi, the 'dharma' is spread via the idea that there is oneness among all things. The concept of "dharma" is one that, in his view, is one that is beneficial to the unification of society. Individuals are brought together by this concept. By adhering to moral norms, it is possible to preserve and safeguard the idea that there is "oneness throughout all." In

order to preserve the peace and harmony that exists within a community, Gandhi believed that a law-abiding citizen should acknowledge the connection that exists between their nature and the function that they play in society. In addition to this, Gandhi believed that the practice of dharma needed to be accompanied by a number of important circumstances in order to bring about social solidarity and stability. These criteria included cultural unity, uniformity, and homogeneity.

Gandhi investigates the possibility that a society devoid of religion may serve as a conduit for a select few individuals to satisfy their own egotism, and that this would result in the development of autonomy on the democratic canvas. The representatives of the ordinary people begin to listen to their own interests, even if it means doing so at the expense of the welfare of the public. The party benefits from the polity that is in the chair. And when they develop new laws for their personal benefit in the name of public welfare and duties, that is the very definition of a filthy politician. If the political system is not founded on ethical principles, then it will not be possible to transform it from one that is unstable, competitive, and self-centred into one that is stable, justified, and understanding. Through this approach, Gandhiji places an emphasis on religion as an integral component of political life. It is not the so-called religions that he is referring to when he uses the term "religion," but rather the ultimate truth that is independent of the so-called faiths. In the absence of an acceptance of this fact, there is no prospect of arriving at a particular principle. It is the unceasing pursuit of justice by a spiritual spirit. Gandhiji emphasises the need of the participation of the population in politics because he believes that an external control might be a barrier to the efficient operation of government and the cohesiveness of a country. He considers politics from outside the country to be a significant danger to the growth and unity of the nation. He never takes the reforming and united constitutional changes in better standardising governance till the law makers or reformists get themselves morally pure. He never takes the reforming and united constitutional changes. By doing so, he places an emphasis on the moral and ethical standards of humanity via behaviourism. According to him, it is essential to have individuals who are both capable and efficient in order to protest against a flawed system and to bring about a genuine government.

The principles of Dharma should take precedence over the principles of money. Gandhi's commitment to the principles of morality in politics rendered Machiavelli's idea of expediency irrelevant. In contrast to the Western notion that politics is a domain for rogues, Gandhi advocated for Indian politics to adhere to the ancient ethos of prioritising ideals above self-serving pragmatism.

Karma- All great saints and sages were karma yogis because they performed faultless activities without ego. Work is their motivation, and they assist others overcome social and spiritual hardship. Mahatma Gandhi is a famous example from this century. Gandhi worked tirelessly because he was unaffected by personal preferences, whims, and fancies. He cleared his head of the trash most people have. Because of this, he saw India's difficulties and his job clearly. He saw simply the facts, not his fantasies. His mind was like a magnifying glass, revealing every detail. Most individuals perceive the world through a misted magnifying glass due to inner issues. Friendships and rivalries affect most global choices.

Gandhi gained strength by overcoming this one-sidedness. All people were his pals, including his adversaries, thus he had no true friends. None of his behaviours were kind. He acted because the circumstances required it. He did what was beneficial for India as a whole. Some say he was obstinate, yet he did things because he understood his own mind, could comprehend others' minds, and saw the world clearly. The politician has a strong intellect but genuine sympathy for people. He wanted to be a famous karma yogi but was a politician. Gandhi attained success via mental cleansing, perseverance, and karma yoga. He worked effectively and tirelessly because of this. He never became tired of his job, unlike most individuals who become bored after an hour. As to why? Naturally, the mind responds. Gandhi purified his mind via karma yoga, bhakti, and kriya yoga. The calmest mind may work hard for extended periods without tiring. It doesn't get distracted by outside or internal factors. It stays on task. Most individuals squander energy on pointless egotistical fights or angry conversations. They lose mental and physical vitality everywhere. Tasks get little or no power. If it did, everyone would become a Gandhi and much work would be done. Concentrated force and remoteness are nearly seductive. As they say, it moves mountains. Gandhi demonstrated this, and we reiterate that detachment doesn't equal contempt for worldly things.

