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Indian Political Thought · 12 questions

Every question carries a Flow Snapshot — and a handwritten model answer on the channel.

No PYQ will be unfamiliar.

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

UPSC 2016 · 10 marks

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's idea of state socialism.

FLOW SNAPSHOT — how the answer moves

Intro routes

R1 vote hollow without bread → state socialism makes political democracy real via economic equality → “one man, one value”

R2 political democracy incomplete without economic democracy → state socialism as the remedy → equality across political, social, economic life

Body flow

programme in *States and Minorities* → state owns key industries, insurance, agriculture (collective farming) → abolish zamindari + redistribute wealth → mixed economy, no exploitation → distinctive feature: placed in the Constitution, beyond legislative majorities → socialism without dictatorship → vs **Marx**: caste + class, constitutional not violent, state as welfare not exploiter → liberal-democratic / Fabian

Counter-view

never fully adopted → under liberalisation, welfare for the oppressed stays insecure

Conclusion routes

R1 bridge from political to economic democracy → liberty secured through the state, not dictatorship

R2 socialism within parliamentary democracy → change by constitutional method, not violence

For B.R. Ambedkar, the vote meant little to one who lacked bread. State socialism was his answer. It would make political democracy real through economic equality, moving society towards "one man, one value" in political, social and economic life.

He set out the scheme in States & Minorities. The state would own key industries & insurance, run agriculture as a state industry with collective farming, abolish zamindari & redistributive wealth, while still permitting private enterprise that did not exploit. Its distinctive feature was to place this programme in the constitution itself, beyond the reach of ordinary legislative majorities.

He wanted socialism without dictatorship. Unlike Karl Marx, he joined caste with class, chose constitutional methods over violence, treating the state as an instrument of welfare, not exploitation. His model stayed within a liberal-democratic, Fabian framework.

The scheme was never fully adopted and under liberalisation, welfare for the oppressed remains insecure. Yet it stands as Ambedkar's bridge from political to economic democracy — liberty secured through the state, not dictatorship.

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

UPSC 2016 · 20 marks

Discuss Sri Aurobindo's views on Cultural Nationalism.

FLOW SNAPSHOT — how the answer moves

Intro routes

R1 nationalism recast as cultural-spiritual creed → against “geographical expression” → India a living nation with a soul

R2 India as Mother / Shakti, a living spiritual entity → idea shaped by **Herder**, Neo-Vedanta, **Bankim**

Body flow

influences shape the idea → cultural nationalism = recovery of civilisational selfhood → revival of *Sanatana Dharma*, Vedas, Upanishads, indigenous art & literature → cultural renaissance = spiritual revival → *Sanatana Dharma* as national personality, not sect → links nationalism with universalism → *Swaraj* non-imported, non-imitative → assimilate Western technique, keep Indian selfhood → national regeneration → universal regeneration (**Heehs**)

Counter-view

religious vocabulary appears Hindu-centric → risk in a plural society → but intention inclusive (Muslims + diversity within one spiritual whole)

Conclusion routes

R1 cultural nationalism = recovery of India's civilisational soul as the basis of freedom

R2 revival rooted at home, universal in aim — Indian selfhood as a guide for humanity

Sri Aurobindo transformed nationalism from a political demand into a cultural & spiritual creed. Against the colonial claim that India was only a geographical expression, he insisted that India was a living nation with a soul. Influenced by Johann Herder, Neo-Vedantism and Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, he treated the nation as a living spiritual entity - India as Mother, a Shakti made of the strength of all her people.

Cultural nationalism, for him, meant the recovery of India's civilizational selfhood. It called for the revival of Sanatana Dharma, the vedas, the Upanishads, indigenous art, literature & historical self-respect. This cultural renaissance was inseparable from spiritual revival. Sanatana Dharma here was not a narrow sect but the very personality of the nation, and it linked Indian nationalism with universalism.

He held that Swaraj must be non-imposed & non-imitative; useful Western techniques could be assimilated, but Indian selfhood must not be surrendered.

India's revival had a wider purpose: national regeneration would prepare the ground for universal regeneration. According to Peter Heehs, freedom was the condition for an awakened India to guide humanity.

Critics note that this religious vocabulary could appear Hindu-centric and strain a plural society. Yet his intention was inclusive, embracing Muslims and India's diversity within one spiritual whole.

