

**Review**

# Ethical Nationalism without Enmity: Comparative Lessons from North Indian Patriot Movements and Gandhian Sarvodaya

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mohitdahiya2517@gmail.com**Conflict of interest:** NIL**Abstract:**

The paper reviews how ethical nationalism in India evolved by considering a moral trajectory of resistance starting with North Indian traditions of patriotic resistance as early as 1000 to 1857 CE up to Mahatma Gandhi Sarvodaya philosophy. It claims that the Indian nationalism has traditionally been not based on exclusionary hostility, but it is founded on an ethic of duty, restraint and compassion. The loyalty to the community as expressed through dharma-yuddha, moral courage, and defence of the weak and Bhakti ethics through the uprising of 1857 manifested a form of early opposition to the authority of the English colonialists in India, early opposition that was expressed by loyalty towards community instead of hatred towards other people. Gandhi later applied this tradition to other areas and made patriotism a principle of moral service based upon Satya (truth), Ahimsa (non-violence), Swaraj (self-rule) arbitration and trusteeship. His Sarvodaya turned nationalism into seva (service) with welfare of everyone in mind, social unity, decentralization and moral self-control as values than political control. It is possible to state that the comparative analysis shows that pre-modern patriotism was used to protect identity with the help of honour, whereas Gandhi transformed it into a universal ethics of non-enmity, reconciliation, and global justice. Amidst the modern times era of populism, polarisation, and online animosity, this research is advanced as a pro-forma paradigm of plural democracies, which is called ethical nationalism. It concludes this by finding that Gandhian Sarvodaya provides a practical system of civic education, inclusive governance and peace-building, and that nationalism is a moral border as opposed to a law.

**Keywords:** Ethical Nationalism, North Indian Patriotism, Sarvodaya, Ahimsa, Comparative Political Thought

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**1. Introduction**

The concept of nationalism has taken a moral middle ground in modern day political discourse. Initially perceived as a mass demonstration of being part and of having a common fate, it often becomes a precursor of separation and enmity. The boundary between patriotic obligation and violent chauvinism is no longer sharp among the societies, nursing a crisis of moral guidance in the national politics

(Brilmayer, 1995; Miller, 2021). Once loyalty to the country has grown apart with the sense of moral duty, marginalization, intolerance and violence spread. Such dehumanization raises a basic question, is it possible to think of nationalism without hostility?

The current research presents the notion of ethical nationalism without hatred, a moral rebuilding of belonging to the nation based on the sense of

responsibility, compassion and fairness. Ethical nationalism allows a person to commit commitment to his/her community but opposes the definition of the community in contrast to those of others. It conceptualizes nationalism as an act of care, moral reserve and shared well-being and as a practice rather than domination or exclusion (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2025). To this school of thought, the true patriot is one who benefits his nation by acting ethically and being socially peaceful instead of being aggressive towards the perceived foreigners.

The paper explores the history and philosophy of such an idea by contrasting North Indian patriotic movements between around 1000 and 1857CE and Mahatma Gandhi Sarvodaya, which means the welfare of all. The former encompasses local manifestations of moral resistance in which the allegiance to dharma and community did not necessarily mean the hatred towards the other. The latter is a modern moral reformulation of nationalism that is grounded in the truth (Satya), non-violence (Ahimsa) and universal welfare (Sarvodaya) (Mishra and Bishoyi, 2023; Guardiola et al., 2022). There is an added insight on the conjunctive analytical assessment of these two streams in that nationalism may be offered as based on ethical self-restraint, which strengthens collective identity without causing hostility.

To this inquiry, it is important to make clarifications of key concepts. Ethical nationalism refers to a notion of national consciousness under moral law to a form of national consciousness where civic loyalty is guided with the principles of justice, equality and compassion. Enmity is used to denote the act of moral perversion that may arise as a result of the national self-requiring an enemy in order to define itself. Patriotism refers to conscientious love of one's country that is an affectionate attachment unmixed with aggression that leads to service and sacrifice. Sarvodaya, which Gandhi referred to as universal uplift, is a political and spiritual ideal that connects the national duty and the wellbeing of the entire humanity (Mishra and Bishoyi, 2023).

The main points of the research are to find the aspects of ethical foundations in pre-modern patriotism of North India, conduct an analysis of Gandhi Sarvodaya as the model of moral nationalism, and conclude on what these two teachings can contribute to the present day discourses of nationalism. The study aims to respond

to three questions, which are correlated to each other: How did Indian patriotism traditions discursively consider loyalty, yet without hatred? What moral principles made them unique and dissimilar to exclusivist varieties of nationalism? And how can we revitalize the moral substance of the national identity in the pluralistic democracies by Gandhian thought?

The present investigation follows a comparative methodological approach based on historical-philosophic and comparative textual approaches. It is founded on first hand materials like the Bhagavad Gita, Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi and empirically approved scholarly works on Indian political thinking and ethics. Gita provides the Gita metaphysical basis of moral duty (swadharma) and non-selfless action, as compared to writings by Gandhi, which reformulated the two principles in accordance with the political community of the time, which is based on non-violence and the truth (Parel, 1997). Peer-reviewed journals and other scholarly publications provide the necessary theoretical base that will be used to connect ancient moral nationalism and Gandhian universalism (Guardiola et al., 2022; Rai, n.d.).

The challenge of this research is in its effort to go beyond the binary of nationalism and cosmopolitanism, by suggesting such a structure of moral belonging. It revisits the Indian traditions of collective identity as not an isolating initiative but as an ethical undertaking, trying to find harmony between the self and the society. In basing national awareness on conscience instead of hostility, the historical patriotic movements of North India and Gandhian Sarvodaya altogether prove that the love towards the native land and the respect to the humanity are not opposing values but strengthening ideas.