Even while distant, Gandhi felt and conveyed enormous sympathy. Detachment is the mental state when nothing bothers you. One does the best one can but doesn't let extraneous circumstances 'throw' the mind. Gandhi effectively acquired and used this mentality steadily. Gandhi recognised that every action he took was part of the universe's divine process and cosmic awareness' will. He saw his acts as an instrument. Many renowned and obscure individuals have proved that karma yoga is achievable. Saints like Swami Vivekananda and Swami Sivananda displayed ultimate egolessness in their relationship with the world - flawless expression, perfect reaction to given circumstances. You can do what they did. Everyone has a route and opportunity. People may build

strong one-pointed minds. Everyone can develop intuition. Everyone can do karma yoga. All you need is a desire for excellence and rigorous practice. In the tradition of Manu, he emphasised the significance of society and advocated for moral principles, so initiating four positivist movements in Hindu philosophy. The ideal, as underlined by the Gita, can only be attained not by engagement, but by acting with a sense of devotion. This level of self-control represents the utmost discipline and a prerequisite for happiness. An engaged individual is absorbed in the action and, therefore, in their own self.

Yoga signifies not aimless activity, as Gandhi astutely noted- "the outward performance of actions in conjunction with inward renunciation of the world"- an amalgamation of soul and body (Nanda, 2017). Gandhi, although was not completely opposed to lifelong celibacy or complete renunciation without experiencing family life, favoured the concept of a householder who fulfils his responsibilities, appreciates the qualities of sex or kama, but refrains from indulgence. His objection to Brahmacharya lies not in the pleasure of sex itself, but in the motive and goal behind it. He saw the worth of all acts as a sacrifice and an accomplishment rather than as indulgence and euphoria. His belief in Brahmacharya was rooted not on abstinence but in self-discipline. Exercising self-restraint promotes the advancement of mankind, while indulgence, want, and lust lead to decline. Gandhi demonstrated his principles by his conduct.

Artha- Artha denotes wealth in all its manifestations, including currency, movable, and immovable possessions. Furthermore, Artha serves as an instrumental value that fulfils many living necessities. Undoubtedly, Vedic culture acknowledges the significance of Artha (wealth) as an essential aspect of existence; nevertheless, this does not imply that individuals are incapable of seeing beyond it. Adam Smith, a prominent economist, said in his "Wealth of Nations" that wealth is not a static idea; rather, the worth of an item is contingent upon what an individual is prepared to pay for it at a given moment. Wealth is a prevalent concept derived from the idea of money and its role as a medium of exchange. Artha also signifies terrestrial assets, including material luxury and financial prosperity. Wealth is an essential and valid element in the attainment of one's life objectives. Hinduism emphasises the significance of economic pursuits while stipulating conditions, including the need of obtaining money ethically and avoiding hoarding and illicit trade. Consequently, riches should not be obtained by violating dharma principles. In the Vedic era, Indian sages and philosophers exemplified value-centric lives and urged others to imitate them. Purusartha were the principles established by Vaidika society to achieve the objectives of life.

Gandhi's thoughts on 'Swaraj' and 'Trusteeship' were a synthesis of the two principles of Dharma and Artha. He rejected class antagonism and promoted class coexistence and harmony as vital to social dynamics. Producers need to see themselves as stewards of the wealth generated by collective effort. They need to see themselves as stewards of money rather than as acquirers or usurpers. Gandhi said that all property is social, and economic justice necessitates the equal distribution of wealth to mitigate the challenges of class strife. Gandhi saw the concentration of riches among a few individuals while millions suffered from near starvation as an unacceptable and volatile situation. He advocated for a liberal welfare state based on the principle of economic fairness, asserting that "each individual should possess the means to fulfil all his inherent needs and no more". He further supported the imposition of a voluntary restriction on desires.