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

UPSC 2016 · 15 marks

Examine Gandhi's critique of 'Modernisation'.

FLOW SNAPSHOT — how the answer moves

Intro routes

R1 not West-as-place but West-as-type → Hind Swaraj (1909) → 'Satanic'

R2 progress mismeasured as multiplying wants, not mastering them → restraint = true civilisation

Body flow

artha/kama over dharma, comfort over moral welfare, "how much to forego" → **Wellock** (greed, materialism, violence, loss of spirituality) → machinery: "craze for machinery, not machinery as such... supreme consideration is man" → industrialism's costs (unemployment, alienated labour, centralisation, ruined crafts) → **Kumarappa** ("no industrialization without predation") → power gathers in state + capital → citizens as passive subjects → Swaraj = decentralisation + moral autonomy

Counter-view

Tagore: medieval, economically limiting, isolating → Gandhi's reply: all cultures free about the house, but no cultural slavery

Conclusion routes

R1 not backwardness but moral reconstruction → Swaraj, Swadeshi, Sarvodaya, trusteeship

R2 critique still alive in sustainability / simple-living debates

Gandhi's quarrel was not with the west as a place but with a type of civilisation. In Hind Swaraj (1909) he called modern civilisation 'Satanic', since it measured progress by the multiplication of wants rather than their mastery.

For his modernisation set artha & Kama above dharma, placing bodily comfort over moral welfare. The real question was not how much one could forego. Wilfred Wellock noted that Gandhi placed greed, materialism, violence and loss of spirituality at the heart of modernisation.

This explains his stand on machinery. The objection was exact: "What I object to is the craze for machinery, not machinery as such. The supreme consideration is man." Unchecked industrialism bred unemployment, alienated labour, centralisation and the ruin of village crafts: J.C. Kumarappa held that there could be "no industrialization without predation." Modern power also gathered in the state and capital, reducing citizens to passive subjects, so Swaraj demanded decentralisation and moral autonomy.

Rabindranath Tagore thought this medieval and economically limiting, fearing isolation from world knowledge. Gandhi replied that the cultures of all lands should blow freely about his house, but openness must not become cultural slavery.

His critique was therefore not backwardness but moral reconstruction - Swaraj, Swadeshi, Sarvodaya, trusteeship - and it still informs debates on sustainability.

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

UPSC 2017 · 10 marks

According to Sri Aurobindo, Swaraj is a necessary condition for India to accomplish its destined goal. Comment in 150 words.

FLOW SNAPSHOT – how the answer moves

Intro routes

R1 Swaraj not an end in itself → complete independence → precondition for India's spiritual destiny

R2 foreign rule blocks a nation's natural growth → India as Mother in chains → freedom to recover selfhood

Body flow

alien rule obstructs growth + individuality → good government ≠ self-government → destiny larger than freedom → recover individuality + revive *Sanatana Dharma* + guide humanity → national regeneration → universal regeneration → **Heehs**: freedom the indispensable condition for India's world-role

Counter-view

spiritual-Hindu vocabulary risky in a plural society → thin on concrete social/economic reform

Conclusion routes

R1 nation in chains cannot fulfil a spiritual mission → Swaraj the necessary first step to destiny

R2 freedom the gateway, not the goal → Swaraj's worth lies in the destiny it enables

For Sri Ambedkar, Swaraj was never an end in itself. It meant complete independence, not minor reforms or seats in the bureaucracy. It mattered because India has a destined spiritual role that foreign rule blocked.

He held that alien rule obstructs the natural growth and individuality of a nation. India, the Mother in Chains, was deprived of her selfhood by colonial domination; good government could not replace self-government.

India's destined goal was larger than its own freedom. Swaraj would cleanse India of European pollution, restore its old national individuality, revive Sanatana Dharma and let India guide humanity spiritually. National regeneration would prepare universal regeneration. As Peter Heehs notes, freedom was "the indispensable condition for India to guide the world if it re-awakened to its spiritual greatness."

Critics find this spiritual framing Hindu-centric and weak on concrete social reform. Yet for Aurobindo the logic held: a nation in chains cannot fulfil a spiritual mission, so Swaraj is the necessary first step towards India's destiny.