## 2. Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

Ethical nationalism tries to reconcile the moral duty and national belonging, and views patriotism as an action and not just an emotional outburst (Bilgrami, 2014; Parekh, 1989). It does not perceive belonging through the creation of domination but as a service/empathy (Kant, 1785/2012; Tagore, 1917/2009). Nationalism is ethical in the sense in which the discharge of civic responsibility is in compliance with the principles of universal morality, and that it rejects aggression as an instrument of politics (Parel, 1997).

The first moral premise to this conception is provided by Immanuel Kant in the Western philosophy. As demonstrated in *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785/2012) Kant asserts that moral value is achieved when an action is performed as a duty and driven by a maxim that is capable of generalization. The given categorical imperative, which is to do only that which one can will to all people, does not include conquering or hating as this action cannot possibly be justified to everyone. Human dignity is therefore spread globally through ethical nationalism and respect to human dignity by Kant (Bilgrami, 2014).

Moral universalism was advanced by Leo Tolstoy who opposed violent nationalism. He condemned military patriotism in his book *The Kingdom of God Is Within You* (1894/2009) and the only moral law of life he articulated was love. His argument on coercive power also played a role in the non-violent politics of Gandhi where he encouraged the moral conscience to be put to action (Parel, 1997; Gandhi, 1999). This was also shared by Rabindranath Tagore in his 1917/2009 writing, *Nationalism* in which he cautioned that patriotism is morally degraded once it is organized self-interest. To Tagore, national pride was paramount and he had to be compassionate towards humanity at large (Tagore, 1917/2009).

The Indian ethical thinking bases nationalism on Dharma, Ahimsa and Swadharma, which is stated in the *Bhagavad Gita*. The teaching of Krishna, which is known as doing the assigned task but detaching oneself to the outcomes of work (*Bhagavad Gita* 2.47) makes the moral self-discipline the central aspect of the life of the people (Miller, 2004). Dharma refers to moral order whereas Swadharma refers to one duty in accordance to truth. The ultimate justice and societal balance is perpetuated through altruistic act (Miller, 2004).

This ethic is universalized in the form of Ahimsa or non-violence. Gandhi read the battlefield in the perspective of the *Gita* and transformed it into a fight between the inner significance and lust (Parel, 1997). He argued that violence corrupts both the one who is the aggressor and the one who is victimized whereas non-violence builds strength into moral power to the victimized victim (Gandhi, 1999). Ethical nationalism involves duty, though without hatred namely, the resistance against injustice by self-control, but not by hostility (Bilgrami, 2014).

In the book *Hind swaraj* (1909/1997), Gandhi opposed the materialistic nature of the modern

civilization arguing that self-rule (Swaraj) must first be mastered with attainment of self-control (Satya) and obedience to truth (Ahimsa) (Parel, 1997). His personal definition of political freedom was: moral self-governance: rule over own mind (Gandhi, 1999, p. 88). And in his writings, *Young India*, Gandhi (1926/1999) extended this to Sarvodaya or welfare of all. He insisted that the one who is really a patriot would be of service to the poorest since the end of an individual is the end of the whole (p. 114). Moral selfhood in Sarvodaya turns into the good of many people, turning patriotism into the service of the people (Guha, 2018).

This framework is reaffirmed by the modern scholars. Bilgrami (2014) thinks of the politics of Gandhi as moral perfectionism, which focuses on how coherent is the gap between thought and action. It has been defined by Parekh (1989) as being rooted universalism which is a blend of Indian spirituality and global ethics. According to Paral (1997), Swaraj and sarvodaya are mutually reinforcing- the personal restraint permits societal justice and Guha (2018) considers the Swaraj as a test in the life of Gandhi. They all refer to ethical nationalism as the political identity reformed through conscience and compassion by Gandhi.

The concept of moral resistance evolves out of these ideals, the historic Indian patriotism of the past is connected with Gandhian Sarvodaya. The traditions of resistance of the previous era engaged in dharma-yuddha; righteous struggle through restraint (Miller, 2004), and the spirit of satyagraha by Gandhi turned into the non-violent truth-force. Both state that true power is in discipline and not violence. Ethical nationalism is, therefore, the ethical climax of patriotism: the solidarity based on the obligation, benevolence, and the general welfare (Bilgrami, 2014; Gandhi, 1999).

### 3. North Indian Patriot Movements: Moral Foundations and Expressions (1000–1857 CE)

#### 3.1 Early Resistance and Ethical Codes

The moral grounds that are considered the basis of patriotism in North India can be linked to the synergist development of the interactions between political resistance and spiritual dedication, as well as social ethics. In the tradition of the Rajput, the idea of resistance was not simply about the practicality of fighting the external danger, but about a sacred process, which was part of the raj dharma the moral responsibility of the rulers to protect justice and maintain the honour of their subjects

(Sharma, 2005). This vision combined the warrior excellence and virtue morality where courage needs to be calmed by righteousness. The Prithviraj Raso is an example of how Prithviraj Chauhan disobeyed Muhammad of Ghor's action as being a hostility but the moral obligation to defend the sovereignty and honour (Lal, 1980). Therefore, the Rajput warrior became a moral ideal whose behaviour during the battlefield was an abidance to ethics of chivalry and appreciation of the opponent (Chattopadhyaya, 1997).

This is an ethic of principled resistance that is further shown by Rana Pratap of Mewar. His not giving in to the suzerainty of Akbar was a symbolic one that upheld the morality decision in favor of endorsement of freedom and uprightness rather than political expediency (Habib, 1999). The records of Rajput chronicles and bardic poetry of the times previously highlight the fact that his jihad was actuated not by hatred towards anyone but by devotion to honour and truth. This kind of heroism created a coalition between the spiritual prowess and moral perseverance to such an extent that fighting back could be just and justified without resorting to revenge. The violence, according to Rajput, could only be justified within the contexts of dharma yuddha -just war, which was to be waged to protect the moral and territorial integrity (Sharma, 2005).