A peaceful society may be established via the pursuit of economic improvements without the use of violence. His economic theory did not anticipate the orchestration of a revolution. A collective effort to curtail desires would lead to a society dominated by spiritual principles. Gandhi believed that the principles of restricted desires and voluntary effort aligned with Hindu values of austerity, frugality, and individuality. Gandhi disapproved of Western economic models since they fostered a mechanistic civilisation at the expense of human and compassionate principles. Excessive reliance on machinery would diminish human effort, he believed. "Genuine economic order does not conflict with the highest ethical standards." He said that "an economics that promotes the worship of wealth and allows the powerful to accumulate riches at the expense of the vulnerable is a spurious and bleak science."

If Gandhi were to be referred to be a socialist, it would be an inaccurate representation of his underlying liberal-conservative worldview. Despite the fact that state control should presumably reduce exploitation, it really does substantial harm to mankind since it eradicates individuality, which is essential to the development of all things. He had a vision of a decentralised economy that would be made up of innumerable village republics that would produce things for consumption. According to his perspective, an ideal society is one in which people are able to satisfy their fundamental need without the need to strive for riches, which he considered to be an endeavour that was not essential for a good living.

Gandhi combines the Western notion of the welfare state with the traditional conception of a non-acquisitive community striving towards the realisation of Dharma with consistency (Srinivas, 1995). His Sarvodaya is a philosophy that promotes human character development in its entirety. It is linked to the Islamic precept of non-acquisition, the Christian virtue of compassion, the Hindu concept of Karma, and the Buddhist

concept of Dharma (Nikam, 1954). Gandhi became a secular believer in the need of developing a moral code based on sanskara and human conscience. This is due to his belief that the fundamental basis of all faiths is morality.

Gandhi promoted a dharmic society based on traditional decentralised government developed from the grassroots at the village level. This immediately contradicted the hierarchical British system. Western methodologies regarding human rights function within a hierarchical power framework, whereby political activists, humanitarian workers, and NGOs with access to global media and money assume the role of agents, therefore taking on the "burden" and responsibility of others' agency. This method is inconsistent with the principle of enabling individuals in their pursuit of truth. Ahimsa is not only a concept for discussion or legislation; it must be embodied by each person. This necessitates grassroots social activity in which individuals actually exemplify the change they want in the world. Therefore, it is essential to have a viable, sustainable society that allows individuals at the lowest strata to express their truth. He desired swaraj, or self-rule, from the British for this reason, rather than as an aim in itself.

Gandhi completely grasped the concept of cultural violence and often discussed it. He said that cultural differences should not be eliminated but rather appreciated, reflecting an ancient dharmic principle. The cosmos is constructed upon variety. The term "uni-verse" signifies the concept of the many-in-one. Each species comprises subspecies and further subdivisions, with this hierarchical diversity continuing indefinitely. Cultural uniformity is thus unnatural and impractical. There must not be a singular religion or lifestyle. Each individual should possess a unique sva-dharma based on their specific circumstances and inclinations.

Gandhi opposed cultural colonisation as vigorously as he did its material and political forms. While he was not hostile to Christianity and often cited Jesus, he resisted Christian missionaries in India. He said that they need to engage only in altruistic endeavours and refrain from proselytising. If they want to operate a school or hospital, or provide sustenance to the impoverished, these endeavours should not serve as instruments for proselytization.

Gandhi believed that the religious activities must be ethically justifiable. This approach to religion, central to his philosophy, afforded him the unique benefit of charting an independent path, enabling him to modify and adjust to new circumstances while developing his philosophy of life and action, all within the confines of an ethical framework. The correctness of his philosophy is subjective; yet, he maintained the application of a uniform moral standard to all phenomena, including politics. Consequently, there exists an ethically grounded framework in

his whole philosophy, a coherence that imparts significance and a distinct identity to his disparate ideas, referred to as Gandhism.

Gandhi's belief in religion is essential to his philosophy. His perspective on religion aligned more closely with theosophy than solely with Hinduism, as demonstrated by his assertions before an international fellowship in 1928: "After extensive study and experience, I have reached the following conclusions: all religions possess truth; all religions contain some error; and all religions are as cherished to me as my own Hinduism (Thomson, 1986)."