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

UPSC 2017 · 20 marks

Political democracy could not last unless social democracy lay at its base – B.R. Ambedkar. Comment.

FLOW SNAPSHOT – how the answer moves

Intro routes

R1 Constituent Assembly closing speech → political democracy = form only → cannot survive without a social base

R2 democracy ≠ elections → “associated living,” respect among equals → form vs soil

Body flow

social democracy = way of life (liberty + equality + fraternity, inseparable) → trinity cannot be split (liberty w/o equality = rule of few; equality w/o liberty = no initiative; both need fraternity) → caste destroys fraternity at root → contradiction from 26 Jan 1950: one vote vs one value (political equality + social/economic inequality) → “top-dressing” on undemocratic soil → preconditions (no glaring inequality, constitutional morality, public conscience, minority protection) → society oppresses deeper than state → rights need moral/social base, not law alone

Counter-view

same Constitution = instrument to convert political into social democracy (FRs, DPSP, reservations); **Granville Austin** – “social document” → political form can build the social base, not merely wait for it

Conclusion routes

R1 caution holds → one vote must steadily become one value

R2 democracy lasts only as its social base deepens → an unfinished task

In his closing address to the Constituent Assembly, B.R. Ambedkar held that India's political democracy would not survive on its own. For him democracy was never elections alone but 'primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience' - a relationship of respect among equals. Political democracy supplied the form; social democracy had to supply the soil beneath it.

By social democracy Ambedkar meant a way of life that treats liberty, equality and fraternity as inseparable principles. The three could not be split: liberty without equality gives supremacy to the few, equality without liberty kills individual initiative and both collapse without fraternity to bind them. Caste, by ranking men from birth, destroys this fraternity at the root.

This produced the contradiction he feared. From 26 Jan 1950 India would grant political equality - one person, one vote - while social & economic life still denied one man, one value.

Hence his preconditions : no glaring inequalities , constitutional morality , a public conscience and protection of minorities.

Ambedkar also held that society can oppress an individual more deeply than the state , so rights need a moral and social base , not law alone.

Yet the same constitution he drafted became the instrument for turning political democracy into social democracy - through Fundamental Rights , Directive principles and reservations .

Granville Austin therefore called it " first & foremost a social document ." The caution holds : democracy last only as one vote steadily becomes one value.

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

UPSC 2018 · 15 marks

Discuss Ambedkar's ideas on 'annihilation of caste'.

FLOW SNAPSHOT — how the answer moves

Intro routes

R1 1936 undelivered speech → radical attack on Hindu social order → caste cannot be reformed, only destroyed

R2 social reform must precede political reform → annihilation, not mending, of caste

Body flow

caste = "division of labourers" (occupation by birth, denies choice/dignity) → rests on endogamy + purity-pollution + scriptural sanction (Vedas/Shastras/Manusmriti) → graded inequality → blocks united resistance, weakens nation → destroys public spirit/opinion/fraternity ("virtue caste-ridden, morality caste-bound") → democracy impossible on such soil → inter-dining/inter-caste marriage useful but insufficient → socialists wrong to treat caste as secondary to class → cure: destroy religious sanction → "religion of rules" to "religion of principles" → law as disinfectant → casteless order on liberty-equality-fraternity

Counter-view

partial reform (inter-dining, inter-caste marriage) vs root destruction of religion; class-only socialist view vs caste-centred analysis

Conclusion routes

R1 annihilation = ending the religious-ideological basis of caste, not softening it

R2 replacement by casteless democratic order, "one man, one value" → **Limaye's Communist Manifesto** parallel

Annihilation of Caste (1936), B.R. Ambedkar's undelivered speech, is a radical attack on the Hindu social order. Its core claim is that caste cannot be reformed in parts: it must be destroyed at its root and social reform must come before political reform.

Ambedkar argued that caste is not a natural division of labour but a 'division of labourers.' It fixes occupation by birth & denies choice, mobility and dignity. It rests on endogamy, purity-pollution, and religious sanction through the Vedas, Shastras and Manusmriti. Hindu society is built on graded inequality, where every caste stands above some and below others. This makes united resistance difficult and weakens the nation.

Caste, for him, destroys public spirit, public opinion & fraternity: "Virtue had become caste-ridden and morality caste-bound." Democracy cannot work on such soil. He therefore found inter-dining & inter-caste marriage useful but insufficient & criticised socialists for treating caste as secondary to class.

