Chapter – III

MAHATMA GANDHI AND BHAGAT SINGH: PERCEPTIONS OF FREEDOM

Mahatma Gandhi has played a pivotal role in India’s freedom movement. His thoughts and perceptions have successfully guided his countrymen in the pursuit of freedom (Gandhi, 2006).¹ Gandhi considered Satyagraha and non-violence as two strategic tools for achieving freedom. But one basic tenet of Gandhian philosophy that sums up Gandhi’s perception of freedom is Swaraj (Parekh, 2001).²

Mahatma Gandhi’s Perception of Freedom: Swaraj

Gandhi fully agreed with the slogan given by Bal Gangadhar Tilak that Swaraj is the birthright of every Indian. According to Gandhi, Swaraj is a “state of being”- of individuals and of nations. He emphasized that real freedom or Purna Swaraj in India will come when all shall have equal opportunities (Bhardwaj & Basumatary, 2013, pp. 42-44).³ Gandhi has expressed the concept of Swaraj in many different contexts. In his autobiography: The story of my experiments with truth, Gandhi provides

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his initial account of Swaraj. As a young person, he had not heard much about Swaraj (Gandhi, 1990).

But for him, freedom at that point of time meant liberty to eat meat openly which was strictly opposed by her family. Similarly, he has mentioned in his biography about freedom from vices, freedom of speech, freedom of writing, freedom from foreign rule etc. He said, “My conception of freedom is no narrow conception. It is co-extensive width the freedom of man in all his majesty.” (Harijan, 1942, pp. 183).

Broadly Gandhi’s writings have expressed Swaraj through four aspects of freedom (Chakrabarty, 2006): India's national independence; political freedom of an individual; group freedom from poverty (economic freedom) and the capacity for personal self-rule (spiritual freedom) (Johnson, 2006).

(i) National Independence

Mahatma Gandhi believed that every country is fit to eat, to drink and to breathe, even so is every nation fit to manage its own affairs, no matter how badly. Swaraj means self-rule and politically Gandhi expressed Swaraj as freedom from foreign rule. But by this, he had not simply

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meant the expulsion of English from India rather he dreamt of sovereignty of the people based on pure moral authority. He said, “For me every ruler is alien that defies public opinion.” According to him Swaraj means a continuous effort to be independent of government control, whether it is foreign government or whether it is national. He believed that true democracy cannot be worked by twenty men sitting at the center. It has to be worked from below, by the people of every village (Young India, 1920, pp. 886). Gandhi said: "Power resides in the people, they can use it at any time." He emphasized that Swaraj means implementation of a system whereby the state machinery is virtually nil, and the real power directly resides in the hands of people (Jesudasan, 1987). Gandhi said: "In such a state (where swaraj is achieved) everyone is his own ruler. He rules himself in such a manner that he is never a hindrance to his neighbour.” (Murthy, 1987) He was fully aware that achieving such freedom or self-rule is a utopian task and considered it nothing less than the realization of the "Kingdom of God." (Prabhu & Rao, 1967). But he insisted to strive for such independence with these words: I would rather work for and die in the pursuit of this dream,

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8. Young India. (1920). 3(8).
though it may never be realized. That means infinite patience and perseverance.

(ii) Political Freedom

The second aspect of Swaraj described by Gandhi is political freedom of an individual. He observed in South Africa that he had no rights as a man because he was an Indian. He discovered that an individual was not liable to basic rights in the absence of national freedom. Gandhi believed that national independence and political freedom are equally important. He emphasized that no society can possibly be built on a denial of individual freedom. He considered that without political freedom, national independence has no meaning for an individual. By political freedom of an individual, he meant the full liberty to all individuals (Young India,
1920, pp. 886).\textsuperscript{12} He said, “I want freedom for the full expression of my personality.” He pointed out that all individuals should have the right to express themselves and they should be granted the access to basic rights. This included the right to freedom of religion, speech, press; right to be treated equally; right to freedom of association; right of minorities to religion and education; right to private property and right to form unions etc. (Gandhi, 1999, pp. 166).\textsuperscript{13}

According to him, all individuals should be politically free irrespective of their social status and they should be free from the fear of any oppressive force. He said, “Swaraj for me means freedom for the meanest of our countrymen. I am not interested in freeing India from the English yoke. I am bent upon freeing India from any yoke whatsoever. I have no desire to exchange King Log for King Stork.” (Young India, 1924, pp. 195).\textsuperscript{14} On another occasion he said, “India will be really free when freedom reaches the door of the dilapidated hut in the poorest villages of the country…when the British left India, Swaraj (independence/freedom) will of course reach New Delhi, but until it goes to every hut, and every villager feels its presence in his own life, it will