There is little question that Gandhism is characterised by a religious undercurrent. On the basis of the notion that no person can live without an innate spiritual push, it is based on this particular belief. Those who, in their self-centred thinking, declare their hostility to religion by stating that it is unconnected to politics are completely unaware of the essential goals that both religion and politics seek to accomplish. The Gandhian ideology has the potential to be conveyed in a manner that is both genuine and true in this setting. His understanding of the concept of satya, which may be translated as truth, serves as the foundation for Gandhi's philosophical system. Truth, according to Gandhi, was synonymous with God, spiritual force, or moral law, all of which were universally applicable. According to his assertions, this self-propelling force functions in a variety of ways, but above all else, it bestows a transcendent oneness onto the whole of creation. The central and fundamental idea that underpins his philosophical framework is the concept of spiritual oneness, which is the goal that people think humanity is working towards developing. An individual who is rooted in reality is required to acknowledge this idea throughout the whole of his lifetime journey of personal development and evolution, and to adhere to it at each and every moment of his lived existence.

Gandhi himself described his life as a series of experiments with truth, and this is exactly how he lived it with purity and conviction. He believed that the search of transcendence was not the ultimate truth, but rather that the interconnectivity of all things was the ultimate truth. It was not the Benthamite idea of the "largest benefit for the greatest number" that was the achievable objective in society or politics; rather, it was the "greatest good for everyone," also known as Sarvodaya. The concept that such an ideal could be achieved by any means other than nonviolence was not something that Gandhi predicted would be possible. In point of fact, nonviolence, also known as ahimsa, is given priority above other factors to take into account. It manifests itself as an ideal inside the whole of his thought itself. There are instances when the words "Satya" and "Ahimsa" are used interchangeably; nevertheless, from a philosophical standpoint, "Satya" refers to the goal, while

"Ahimsa" refers to the techniques (Allen, 2008). Gandhi said that to attain sarvodaya, the methods must be as virtuous as the objectives.

Gandhi condemned the dichotomy between individual and collective behaviour. He advocated for a rigorous regimen of self-discipline and self-control to facilitate the pursuit of peaceful principles and the discovery of truth, as well as the cultivation of soul-force. Although nonviolence may seem like a bad idea, it yet has good implications in the context of love, especially towards the wrongdoer. It aims to vanquish malevolence with veracity and to counteract physical might with spiritual strength. It denotes intentional pain and reasonable self-discipline. It posits conscience as a guiding principle for action and urges individuals to regulate their baser instincts. Nonviolence is synonymous with the renunciation of materialistic pursuits, aggression, sexual impulses, and the feelings of fear and rage.

Gandhi saw satyagraha, the practice of nonviolence in action, as a way to advance society. From a political perspective, it took the form of an approach that encouraged the general public to stand up against wrongdoing. Additionally, it might be used to bring about societal change prior to gaining control of the government. Politics may not be necessary for satyagraha to be effective. Its goal is to make the guilty person feel more moral and more committed to social justice so that he or she might change their conscience. Satyagraha, Gandhi believed, was the proper means of resistance in a democratic society that could govern itself, and he was sure that his solution to social problems would work. But if those without Gandhi's moral fibre use satyagraha for their own benefit, it would be a misuse of the strategy.

In his broader philosophical framework, Gandhi assigns a subordinate role to the state. His societal aim is a stateless and classless society. Community. He aspires to achieve a state of self-regulated, self-adjusting, and enlightened anarchy, devoid of force from any external authority; this society would be governed by disciplined people, with discipline being self-imposed. Gandhi saw the impracticality of such an ideal, since it requires an exceptionally high level of moral behaviour from people in a context of imperfection. He thus endorsed a feasible ideal- a moderate approach- as an accommodation to human frailties. In this regard, he was a realist. His scepticism towards the state is a salient aspect of his ideology, since the state is characterised primarily by its use of power.