Along with these martial traditions, the Bhakti movement transformed the moral landscape of North India by re-devising the new meaning of loyalty in the spiritual and not sectarian lines. Devotion as expressed by saints like Kabir, Nanak, and Meera Bai was a vision statement that was clearly anti-stratification with caste hierarchy and anti-religious hierarchical albums and anti-ritualism (Hawley, 2015). The Bijak verses of Kabir postulate that the divine is above temple and mosque, and all this reasoning means that the truth and righteousness are the utmost forms of patriotism (Hawley, 2015). Similarly, the divinity of the Guru Nanak in the Japji Sahib is assumed to be Satnam and he encourages his people to promote justice and equality as the true service of God (McLeod, 2005). The poetry of Meera Bai, which focuses on Krishna devotion, opposes patriarchal and royal traditions and supposes moral faith to the truth as a priority instead of arguing to live according to the social hierarchy (Hawley, 2015).

The Bhakti movement thus democratized morality making the spirituality connected with social justice.

Its rhetoric of compassion (daya), the truth (satya), and service (seva) was using an ethical language that motivated the people to solidarity in the face of caste or creed (Sharma, 2005). This intellectual work laid the foundation towards further patriotic movements in the sense that the resistance towards injustice was a moral requirement as well as spiritual obligation. Here, moral self-purification and social responsibility intersected forming what can be called as the spiritual politics of resistance.

### 3.2 Late Medieval to Colonial Resistance

The next significant development of ethical resistance was the development of the Sikh moral nationalism in seventeenth century. The tenth Sikh Guru was called Guru Gobind Singh who institutionalized the Khalsa in 1699 in order to blend spiritual purity with civil bravery (Singh, 2001). The ideal of Khalsa required that the sword (kirpan) should be drawn with only one object, protection of justice and never to aggress. The letter to the Emperor Aurangzeb by Guru Gobind Singh, his Zafar Nama, logically described a war ethic, namely that of war: when all other options are exhausted, the sword can legitimately be drawn (Dhillon, 2013). This saying became a rule of morality of violence as a heroic resistance against any cruelty or vengeance. Banda Singh Bahadur took this moral revolution into practice in the form of his social practice after the martyrdom of Guru Gobind Singh. Reforms of egalitarian character like ending feudal privileges and the redistribution of land to peasants were introduced by his brief rule in Punjab (1709-1716) (Grewal, 1990). These were polices of the Sikh ideal of sarbat da bhala- welfare of all, which connected justice and service. The Sikh uprisings against the Mughal rule were not sectarian uprisings hence, but acts of moral crusades to reestablish the sense of fairness and equity (Dhillon, 2013).

The moral vibration of Sikh nationalism spread to modern-day areas, forming a concept of righteousness and sociological sharing of responsibility. The code of Khalsa was a combination of devotion (bhakti) and action (shakti), as it was possible to have a harmonious relationship between spirituality and resistance. This fusion undertook the difference between Sikh moral nationalism and passive spiritualism as well as violent militancy (McLeod, 2005).

This identical moral ethos emerged with the Marath resistance under the rule of Shivaji, even though he ruled on the Deccan, he was able to inspire patriots

in the North Indian Persian traditions Like Akhbarat-i Shivaji and Sabhasad Bakhar have recorded that Shivaji was an upright ruler who did not allow women and civilians to suffered in the course of war (Chattopadhyaya, 1997). His manner of behaviour would be an example of ethical restraint of dharma yuddha. The rule of Shivaji also stressed on justice, tolerance, and welfare that politics could be sovereign based on moral self-control and not coercion (Habib, 1999).

The Revolt of 1857 signalled the climax of these ethical norms in one of the colonial situations. The revolt was covered by the moral feelings of dharma, iman, and izzat, i.e., faith, religion and honour (Mukherjee, 1998). Its edicts especially those which were made by Bahadur Shah Zafar appealed to Godly justice and protection of cultural purity as opposed to religious violence (Chandra, 2012). The letters and poems of Zafar were not focused on the polar opposites, but on compassion and sorrow instead of division, foaming at the mouth to unite and become just. The heads of uprising, Rani Lakshimbai, Nana Sahib and Kunwar Singh presented their cause as a religious obligation to defend the religion as well as the country (Mukherjee, 1998).

Although there had been cases of violence, the rebel announcements often declared against causing injury to civilians and encouraged soldiers to moral behaviour (Habib, 1999). The common use of Hindu and Islamic symbol a cow and the Quran was a sign of ethical pluralism which came after Bhakti and Sikh traditions (Grewal, 1990). The ethos behind the revolt was consequently not a vengeful community objection but rather a moral safeguarding of the truth and justice. It was the rebellion of what could be called righteousness, a revolt led by principles and not by hostility.

### 3.3 Philosophical Synthesis

Running through the whole span of history, between the bravery of the Rajput and the Bhaktism, the egalitarianism of the Sikh, the rebellion of 1857: a certain type of moral declamation can be observed: the idea of resistance in the form of an ethical duty. This note suggests that the Indian patriotism has always been historically associated with morality (Sharma, 2005). The aim of the struggle, was, then, not the acquisition of domination but the resistance of the dharma i.e. the reinstatement of social harmony and moral order.

The ethical restraint in violence form was the main part of this worldview. The raj dharma or code of warrior, compassion of the saint in the form of bhakti and the Sikh understanding of justice contained in the dharma yuddha were all forms of limiting violence to justifiable moral purposes (Dhillon, 2013). Resistance was then only approved in applicability in self-defence or guard, as well as in the defence of truth. This is a direct contrast to later forms of nationalisms that were relying on the antagonism using the identity (Chandra, 2012).