Real annihilation, he held, means destroying the religious sanction behind caste, replacing the "religion of rules" with a "religion of principles" and using law as a disinfectant against inequality. The goal is a casteless order built on liberty, equality and fraternity - "one man, one value". Madhu Limaye compared the text to the Communist Manifesto for its egalitarian vision.

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

UPSC 2019 · 10 marks

Comment on M.K. Gandhi's concept of Swaraj in 150 words.

FLOW SNAPSHOT — how the answer moves

Intro routes

R1 Swaraj as the core of Gandhi's thought → far more than freedom from British rule

R2 swa (self) + raj (rule) → rule over oneself before political independence

Body flow

rejects mere transfer of power (English rule without the Englishman) → real Swaraj = capacity of all to resist abused authority, not office for a few → multidimensional: political / economic / social / cultural / spiritual → **Dalton**: inner freedom grounds outer freedom → practical shape: Gram Swaraj, khadi, Swadeshi, constructive programme

Counter-view

unlike **Tilak** → political freedom without social reform (Hindu-Muslim unity, end of untouchability) is incomplete

Conclusion routes

R1 Swaraj as civilisational alternative, not a mere change of rulers

R2 Swaraj as the path to Ramrajya → people's sovereignty, welfare of the last person

Swaraj lies at the heart of Mahatma Gandhi's political thought and its meaning runs far deeper than freedom from British rule. Literally it is self-rule – swa (self), raj (rule); but for Gandhi it first means rule over oneself, moral autonomy & self discipline. He rejected the mere transfer of power to Indian elites – English rule without the Englishman. Real Swaraj, he held, comes not when a few acquire authority but through "the capacity by all to resist authority when it is abused."

This self-rule is multidimensional – political, economic, social, cultural and spiritual. Dennis Dalton reads inner freedom as the ground of outer freedom; without self-restraint, political freedom becomes hollow. Swaraj takes practical shape through Gram Swaraj, Khadi, Swadeshi and the constructive programme. Unlike Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Gandhi insisted that political freedom without social reform, Hindu-Muslim unity, the end of untouchability, is incomplete.

Its moral ideal is Ramrajya : people's sovereignty & the welfare of the last person - a civilisational alternative, not a mere change of rulers.

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

UPSC 2020 · 10 marks

Comment on the Ambedkar's view on constitutionalism in 150 words.

FLOW SNAPSHOT — how the answer moves

Intro routes

R1 constitutionalism ≠ mere written Constitution → limited govt + rule of law + democracy + accountability → but legal-social, aimed at transforming an unequal society

R2 start from his legal-social premise → the text limits power, yet its real purpose is to remake society, not just regulate the state

Body flow

legislature = product of social conditions → unlimited legislative power vs constitutionalism → government as public trust → public opinion as preventive check + democratic control of bureaucracy → text alone insufficient → democracy as the edifice → constitutional morality (values over caste / religion / party / hero worship) → “must be cultivated”

Counter-view

politics confined to constitutional methods, routine civil disobedience rejected (read by some as narrowing popular agitation) → his defence: without social democracy, constitutionalism stays fragile

Conclusion routes

R1 responsible government + responsible citizenry → limited in method, purposive in transforming society

R2 the text guarantees nothing on its own → survives only where constitutional morality and social democracy are cultivated

B.R. Ambedkar understood constitutionalism as more than a written constitution. It meant limited government, rule of law, democracy and public accountability. But his view was legal-social: the constitution must transform an unequal society, not merely regulate the state.

He held that the legislature is a product of social conditions, that unlimited legislative power is opposed to constitutionalism and that government is a public trust. Public opinion works as a preventive check, and the bureaucracy must stay under democratic control.

Yet the text cannot work alone. Constitutionalism survives only on the edifice of democracy, which rests on constitutional morality – placing constitutional values above caste, religion, party and hero worship. “Constitutional morality is not a natural sentiment. It has to be cultivated.”

He confined politics to constitutional methods, rejecting routine civil disobedience after independence and feared that without social democracy, Indian constitutionalism would stay fragile. His vision combines responsible government with a responsible citizenry.