Gandhi envisioned a democratic state in which individuals would have the ability to rebel against any abuse of authority without resorting to violence. It is important to use nonviolence as a means of combating violence, and the use of nonviolence may help reduce the use of coercion if the scope

of operations carried out by the government were severely restricted. Gandhi was unwavering in his commitment to maintaining a clear divide between the worlds of social and political groups (Gandhi & Dalton, 1996). Reducing governmental power by enhancing voluntary social engagement might facilitate a democracy centred on the wellbeing of everyone. He proposed the collaborative control of industry by the state and the workers, alongside trustees.

Gandhian definition of civilisation emanates from social equity and economic fairness. This might be achieved via the decentralisation of governmental authority and by grounding economic activity on agriculture and small industries. In the centralised manufacturing sector, collaboration among capital, labour, and the state is essential. Gandhi envisioned self-sufficient communities embodying the essence of republics, with India as a collective republic of republics. He said, 'I would strive for an India where the impoverished see it as their nation, in which they own a significant voice; an India devoid of social stratification; an India where all communities coexist in peace and harmony' (Prasad, 2016). Untouchability, along with the affliction of intoxicating beverages and narcotics, should have no place in such an India (ROBERTS, 1930). Women will possess equal rights as males. This is the India of my aspirations.

Consequently, Gandhi's notion of democracy was unrelated to numerical strength, majority rule, or conventional representative governance. He emphasised service and sacrifice as the driving principles. It is an ethical idea, yet morality has not been explicitly defined anywhere. His conception of a democrat is an absolute connection with the impoverished, willingly sacrificing personal luxuries to achieve equality, and intentionally striving to do so. In accordance with the Indian tradition of altruistic action as articulated in the Gita, Gandhi identified the deficiencies in the materialistic and power-centric Western civilisation. For India, adopting a foreign political system that has demonstrated ineffectiveness would be unsuitable, particularly given the nation's rich heritage upon which it can construct a new framework. He hoped that India could develop a genuine science and art of politics for the world to admire. These were his aspirations, which his detractors may label as unrealistic optimism.

There is no need to elaborate on the normative aspect of Gandhi's political theory. However, it is worth noting that he actively seeks to eradicate some issues that democracy faces. He thinks that hypocrisy and corruption shouldn't be the natural outcomes of democracy, but unfortunately, they are. Furthermore, the majority of government activity development does not constitute a credible indicator of democracy. Democracy may coexist with what is now called the elite so long as the few in power represent the ideals,

aspirations, and desires of the people they are supposed to govern. (Johnson, 2005b).

Gandhi argued that the use of forceful methods was completely incompatible with the democratic way of life. As a result, he lost the support of Marxist socialists and Fascists. From his perspective, democracy was an expression of the inner drive; it was an organisation that assisted in the development of human uniqueness; it was a peaceful way of life that aimed to realise the truth. Throughout his life, Gandhi never allowed his ideal ideals to get separated from his practical goals. Gandhi was a democratic figure in the sense that he placed a high value on the individual in accordance with his way of thinking. He placed a strong emphasis on the centrality of the individual in his thinking, and as a result, he arrived to a critical stance regarding the claims made by the state. Perhaps there is a similarity between his way of thinking and that of the liberals in England in this regard.

Similarly, in Gandhian philosophical tradition, the individual grows into their full potential while being in perfect harmony with the universe. Consequently, following a principle of conduct that promotes one's optimum development is an essential component of individual liberty. This moral concept of the individual and his liberty originates with Gandhi's understanding of dharma (Buultjens, 1986). Additionally, it offers a choice for a course of action, while also recognising the value of the individual conscience in relation to societal issues. It is necessary for the person to engage in rigorous and purposeful education in self-discipline in order for him to adhere to your conscience. Against the inherent degrading of people that is inherent in the Caste system, Gandhi raised his flag of resistance. He was against any and all sorts of exploitation, regardless of whether it was carried out by people or by the state. The loss of individual dignity as a result of foreign dominance was another component of his argument against the authority of the British authorities. throughout the course of his travels throughout Africa, he had the opportunity to see instances of racial exploitation. His political ideas are characterised by an increasing propensity towards individualism.