The other element that was constant was the communal harmony ideal. The community, which was later called sangat, was a vision and idea of Bhakti and Sikh traditions as a moral fellowship that went beyond religious boundaries (Hawley, 2015; McLeod, 2005). The war against 1857 was yet another occasion when the solidarity between the Hindus and Muslims on a moral collective cause ascertained this pluralistic moral vision. This all facing ethic thus characterized Indian early patriotism as the form of moral solidarity other than sectarian nationalism.

Philosophically, these traditions run together towards the idea of moral resistance a kind of defiance based on the truth, personal sacrifice and compassion. The soul and the spirit of the Rajput, the Bhakta, and the Sikh were united in a unique moral-political ethic. The restraint had been internalised in each tradition as the source of power and made the righteousness the final measure of freedom. This tradition provided the foundations of the Gandhian concept of non-violent resistance that occurred in the future. This tradition may be seen as the contemporary extension of Gandhi concept of Satyagraha: to convert Rajput courage into soul-force, Bhakti pity into Ahimsa, Sikh egalitarianism into Sarvodaya (Dhillon, 2013; Grewal, 1990). In this regard therefore, the ethical grounds of the North Indian patriotic movements between 1000 and 1857 CE do not only help develop a pre-modern opposition, but also pre warned the development of a modern ethical nationalism, where patriotism is an obligation of truth and service and not a vehicle of hate.

## 4. Gandhian Sarvodaya: Moral Nationalism for All

### 4.1 Foundations of Sarvodaya

The Gandhian Sarvodaya (hardly translatable as the welfare of all) holds a dominant place in the

historiography of Indian political thought, whereby, the concepts of Satya (truth) and Ahimsa (non-violence) are united in order to create a moral substratum to regenerate the society and the nation. It was first used by Gandhi when he translated John Ruskin in the explanation and translation of Unto This Last to Gujarati in 1908, where he took the term Sarvodaya to mean, upliftment of all beings, instead of economic parity (Parel, 1997). Based on this re-interpretation he drew up Sarvodaya as an integrated ethical vision that brought together the elements of spirituality, economics and political praxis in a wholly harmonised manner, which proposed that moral regeneration, and not material progress was the true aim of civilization (Iyer, 1973).

The essential element of Sarvodaya is the interdependent nature between Satya and Ahimsa. To Gandhi, Satya was the absolute truth i.e. a divine substantiation for him was expressed as moral struggle, Ahimsa was the active essence of the same to be shown in human behaviour (Gandhi, 1999). He coined his motto, Ahimsa is the means, Truth is the end, which only emphasized the fact that achievement of moral truth was impossible by use of instruments of violence (Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi [CWMG], Vol. 23, 1967). In his own view, violence instigates the inaccuracy of the truth by rejecting the divine completeness of life. Ahimsa practice requires therefore the growth of self-control (brahmacharya) and loving (karuna) which makes politics a means of achieving moral self-purification. In this there was ethical re-orientation through which Gandhi took nationalism to a moral enterprise of collective moral endeavour as opposed to a power struggle (Brown, 1977).

One of the core subjects of Sarvodaya was trusteeship, which was a message delivered by Gandhi in reconstituting the privacies and the social responsibilities. According to him, it is the duty of the rich to be custodians of the wealth, and that the rich are custodians and not lords of their riches (Gandhi, 1951, p. 10). Trusteeship aimed to rid us of exploitation, as well as class animus, it propagated social harmony based on voluntary moral restraint, not through compulsion. Gandhi interpreted it as moral socialism between capitalism and socialism basing the idea on the belief that moral conversion rather than economic coercion is the only way of delivering justice (Desai, 1957). In this, trusteeship shifted material ownership into spiritual duty hence,

making economics submissive to the moral philosophy.

The other pillar in Sarvodaya was the promotion of decentralisation by Gandhi via gram swaraj (village self-rule). He imagined strict cooperation between independent but interdependent villages, a federation of them (Nanda, 1985). Political power, in the eyes of Gandhi, had to come about through the grassroots, centralized power in his view corrupts both the rulers and the ruled. Decentralisation, therefore, was a moral protection against tyranny, egalitarianism and civic responsibility would be encouraged. Every person, he made it clear, ought to have the ability to govern him or her-self; therefore, freedom must be internal i.e. control over desires and behaviour first before it could be an external thing (Iyer, 1973).

Another way in which Gandhi reconstrued patriotism was in the context of a universal moralization. His most frequently quoted quote was: My patriotism is not a special matter; it is a universal thing (CWMG, Vol. 23, 1967, p. 256) which described his belief that love towards a country cannot be separated in any way with love towards people. It was only upon the realisation of the divine unity of all creatures that nationalism would achieve moral legitimacy to him. A country that was trying to achieve its emancipation by violence or hatred was just replacing one domination organization with another. Patriotism in its true meaning, according to Gandhi, is a service (seva) to all life, a conjoining of service to the nation and service to man (Brown, 1977).

#### **4.2 Non-enmity and the Political Ethic of Resistance**

Gandhi Sarvodaya was a radical reworking of the political ethics as it developed by the open rejection of hatred as the principle of resistance. In his work, Young India (1924), he declared that he could hate the sin and not the sinner, thus he placed moral opposition and vengeful retaliation in opposition to each other. Ahimsa was not passive in the nature of Gandhi but rather a force of morality the soul-force (atma-shakti) that drives out evil by truth and compassion (Gandhi, 1999). It was this philosophy that led to the creation of Satyagraha which he described as the pursuit of Truth through love and suffering (Iyer, 1973, p. 148). Satyagraha needed innocence of intent, self-control, and belief in the efficacy of conscience thus turning a political fight into a moral talk-over between the ruler and subject.