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

UPSC 2021 · 15 marks

“When a nation becomes devoid of arts and learning, it invites poverty.” (Sir Syed Ahmad Khan). In the light of this statement, assess the role of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan as a reformer in modern India.

FLOW SNAPSHOT — how the answer moves

Intro routes

R1 post-1857 Muslim decline read as a crisis of learning → education the cure

R2 his own diagnosis: no arts/learning → poverty → reform built on this

Body flow

idea into institutions → Scientific Society (1863) → Aligarh Institute Gazette → MAO College / AMU → science-faith harmony (science + Quran) → social reform via Tahzib-ul-Akhlaq (anti-superstition/polygamy, widow remarriage, women's education) → early pluralism (two eyes of India)

Counter-view

post-1887 turn → opposed representative democracy / Congress / self-government → pro-British loyalism → weakened nationalism, fed separatist arguments → most criticised part

Conclusion routes

R1 Kopf: a nineteenth-century moderniser, not merely a communal leader

R2 judged by his own test (learning cures backwardness) → foundational reformer & Muslim modernist

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan read the decline of Indian Muslims after 1857 as a crisis of learning. His statement links the lack of arts and learning to poverty, and his life's work was to remove the lack through education. This conviction defines his reform role.

He turned this into institutions. The Scientific Society of 1863 translated western science into Urdu; the Aligarh Institute Gazette spread modern knowledge; and the Mohammedan Anglo-oriental college, founded in 1875, became the centre of modern Muslim education, later Aligarh Muslim University. He saw no clash between science and faith, asking Muslim youth to carry "the book of science in one hand and the Holy Quran in the other hand." Through *Tahzib-ul-Akhlaq* he attacked superstition and polygamy and supported widow remarriage and women's education. His early politics was pluralist; he treated Hindus and Muslims as the two eyes of India.

His reformism has limits. After 1887 he opposed representative democracy, the Congress and self-government and praised British rule. This loyalist turn weakened common nationalism, fed later separatist arguments and remains the most criticised part of his legacy.

Yet David Kopf places him among 19th century modernisers, not merely communal leaders. Judged by his own test – that learning is the cure for backwardness – he stands as a foundational reformer and Muslim modernist of modern India.

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

UPSC 2023 · 15 marks

Sri Aurobindo's idea of Swaraj has deep significance in the Indian social, political and cultural history. Analyze.

FLOW SNAPSHOT — how the answer moves

Intro routes

R1 Tilak's Swaraj = self-rule → Aurobindo radicalises it → absolute Swaraj = complete independence

R2 not mere reforms/seats → breadth carries political + social + cultural meaning → hence deep significance

Body flow

Political: first to demand Purna Swaraj → reject petition politics → organised resistance → mass politics → **Social:** self-help → mass/youth awakening → participation + ethical leadership → joint action, not a few → **Cultural:** non-imported/non-imitative → civilisational pride → revival of indigenous traditions → Indian-rooted education → inner freedom of self

Counter-view

vocabulary Hindu-centric → socio-economic programme thin

Conclusion routes

R1 significance remains → binds political freedom to cultural renaissance + integral human growth

R2 Swaraj points beyond India → towards human unity

Where Bal Gangadhar Tilak read Swaraj as self-rule, Sri Aurobindo gave it a deeper and more radical meaning. Writing in Bande Mataram in 1907, he refused to "pitch our ideal one inch lower than absolute Swaraj." For him Swaraj was complete independence, not a few reforms or seats in the bureaucracy. This breadth explains its lasting significance across India's political, social and cultural life.

Politically, Aurobindo was among the first to demand Purna Swaraj. He rejected moderate petition politics, made organised resistance the basis of action and prepared the ground for later mass politics.

Socially, Swaraj meant self-help and the awakening of the masses, especially the youth. It called for active participation and ethical leadership, treating freedom as a collective awakening rather than the initiative of a few.

Culturally, Swaraj had to be non-imported & non-imitative. It demanded recovery of civilisational pride, revival of indigenous traditions and education rooted in Indian life. It also carried an inner sense: freedom from the limited body-mind-sense self.

Critics find this vocabulary Hindu-centric and its socio-economic programme thin. Yet Swaraj's significance remains: it bound political freedom to cultural renaissance and integral human growth, pointing finally towards human unity.