\textsuperscript{12} Young India. (1920). 3(8).
\textsuperscript{13} Gandhi, M. K. (1999). \textit{The collected works of Mahatma Gandhi} (Publications Division: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Govt. of India), 46.
\textsuperscript{14} Young India. (1924). 2.
not be of much meaning. Real freedom will come not by acquisition of the capacity by all to resist authority when abused—in other words, freedom is to be attained by educate the people to a sense of their capacity to regulate and control authority.” He said that freedom is not worth having if it does not connote freedom to err. Through these words he indicated that until and unless the common man in India feels a sense of equality, fearlessness and dignity in his daily life, the real freedom cannot be achieved.

Although Gandhi advocated individual freedom yet he never acknowledged freedom as an individual’s license to deprive others from this precious right (Gandhi, 1999, pp. 112).15 He was fully aware that it is human nature to claim things as “mine”. He was of the view that in the pursuit of independence or in the garb of expression of freedom, an individual should not harm the right to freedom of other individuals. He remarked that freedom should be expressed with self-restraint so as to maintain harmony in society and nation. He said, “I value individual freedom, but you must not forger that man is essentially a social being. He has risen to his present status by learning to adjust his individualism to the requirements of social progress. Unrestricted individualism is the

law of the beast of the jungle. We have to learn to strike the mean between individual freedom and social restraint. Willing submission to social restraint for the sake of the well-being of the whole society enriches both the individual and the society of which one is a member. He emphasized that political freedom should not only provide basic rights rather it should provide protection for exercise of these rights also (Gandhi, 1999, pp. 112). He highlighted the importance of an individual’s freedom in the progress of a nation. He was of the view that without liberty an individual cannot voluntarily surrender himself fully to the service of society and without this devotion society gets ruined.

(iii) Economic Freedom

The third aspect of Swaraj expressed by Gandhi is economic freedom of an individual. Gandhi believed that economic independence is crucial for achieving individual freedom. This is more important for the poor because poverty generates differences in the social strata which then lead to caste system, untouchability, inequality and ultimately deprivation of right to freedom. According to Gandhi:

“Economic freedom means entire freedom from British capitalists and capital, as also their Indian counterpart. In other
words, the humblest must feel equal to the tallest. This can take place only by capital or capitalists sharing their skill and capital with the lowliest and the least.” (Harijan, 1946, pp.116).¹⁷

Gandhi’s economic perception was inspired by Ruskin’s book *Unto This Last*. In 1908, Gandhi translated Ruskin’s book into Gujarati with the title *Sarvodaya*. His perception encompassed the dignity of labor and an equitable distribution of wealth. Gandhi endorsed Ruskin’s ideal that every human being deserved the decent conditions of life, even the last and the least. So the economic philosophy of Gandhi is known as Sarvodaya which means- the uplift/welfare of all (Gandhi, 1908).¹⁸ Similarly Gandhi not only agreed with Timofei Bondarev’s idea of bread labour (as per which every person should engage in some form of labour for few hours) rather he added a spiritual dimension to it by correlating labour with sacred activity or yajna (Johnson, 2006).¹⁹

Gandhi asserted that in order to achieve economic freedom, self-sufficiency is mandatory. To gain economic self-sufficiency, Gandhi championed Swadeshi and non-cooperation movements reason being

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European industrial goods had inflicted unemployment and poverty amongst Indian workers (Ghosh, 2007).\textsuperscript{20} By promoting homespun Khadi and Indian-made goods, Gandhi prompted peaceful civil resistance as a means of promoting national self-sufficiency. He inspired the people to become self-reliant by cutting down the wants and following a ‘plain living’. On the other hand, he inspired people to produce their own food and clothes.

Gandhi thought that India needed production by masses and not mass production. He believed that mass production by modern industrial technology was responsible for increasing the gap between rich and the poor as it was assimilating wealth for the owners but inflicting unemployment in local workers. So he promoted small scale and locally oriented production, using local resources and meeting local needs. He encouraged the villagers to start small scale industries. He was of the view that in this way employment opportunities would be made available everywhere (Ghosh, 2007).\textsuperscript{21} He was in the favour of labour-using rather than labour-displacing. But that does not mean he was against the use of machinery. He advocated the use of technology to supplement human


\textsuperscript{21} Ibid.
labour and stated that machine-power can a make a valuable contribution towards economic progress (Nadkarni, 2014).  