The first national experiment involved Satyagraha and was the Non-Cooperation Movement (192022). Gandhi called Indians to quit British institutions law courts, schools, and councils in order to accomplish that as a common duty. It was not aimed at destroying the state but denying morality to unjust authority (Brown, 1977). The movement redefined obedience in the form of a moral dilemma: it was immoral to be subjected to injustices. Equally, in the Salt March (1930), Gandhi transformed the ordinary task of salt making into a form of moral resistance against oppression, which is delegation of Ahimsa as a form of moral protest made with no violence, which was shaming the imperialists (Nanda, 1985). In the 1930s the Constructive Programme was initiated which took Satyagraha into a daily living. Gandhi sustained that, social re-construction, such as village sanitation, propagation of khadi, schooling, eradication of untouchability and establishment of communal harmony (Desai, 1957) must form the basis of true independence, (Swaraj). These works represented the ethical aspect of Sarvodaya: without virtue freedom is feeble. Gandhi, therefore, believed that political resistance should enlighten the society and the individual and therefore that Ahimsa, Satyagraha was not a tactical tool but a moral practice to personally and collectively change the society.

Gandhi replaced the revenge logic with what can be called the ethic of non-enmity (a-vidvesha) through these practices. He claimed that violence turns out to degrade the functioning of the victim and the perpetrator, so only non-violence will save the dignity of everyone. Instead, the actual objective of struggle, he argued is not to destroy the opponent but to awaken the conscience (Parel, 1997). Thus, Gandhi turned nationalism into a moral persuasion where power works by Truth and love instead of force and clears up the concept of winning: winning by loving is just winning without fighting.

#### **4.3 Sarvodaya and Global Ethical Nationalism**

Sarvodaya did not just have a moral ambition of the Indian subcontinent, thus influencing the discourses on peace and justice in the nineteenth century in the world. This philosophy inspired Martin Luther King, Jr., who termed Satyagraha as the most powerful tool humanity had to grant freedom to people (King, 1960, p. 87). The civil rights movement in the United States established by King was based on the teachings of Gandhi who believed that social change had to be founded on love and suffering instead of

violence, a stance that reverberated in the general movement to establish human dignity. On the same note, the former President of South Africa Nelson Mandela recognised Gandhi as the divine warrior whose approach to non-violent resistance would help the South African anti-apartheid struggle (Mandela, 1994). In both the contexts, Sarvodaya was an interlude between national freedom and universal justice.

There are also overtones of the Sarvodaya on issues to do with green ethics and sustainable development. Gandhi had already anticipated environmental criticism of industrial modernity in his insistence of self-restraint (aparigraha) and voluntary simplicity (Schumacher, 1973). He warned against ignorant greed and waste on the natural world that would trigger moral and environmental decline arguing that Earth will always give well enough but not much well-off, always leave enough to share, but never too much (Gandhi, 1951, p. 17). His demand of local economies and small-scale production sparked a later school of thought of economic theorists like E. F. Schumacher who modelled Gandhian economics as an economics as if people mattered (Schumacher, 1973, p. 54).

Philosophically, the moral universalism applied by Gandhi used the Eastern tradition as well as Western tradition. He picked up the Christian ethic of love of Tolstoy, the dignity of labor of Ruskin, and the teachings of Ahimsa and Dharma of the Indian sources (Nanda, 1985). However, Gandhi was above these forces because he connected individual conscience and the welfare of the whole population. Although Tolstoy and Ruskin are still the moral critics of modernity, Gandhi transformed their thoughts into the means of political actions. His Sarvodaya thus combined spirituality with social justice, which is an ethical cosmopolitanism whereby national development cannot be independent of world peace.

UPS Sarvodaya in effect transformed nationalism to moral cosmopolitanism. To Gandhi, the country was a moral community, tied together by the obligations, sympathy, and the veracity rather than a political one, which is characterized by force. He said that a real patriot is best serving his country by serving human kind (CWMG, Vol. 23, 1967, p. 259). Gandhi aimed at humanizing politics and sacralising the life of people through Ahimsa, trusteeship and decentralization. In this way he was able to provide a lasting alternative to the contemporary crisis of

nationalism, an ethical order in which the good of everybody, as opposed to the control of minority, forms civilization.

## 5. Comparative Analysis: Moral Parallels and Divergences

The Indian patriotism did develop on moral grounds due to change of a curriculum of Raj Dharma, the rule of the rulers to maintain justice to Sarvodaya Dharma, the Gandhian principle of welfare of all. Those two traditions are the focus on ethical behaviour, spiritual discipline and seeking justice; however, it was Gandhi who changed the moral discourse of resisting into not using the language of martial heroism, but the language of moral universalism. This change towards defensive nationalism to ethical cosmopolitanism is how the progression of India in terms of ethics can be viewed as ethical nationalism, wherein the attachment of oneself to their own community is never not accompanied by service to the whole of humanity (Raghavan, 1979).

### 5.1 Evolution from Martial Duty to Moral Universality

Dharma served as a religious ordinance just as it served as an ethical system in early Indian political tradition, which formed the basis of both the morality of the individual and social structure. Mahabharata and Arthashastra in a very eloquent manner explain on the topic of Rajdharma that the ruler should remain right and protect his subjects with compassion and bravery (Kangle, 1969). The opposition of the figures of the Rajput men, such as Prithviraj Chauhan, Rana Pratap, etc., is a kind of illustration of this concept, because of his or her loyalty and sacrifice, and moral restraint instead of hate (Chattopadhyaya, 1997). Moral battle field is thus theorized as being a battlefield of justice and not revenge.