Gandhi believed that collectivism was a danger to the independence of the individual. It is not possible for the legislative state to argue for morality in an explicit manner; rather, its purpose is to remove impediments that stand in the way of a better living. It is imperative that the limitations placed on the power of the government be concrete rather than theoretical. To a constant degree, ethical considerations take precedence over the laws of the state. It's possible that state legislation is unethical. Individuals and society as a whole must make it a priority to guarantee that the state does not go beyond the boundaries of its authority. Gandhi has not been

concerned with the specific connection that exists between morality and the law; rather, he has been a staunch supporter of the idea that moral law should take precedence over legal regulations (Jordens, 1998).

The interpretation of the term "individual" in Gandhism diverges from its liberal connotation (Pfstl, 2014). The Gandhian person, in contrast to his Western counterpart, is not only a collection of rights asserted against the state, but rather an ethical being committed to a sense of responsibility. Gandhi says that loyalty to the state originates from commitment to an ethical ideal. In his dharmic perspective, obligations are more basic than rights. He advocates for individual collaboration with the state, but espouses insurrection if the state fails to fulfil its moral obligations. Nonetheless, the insurrection is not enduring; it just serves as a means to restore the state to its proper position.

Gandhi was far-sighted and a true realist as he was concerned about the instability and anarchical nature of state, therefore he advocated for the need of constitutional procedures for expressing public disapproval. He vehemently disapproved of the idea of a violent revolution, but he understood that it was both legitimate and necessary to oppose actions taken by the government that were seen as immoral. The fact that he was able to develop a non-violent opposition movement and use persuasive but self-sacrificing methods that would raise the community's conscience without resorting to violence was one of his most notable accomplishments. The execution of this treatment is not contingent on the type of the ailment or the disposition of the opponent when it comes to the treatment. It is generally applicable to him. Gandhi's conception of the state included the concept of Swaraj, which culminated in the realisation of enlightened anarchy via the use of nonviolence. In this context, democracy functions as the transitional framework. As a result of the inherent dangers that are associated with majority rule in democratic systems, it is not possible for it to be a viable solution to political problems.

Despite Gandhi's lack of support for formal safeguards against abuse of power, he placed the onus of finding a solution on the collective moral authority of the community rather than the state. He only advocated for cosmetic reforms to the state, such a larger voting age, mandatory physical labour to cast a ballot, and low salaries for legislators and judges. A voting age limit between 18 and 50 years old was something he strongly supported. The Hindu practice of varnashrama may have served as an inspiration to him. Gandhi, in keeping with his nonviolent ideal, stressed that punishment may be a form of rehabilitation. Because of his religious beliefs, he was against capital punishment. He saw a dormant, intrinsically good quality in the criminal. Though he despised criminals, he did not hold them to account. He held the belief that the social and

economic climate, along with education and training, can help reduce the tendency towards anti-social behaviour.

A virtuous individual is essential for a commendable community, rather than the reverse. If morality were to expand, Gandhi would see simply intellectual achievement as an inadequate metric of development (Bheenaveni, 2023). His primary objective was effective moral education, and from this perspective, he advocated for physical labour and craftsmanship. His affection for Swadeshi beyond ordinary nationalism, representing a foray into the realm of ethical education. His promotion of self-sufficient independent communities aimed to instill the principles of self-reliance and moral elevation. His philosophy exemplified the moral imperative in action.

Conclusion

Gandhi is distinctive in political history for having developed a novel and humanitarian approach to the liberation fight of an oppressed populace, executing it with exceptional vigour and dedication. The moral impact he has had on intellectuals throughout the civilised globe may prove to be more enduring than one would expect in our current day, characterised by an overemphasis on raw power. The enduring impact of politicians is contingent upon their ability to inspire and strengthen the moral forces of their constituents via personal exemplification and educational influence.

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