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

UPSC 2024 · 15 marks

Manabendra Nath Roy's political thought highlighted the humanistic aspects of Marxism. Discuss.

FLOW SNAPSHOT — how the answer moves

Intro routes

R1 not a break with Marx → humanism drawn out from within Marxism → individual freed

R2 Roy's aim = human liberation, not class power → release from exploitation, dogma, authority

Body flow

Marxist start (anti-imperialism, class analysis, *India in Transition*) → **Marx** himself a humanist → *Capital* as social ethics / protest against servitude → Comintern exposes what smothers humanism → rejects proletarian dictatorship, party absolutism, economic determinism → Radical Humanism: protest against exploitation kept + sovereign individual → reason, morality, education, consent over class struggle and violence

Counter-view

sharp rupture from orthodox Marxism vs **Kaviraj's** "substratum of philosophic continuity" / **Bipan Chandra's** Marxism-liberal-humanism bridge

Conclusion routes

R1 every social order judged by the freedom it gives the individual

R2 humanism of Marxism = social justice joined to individual liberty

Manabendra Nath Roy did not discard Marx; he drew out the humanism within Marxism and freed it from all that crushed the individual. For Roy, the goal was never class power but human liberation - release from exploitation, dogma and every authority that denied the person's worth.

Roy first used Marxism for anti-imperialism and class analysis, as in *India in Transition*. Yet he read Karl Marx himself as a humanist and lover of human freedom: for him, *Capital* was "a treatise on social ethics - a powerful protest against the servitude of the toiling majority."

His communist International years exposed what smothered this humanism. The dictatorship of the proletariat, party absolutism and economic determinism subordinated the person to class and state. Roy rejected them - economics alone does not drive history and the collective cannot erase the individual.

Racial Humanism kept the moral protest against exploitation but placed the sovereign individual at its centre. Reason, morality, education and consent replaced class struggle and violence.

Critics note his break from orthodox Marxism, yet Sudipta Kaviraj found "a substratum of philosophic continuity" beneath both phases, and Bipan Chandra saw him bridging Marxism and liberal humanism.

His final test judged every social order by "the actual measure of freedom it gives to the individual." Roy highlighted Marxism's humanism by joining social justice to individual liberty.

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

UPSC 2025 · 15 marks

“State..... does the greatest harm to mankind by destroying individuality, which lies at the root of all progress.” — Mahatma Gandhi. Elucidate.

FLOW SNAPSHOT — how the answer moves

Intro routes

R1 state = “concentrated, organised violence” / soulless machine
→ hence fear that its growth destroys individuality

R2 the paradox: state “doing good” by curbing exploitation, yet harming most by killing individuality

Body flow

rests on coercion + bureaucracy + uniform rules → expansion reduces citizens to subjects → kills conscience, voluntary action, moral responsibility = true roots of progress → individual “the one supreme consideration” → rejects Austinian absolute sovereignty (**Austin**) → state a means, not final ideal

Counter-view

individuality ≠ unrestrained individualism → “law of the beast of the jungle” → freedom balanced by duty → **Green**: community by common good, not compulsion

Conclusion routes

R1 remedy: limit the state → Satyagraha + Gram Swaraj → individual at the centre

R2 warning stays relevant wherever welfare / security justify over-centralisation

For Mahatma Gandhi, the modern state was "violence in a concentrated and organised form" – a soulless machine resting on coercion, bureaucracy and uniform rules. From this followed his deepest fear: that even when the state appears to do good by minimising exploitation, its growing power does the greatest harm by crushing individuality.

The statement turns on a paradox. State expansion, however well-meant, reduces citizens to subjects. Uniform command leaves no room for conscience, voluntary action or moral responsibility – and these, not material output, are the true roots of progress. Gandhi therefore held the individual to be "the one supreme consideration", and rejected Austinian idea of absolute sovereignty associated with John Austin: the state is a means, never the final idea.

This is not selfish individualism. "Unrestricted individualism is the law of the beast of the jungle"; freedom must be balanced by duty. Like Thomas Hill Green, Gandhi saw community as held together by common good, not compulsion.

His remedy was to limit the state and place the person at the centre - Satyagraha to resist unjust law & Gram Swaraj to revive self-governing villages. The warning remains relevant wherever welfare or security justifies excessive centralisation.

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