Gandhi gave this classical ethic a fresh meaning in a contemporary environment. Hind swaraj (1909/1997) is where he assumes that the true freedom (Swaraj) cannot be earned by use of violence but by mastering oneself and regenerating morally. Based on Bhagavad Gita, Gandhi holds on the Sarva dharma or personal duty as moral duty based on truth (Satya) and non-violence (Ahimsa). To him, there is an inner conquest of anger, greed and pride that replaces the outer one of enslavement of an enemy. As such, the change of Raj Dharma into Sarvodaya Dharma is a recovery of its loss of its territorial defence to that of conscience protection.

The moral fighter of the Rajput convention was the agent that served to maintain justice and limit violence; the Gandhian Satyagrahi was the agent that rejected injustice by tolerance of injury and love. Even though both considered duty as something holy, the responsibility of Gandhi was universal and did not depend on the territorial or religious orientation. The same moral courage which was the moving spirit of the sword, it now makes the spinning wheel to move--the productive labours and the opposition of the morals (Parel, 1997).

### 5.2 Continuity of Ethical Nationalism: From Raj Dharma to Sarvodaya Dharma

Despite the difference in time and context, early patriotic movements and the Gandhian theory share's a common moral assumption, the political legitimacy is subject to conditions of rightness. The Arthashastra states that the main duty of a king is the welfare of his people (praja sukhe sukham rajyah) and, therefore, it is the satisfaction of the ruler and the subjects, making them equal (Kangle, 1969). The same is also supported by the doctrine of trusteeship by Gandhi who argued that goods and power should be used to serve the general good and not the personal greed (Gandhi, 1951).

Continuity of this nature highlights a great depth of moral coherence in the Indian political thought. Both Raj Dharma and Sarvodaya Dharma believe in values of duty, which outweighs the values of rights, responsibility, and privilege over power, and that self-control (sanyam) is the foundation of ethical life. The divergence, however, was reflected through the extension of the moral responsibility by Gandhi, which was radical; between the duty of the ruler and a personal one, between the duty of communities and the duty of humankind.

Gandhi made universal the moral argument of Raj Dharma in the sense that the sovereignty was placed in an individual conscience and not a physical crown. He woke up the political trait of justice as a human disciplinary virtue and spiritual modesties. In line with this, the Gandhian citizen just as much as the ancient king is a citizen under obligation but under love is set free. The continuity of this morality thus made nationalism an ethical course of action, which was truthful, serving and restraining instead of an ideology of subjugation (Iyer, 1973).

### 5.3 The Moral Image of the “Other”

One noticeable difference between North Indian national movements of the patriotic movements and the conception of Sarvodaya by Gandhi is the

difference in their conceptualization of the Other. The medieval resistance adhered to the ideal of honour in a battle, but the enemy was an external group to whom hostility was forced, but the code of morality brokered enmity as a natural condition (Dhillon, 2013). An example of this is the Rajput code which clearly did not allow issues such as violence to women or non-combatants; thus, the concept of ethical restraint in conflicts is represented (Chattopadhyaya, 1997). Similarly, Sikh struggle by Guru Gobind Singh and Banda Singh Bahadur was guided by the principle of Dharma Yuddh-righteous war which was fought without this malice (Grewal, 1990).

Gandhi did away with the otherness and selfless absolutely. He pointed out in his work, *Young India* (1924) that the English are our brothers, we do not fight them, we fight their system. In Ahimsa ethic the antagonism would have been transformed into a form of dialogue and hostility converted into sympathy making the opponent a moral ally in searching the truth. This shift towards the tolerance into compassion becomes, according to Raghavan, the highest ethical growth in the Indian political philosophy (Raghavan, 1979).

Where the previous patriots sought justice using honour, Gandhi used love in seeking reconciliation. His non-violence was not the inert but active, he wanted to open the conscience to the shared suffering. So, resistance was a communion, a humanization among each other of the oppressor and the oppressed. Continuing to spread to the wider world spiritual love that existed in the Bhakti tradition as a moral juridical system, Ahimsa, as preached by Gandhi, achieved the devotional goal of seva (service) by acting socially (Hawley, 2015).

#### **5.4 Socio-political Vision: From Justice to Integration**

The moral continuum with characteristics of protective measures to integrative processes is defined by socio-political goals of both traditions. The North-Indian patriot interpreted justice (nyaya) as a duty of God, hence ensuring the well-being of society and the weak ones. This idea of justice was distributive but paternalistic, which was based on the hierarchical ethical system (Habib, 1999). This idea was democratized by Gandhi as he equated justice to equality and decentralization. His gram swaraj idea was whereby a series of self-sufficient villages existed where moral autonomy, rather than state coercion, stood (Nanda, 1985).

Political freedom according to Gandhi could not be separated with moral restraint. According to what is expressed in Harijan (1937), No Swaraj without self-restraint (CWMG, Vol. 66, 1977). Equality was not just a social reform agenda, it was also a normative imperative. Although traditional patriots were mostly dominated by the desire to ensure the existing social order, Gandhi aimed to redesign the social order using the ideas of Sarvodaya and Ahimsa. Ethical praxis achieved centre stage of national building through his Constructive Programme which affirmed education, sanitation, khadi production and the deletion of untouchability (Desai, 1957). As a result, justice has become more of a participative process that made compassion institutionalized.

#### **5.5 Spiritual Core: From Bhakti and Dharma to Satya and Ahimsa**

The religious aspect of both traditions displays continuity of the moral purpose regardless of the changes in the doctrines. The Bhakti movement, especially in medieval India, re-pitched the ritualized devotion to take the form of moral love. Such saints as Kabir and Nanak stressed that the true worship is based on truth and service to humanity (Hawley, 2015). Gandhi adopted the spiritual universalism in developing civic virtue. Harmony of Satya (truth) and Ahimsa (non-violence) acted as a secular form of the Devotion- faith in action which is realised by an action of ethical practice.