Gandhi projected his views on machinery in Hind Swaraj with the following words:

“Machinery is like a snake-hole which may contain from one to a hundred snakes. Where there is machinery, there are large cities; where there are large cities, there are tram-cars and railways. And there only does one see electric light. Honest physician will tell you that where means of artificial locomotion have increased, the health of people has suffered. I remember that, when in a European town there was scarcity of money, the receipts of the tramway company, of the lawyers and of the doctors went down, and the people were less unhealthy. I cannot recall a single good point in connection with machinery.

Ideally….I would rule out all machinery, even as I would reject this very body, which is not helpful to salvation, and seek the absolute liberation of the soul. From that point of view, I would reject all machinery, but machines will remain because,

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like the body, they are inevitable. The body itself …. is
the purest piece of mechanism; but if it is a hindrance to the
highest flights of the soul, it has to be rejected.” (Gandhi, 1998)23

But Gandhi’s view on the use of machines and technology are often mis-
interpreted. He had once remarked:

“My opposition to machinery is much misunderstood. I am not
opposed to machinery as such. I am opposed to machinery
which displaces labour and leaves it idle.” (Harijan, 1942, pp. 183)24

He emphasized that proper use of technology would make a valuable
contribution towards economic progress. Dr. Bhattacharya has also
highlighted the fact that Gandhi was not against machine qua machine
rather he was concerned regarding the enslavement of human beings.25

Gandhi rejected class warfare and class-based revolution, because
these may result in social violence. To bridge the gap between the rich
and the poor Gandhi pioneered the trusteeship principle. As per this
principle, Gandhi urged wealthy individuals to do introspection and

   Calcutta: Calcutta Book House.
utilize their surplus wealth as a trust for the welfare of the poorest and deprived. This principle is expressed in the form of Gandhi’s talisman (Lal, 1958):

"Whenever you are in doubt, or when the self becomes too much with you, apply the following test. Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man [woman] whom you may have seen, and ask yourself, if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him [her]. Will he [she] gain anything by it? Will it restore him [her] to a control over his [her] own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to swaraj [freedom] for the hungry and spiritually starving millions? Then you will find your doubts and your-self melt away."

Through these ideals Gandhi strived to minimize economic and social inequality, and achieve Sarvodaya. These ideals were set into practice in Gandhi’s ashrams and he dreamt of entire nation adopting these ideals. In the ashrams, inhabitants promote a lifestyle of self-sufficiency by producing their own food, clothing and means of living. To promote the sense of equality, all inhabitants are required to help in all

necessary tasks (Mathur, 1971).\textsuperscript{27} In sync with the principle of "trusteeship," inhabitants are presumed to follow a simple living, deny material pursuits and act as "trustees" of other individuals and the community in their management of economic resources and property.

(iv) **Spiritual Freedom**

Spiritual freedom or self-rule is the most important aspect of Gandhi’s perception of Swaraj. As per ancient traditions of India, spiritual freedom of an individual is generally associated with renunciation of the world. Traditionally a self-ruling or spiritual person is considered indifferent to politics or economics. But Mahatma Gandhi reinterpreted the meaning of self-rule and advocated its role in achieving political freedom. According to Gandhi, self-rule is the process of eliminating internal obstacles to freedom (Gandhi, 1999, pp. 133).\textsuperscript{28} He said, “It is my certain conviction that no man loses his freedom except through his own weakness.”

According to Gandhi, self-rule means identification with the spiritual being. Self-rule involves the influence of spirit on inner consciousness. Gandhi derived the concept of self-rule or spiritual

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{27} Mathur, J. S. (1971). *Industrial civilization & Gandhian economics.* Pustakayan Publishers.
\item \textsuperscript{28} Gandhi, M. K. (1999). *The collected works of Mahatma Gandhi* (Publications Division: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Govt. of India, 20.
\end{itemize}
freedom from Bhagvad Gita. He emphasized certain virtues are necessary for achievement of spiritual freedom. These virtues are non-violence, chastity, greedlessness, truthfulness, non-stealing, swadeshi, bodily labour, removal of untouchability, control of palate, fearlessness and respect of all religions. In his words: Swaraj is a state of mind to be experienced by us. We have to win it by our own strength. He remarked that the only devils in the world are those running around in our own hearts - that is where the battle should be fought. In other words, Swaraj is a state of self-realization through which an individual attains self-awareness and learns to rule himself (Gandhi, 1999, pp. 294). 29

Gandhi was of the view that experience of self-rule awakens social and political conscience. He said that without self-rule, political, national freedom or economic freedoms cannot be achieved. He believed that through self-rule, an individual develops a will power to get free and when that happens, no force can enslave him or her. He said, “Even the most despotic government cannot stand except for the consent of the governed, which consent is often forcibly procured by the despot. Immediately the subject ceases to fear the despotic force, his power is

gone.” (Young India, 1920, pp. 3) On another occasion, he said, “The moment the slave resolves that he will no longer be a slave, his fetters fall. He frees himself and shows the way to others. Freedom and slavery are mental states. Therefore, the first thing is to say to yourself- I shall no longer accept the role of a slave. I shall not obey orders as such, but shall disobey them when they are in conflict with my conscience.” (Harijan, 1946, pp.18). He propounded that any force can only torture or destroy one’s body but it can never imprison the mind. So through self-discipline, spiritual freedom can be attained which propels the individual to strive for national independence.