According to the exegesis by Gandhi regarding Bhagavad Gita, the inner-war of location that faced Arjuna mirrored the ethical dilemma that humanity was faced with, which is the conflict between the self-interest and duty. Gandhi argued that the victory of dharma required the oppression of the desire and not the oppression of other external enemies (Bhagavad Gita, 2.47). He therefore substituted the divine command with morality conscience hence making spirituality and politics to be fundamental in a single line of moral ethics. The Bhakti love of God was transformed into the Bhakti love of humanity of the Satyagrahi.

#### **5.6 Philosophical Tension and Postcolonial Lessons**

Even though the change involves profound continuities inherent in the tradition, the shift in the Rajdhama to Sarvodaya Dharma is surrounded by a radical philosophical shift. The latter condoned restrained violence as a mechanism of order protection, but the former one promoted non-

violence to the greatest moral value. In this regard, the antecedent paradigm was seeking a moral victory within the confines of limited scope whereas the emergent paradigm was seeking a transformation of moral consciousness out of the boundaries. It made Gandhi turn resistance into compassion; he replaced the ethics of valour with that of suffering, to him suffering acted as a cleansing agent to the society and individual hence making love the ultimate weapon of justice (Bondurant, 1958).

This moral synthesis is still relevant today as far as postcolonial India is concerned. It calls into question the modern manifestations of nationalism to transcend exclusionary forms of nationalism in place now and to regain their moral underpinnings. Gandhi in his vision stands that ethical nationalism should be based on principle of coexistence, dignity and civic morality, and should transform the desire to rule into a desire to serve. Since the Dagger of the Rajput to the spinning wheel of Gandhi, the Indian historical course has shown that the moral principle that truth rather than violence is the best means of gaining freedom is still maintained.

Gandhi did not openly disown the historical legacy of India, on the contrary, he re-used it. Through a reworking of the terms of Raj Dharma in the context of Sarvodaya Dharma, he was able to convert patriotic feeling to moral universalism, showing that the well-being of one would automatically lead to the well-being of many.

## **6. Contemporary Relevance: Toward an Ethical Nationalism for the 21st Century**

The world, as well as the national politics is facing a deeply souring moral crisis in the twenty-first century. These increases in the rise of populism, majoritarian nationalism, and identity-based polarization have undermined the moral foundations of democratic life. In such an environment, a disruptive alternative version is offered by Gandhian Sarvodaya, as well as traditionally based on Indian civilization ethos, ethical nationalism. The Ahimsa (non-violence), Satya (truth), and universal welfare of the state as the conception of nationalism proposed by Gandhi serves to give moral guidance to re-conceptualizing the political life as an ethical partnership, but not as an ideological struggle (Gandhi, 1926/1999). His argument that in being a good patriot, one should not hate anyone is still a salve to the modern populism, which flourishes on apprehension and separatism (Parel, 1997).

## **6.1 Ethical Nationalism as an Antidote to Populism and Hate**

In many democratic societies nowadays, populist politics uses the concept of nationalism to delineate the exclusion of minorities and silence the opposition groups. Gandhi faintly foresaw these twists as he warned that irreligious nationalism culminates into a curse to the mankind (Hind Swaraj, 1909/1997). According to him, the political movements that cannot exercise the ethical self-regulation cannot but become a sort of collective egoism. Gandhi combined patriotic feeling with the understanding of the interdependence in the world by balancing his Sarvodaya paradigm which fundamentally chose the welfare of every person (Iyer, 1973). This paradigm thus resorts to reshaping the concept of nationalism as a statement of identity, but it is a statement of accountability.

In the paradigm of Gandhi, nationalism should bring dharma rather than dominance. A moral person, which is an ethical state, should act in an honest manner, protect the weak, and tolerate criticism (Bhattacharyya, 2006). Reflecting its employees, Sarvodaya transforms the concept of sovereignty into being a steward instead of being a proud master. The eventual moral reconstruction is essential in the times of populism among demagogues and cultural disintegration. What this means is that democracy without virtue is a worthless quality and institutions cannot sustain justice unless it is filled with morally inclined citizens (Parekh, 2001).

## **6.2 Application to Civic Life: Inclusive Governance, Digital Ethics, and Pluralism**

Existence of the Gandhian ethics in civic life requires that moral ethics be applied in the social practice. When Gandhi considered Swaraj, the principle that Swaraj stressed on was self-rule as a moral self-discipline, which was not simply a political autonomy (Gandhi, 1926/1999). In the modern day world, the principle is translated into inclusive governance, where power is seen to be exercised in terms of trust to the populace good. Trusteeship concept enables the corporate accountability, political transparency and economic fairness (Chatterjee, 2011).

The digital era also presents the ethical challenges that ethical nationalism has to deal with. The ability of the social media to enhance misinformation and hate speech puts into danger the civic harmony the Gandhi valued. His demands of Satya (truthfulness) can provide a normative basis to digital ethics truth

as a group value and not an individual view (Bilgrami, 2014). In turn, digital citizenship is to follow Satyagraha in its discipline: to be opposing falsehood, facing manipulation, and performing empathy in the area of online discussion.

More important is the idea of cultural pluralism that must be conceived by Gandhi based on claiming that truth is manifold (anekantavada). His belief was that all religions were true yet fallible (Harijan, 1937) a clause that can help the modern multicultural societies to coexist. This ethic of humility and dialogue in an age when cultural chauvinism is the order of the day provides a paradigm of inclusive citizenship one that recognizes diversity as a moral asset and not a political weakness (Chakrabarty, 2007).