Similarly, self-rule is necessary for political freedom. Gandhi emphasized that even if national independence is attained, it becomes equally important to safeguard one’s political freedom. Because independence does not provide a licence to arbitrariness and in the pursuit of independence or in the garb of expression of freedom, an individual should not harm the right to freedom of other individuals (Gandhi, 1999, pp. 112). He said that unrestricted individualism is the law of the beast of the jungle. We have to learn to strike the mean between individual

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30. Young India. (1920). 3(8).
freedom and social restraint (Gandhi, 1999, pp. 224).\textsuperscript{33} This social awakening regarding the rights of others and self-restraint while expressing one’s freedom can be gained only through self-realization or self-rule. Gandhi famously said that the only tyrant I accept in this world is the still voice within (Young India, 1920, pp. 3).\textsuperscript{34} Through self-rule only one can learn to listen to the voice of inner conscience.

According to Gandhi, for achieving economic freedom again self-rule plays a crucial role. He propounded that to attain economic freedom, one has to cut down the wants and follow a ‘plain living’. Secondly he urged wealthy individuals to do introspection and utilize their surplus wealth as a trust for the welfare of the poorest and deprived. Both these ideals require freedom from passions and self-denial for the sake of society. This in turn highlights the moral power of an individual which is acquired by spiritual freedom or self-rule (Gandhi Marg, 2004).\textsuperscript{35}

Hence Gandhi used the term Swaraj in multiple aspects. As per him, Swaraj is total freedom and includes national independence, political freedom, economic freedom as well as spiritual freedom. In short,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{33} Gandhi, M. K. (1999). \textit{The collected works of Mahatma Gandhi} (Publications Division: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Govt. of India), 62.
\item \textsuperscript{34} Young India. (1920). 3(8).
\item \textsuperscript{35} Gandhi Marg. (2004). 25(4).
\end{itemize}
national freedom means elimination of alien rule and handing over of power to people; political freedom means right to choose without any fear of oppressive force; economic freedom means freedom from British capitalist and capital, as also their Indian counterpart by bringing equality between poorest and rich; while spiritual freedom means self-realization and self-restraint. Of all these, he has put special emphasis on spiritual freedom or self-rule because it ultimately manifests into national, political or economic freedom (Young India, 1931, pp. 5).\textsuperscript{36} Gandhi envisioned such freedom for India and hoped to set an example for other nations also. His perception of freedom is summarized with his following words:

“I shall strive for a constitution which will release India from all thralldom and patronage, and give her, if need be, the right to sin. I shall work for an India in which the poorest shall feel that it is their country, in whose making they have an effective voice; an India in which there shall be no high class and low class of people; an India in which all communities shall live in perfect harmony. There can be no room in such an India for the curse of untouchability, or the curse of the intoxicating drinks and drugs. Women will enjoy the same rights as men. Since we shall be at peace with all the rest of the world, neither

\textsuperscript{36} Young India. (1931). I (4).
exploiting, nor being exploited, we should have the smallest army imaginable. All interests not in conflict with the interests of the dumb millions will be scrupulously respected, whether foreign or indigenous. Personally, I hate distinction between foreign and indigenous. This is the India of my dreams... I shall be satisfied with nothing else.” (Young India, 1931, pp. 5)³⁷

Gandhi was fully aware that achieving such Swaraj of his dreams is a Utopian task but he believed in its accomplishment. He hoped that by gradually transforming individuals, ultimately transformation can be brought in the society and nation. He said:

"It may be taunted with the retort that this is all Utopian and, therefore not worth a single thought... Let India live for the true picture, though never realisable in its completeness. We must have a proper picture of what we want before we can have something approaching it." (Harijan, 1946, pp.236)³⁸

Bhagat Singh’s Perceptions of Freedom

Bhagat Singh prompted youth in India to begin fighting for Indian independence and he continues to be a folk hero in modern India. He is