### **6.3 Lessons for Contemporary India and the World**

The Gandhian ethics are still critical in modern-day India in the restoration of the lost public trust and civic unity. His image of Sarvodaya is that the country is a moral community which is based on dignity and mutual care. According to Gandhi in the contemporary state governance, morality education should be considered top of the agenda instead of institutional efficiency only (Nanda, 1985). The educational need, therefore, demands the development of empathy, simplicity and adherence to the truth -values as they oppose the commodification that dominate the modern politics. Gandhi anticipates on the moral universalism in the ethical foundations of peace diplomacy and sustainable development on the global level. The statement that the world would support the needs of everyone and not the greed of everyone, which is expressed by him (CWMG, Vol. 66, 1977) echoes the present-day ecological and humanitarian crisis. Sarvodaya offers a system of world justice based on collective responsibility, thus, the connection between environmental conservation and restraint is established. The idea of peace being not absence of war but presence of love as put forward by Gandhi (Gandhi, 1951) is similar to the new-fangled peace studies which answer the question; reconciliation is not a political compromise, but a moral transformation (Bonduant, 1958).

### **6.4 Integrating Sarvodaya in Civic Education and Global Diplomacy**

Embarkation of the Sarvodaya principles on the civic education systems helps to shift the young citizens back to ethical citizenship. Gandhi had Nai

Talim that stressed acquisition of learning through service and simplicity and moral consciousness (Pathak, 2019). Educationists can develop empathy-based citizenship by modifying these values to meet the requirements of the modern-day curricula by using peace education, community involvement and environmental responsibility. Gandhian ethics of Ahimsa and Satyagraha provide an ethical alternative to realpolitik in the arena of diplomatic relations. His approaches additionally inspired such international leaders as Martin Luther King Jr. and Nelson Mandela, which proves the fact that non-violence might also be effective to gain both moral and political legitimacy (King, 1960).

The Gandhian method is also close to African humanist traditions like Ubuntu which sums up the maxim, I am because we are. Sarvodaya and Ubuntu also rebuff individualism in their support of relational ethics promoting the welfare of the community (Ramos, 1999). Equally, the notion of cosmopolitan patriotism championed by authors of the likes of Martha Nussbaum (1996) resembles the beliefs of Gandhi who held that serving the human race in terms of patriotism is the paramount form of patriotism. A new ethical nationalism is created by the synthesis of those traditions the one where love of the nation and duty to humankind neither conflict nor do not complement each other.

### **6.5 Toward an Ethical Future**

An ethical nationalism in line with the twenty-first century has to revive, then, the moral lexicon used by Gandhi: truth, non-violence, and service. It should also replace exclusion with empathy, competition with cooperation and coercive power with moral persuasion. The long-lasting experience of Sarvodaya is that, without hostility, nationalism can grow to become a peace-agent. The statement, which Gandhi made in his Young India (1925) is strangely defined as, You know, I am not a kind of exclusivist in my patriotism; I believe it is universal. With a century of cynicism and digital disputes, his belief in the ethical potential of humans is an even more radical thought than all others.

### **7. Conclusion**

The current paper aims at showing how the moral basis supporting the Indian nationalism when surveyed along the spectrum between the North Indian movements of patriotism and the Sarvodaya of Gandhi, is based on moral values rather than hatred. Throughout the centuries Indian political thought has given importance to sacrifice (dharma),

sympathy, and reality as the foundation of the common life. Nationalism, which started as a martial ho of duty to the people, but developed eventually to be a philosophy of universal welfare, with the Rajput raj dharma giving way to Ahimsa and Sarvodaya Dharma beliefs through Gandhi (Iyer, 1973). Moral resistance and not aggression has been one of the most important political virtues in India, as depicted in the history, simply because the modality of international relations dictated predetermined directions in the Indian context (Chattopadhyaya, 1997).

The Sarvodaya by Gandhi united in a single ideology, moral inheritance of the earlier traditions of patriotism, with a philosophy of non-violence and truth particularly in the contemporary times. Whereas pre-modern delinquent movements preserved justice in terms of heroism and moderation, Gandhi imposed the same responsibility on every human being. He believed that the concept of freedom should be based on moral self-control as opposed to technological or military strength, which is the argument he presented in Hind Swaraj (1909/1997). His ideal that the welfare of all is the actual index of progress was an extreme shift in the politics of domination to service (Parel, 1997). Gandhi transformed the ethical nationalism and made it a universal form of moral opposition through Ahimsa and Satyagraha.

Comparative reading brings out a logical thinking of morals: both traditions were against injustice by being disciplined, courageous and compassionate. But Gandhi made a contribution in making the element of patriotism to have a broader meaning of protecting the community to the global moral duty. He transformed the ethic of protection into the ethic of participation of service, of politics as misogynous morality. This continuity and spread is evidence that the Indian political tradition, when morally understood is an ancient discussion of moral power. This frame provides a philosophical principle of the democratic renewal in the modern times. In these times of populism, digital fake news, and political extremism, Gandhian ethics can be used to remember that nationalism without compassion turns into national selfishness (Bilgrami, 2014). Politics needs to be brought back to its course of dialogue and coexistence through ethical nationalism based on truth, justice, and compassion. The next direction that future studies should take is to determine ways in which Gandhian ethics can be

applied in the civic education field, media ethics, and the policy arena. Further empirical research on moral education, digital governance, and interfaith harmony in South Asia may also help to examine the extent to which Sarvodaya can be applied to 21 st - century democracies (Bhattacharyya, 2006). It does not simply mean to recall Gandhi but to make him come alive, to turn the theory of ethical nationalism into an actual democratic culture where freedom and fraternity are the pillars supporting the good of all.

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