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³⁷. Ibid.
regarded as a fearless hero who chose violence to avenge the deaths of his countrymen and then made a supreme sacrifice for his country. But contrary to the popular belief, this is not his sole contribution (Nayar, 2000). His major contribution to the freedom struggle is the effort to formulate a bi-pronged revolutionary philosophy which not only dealt with the traits of colonial subjection but also with internal exploitation (Singh, 2011). In his earlier days, he was a follower of Gandhi and throughout his life respected him. But he did not believe in the Gandhi’s ideology, which emphasized Satyagraha and other non-violent strategies of resistance. He did not believe that Gandhian philosophy would be able to transform the society. He was of the view that Gandhian politics would only result in the replacement of one set of exploiters by the others. Bhagat Singh warned against “a replacement of a white rule at Delhi by a brown rule,” saying that such a rule “once installed on the throne runs the risk of being petrified into a tyranny.” (Singh, 1931) So he strived for an alternative ideology.

During his college days, he studied all sort of political literature in the search of an alternative ideology with a global view. Singh was

impressed with revolutionary leaders like Sardar Ajit Singh, Lala Lajpat Rai and Lala Hardayal. And Lala Hardayal himself advocated Karl Marx’s views through his article ‘Karl Marx: A Modern Rishi’. Singh was quite influenced from the teachings of Mikhail Bakunin, Karl Marx, Vladimir Lenin and Leon Trotsky also. The works of these leaders impressed him and sowed in his mind the seeds of democracy, socialism and rationalism (Mishra, 2014, pp. 149-156). He wrote in his autobiographical note, “Study was the cry that reverberated in the corridors of my mind, my previous faith and convictions underwent a remarkable modification” (Singh, 1931).

He wanted India to be a completely independent Republic of Workers and Peasants. He wanted to make India a free and socialist state where everyone would have full liberty and peace (Singh, 1931). He dreamed of a nation where exploitation of man by man would be impossible. He was a unique socialist revolutionary nationalist leader who was attracted to anarchism and communism (Mishra, 2007, pp.44). He made sacrifice for the nation at a tender age so his ideology has a very

short time span but still it is unique and clear. Taking into account the issues pertaining to colonial subjection and internal/domestic exploitation, Singh propounded a bi-pronged revolutionary philosophy which was rooted in Socialism (Mishra, 2014, pp.149-156).46

**Socialism**

Bhagat Singh was an ardent socialist. He was a member of Hindustan Republican Association and was instrumental in rechristening of this association to Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (Nayar, 2000).47 Hindustan Republican Association’s vision was to establish a federal republican form of government in India through organized and armed revolution. Its major aim was to eradicate class based exploitation from Indian society. Bhagat Singh was deeply influenced with communist philosophy and in 1926, established ‘Naujawan Bharat Sabha’ (Singh & Hooja, 2007).48 The ‘Naujawan Bharat Sabha’ declared that its objective was to establish “a completely independent Republic of Workers and Peasants in India”. He motivated his fellow colleagues and under his influence only Hindustan Republican Association was rechristened into

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the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association in 1928. This suggests that Bhagat Singh’s vision was not only to make India an independent Republic but to establish her as a completely independent socialist Republic state.

Socialism is an array of social and economic systems characterized by social ownership and democratic control of the means of production. Social ownership is the basic element of socialism and refers to forms of public, collective or cooperative ownership, or to citizen ownership of equity. Socialism is an array of political philosophies which correlates social problems with capitalism. After Karl Marx, social democracy and communism evolved as the dominant political tendencies within the socialist movement. The fundamental objective of socialism is to attain an advanced level of material production because of the belief that an expansion of human productive capability is the basis for the extension of freedom and equality in society. As per socialism, creativity is an essential aspect of human nature and socialists define freedom as a state of being where individuals are able to express their creativity unhindered by constraints of both material scarcity and coercive social institutions. Hence as per socialist concept, Bhagat Singh wished to secure human freedom through modern developments in technology because it would reduce necessary labour time and would enable individuals pursue the
development of their true individuality as well as creativity. He considered freedom as a birth right of an individual and said, “Freedom is an imperishable birthright of all.” He wanted to attain complete independence with a society free from all social discrimination (Singh & Hooja, 2007). On the basis of his writings (Singh, 1931), diaries and jail notes, Bhagat Singh’s concept of freedom may be expressed into the following aspects: India's national independence, political freedom of an individual, group freedom from poverty (economic freedom) and the spiritual freedom (Singh, 1930).

(i) National Independence: Anti-imperialism

Bhagat Singh believed that freedom is an imperishable birthright of all. He was against colonialism and imperialism. In ‘The Statement of the Undefended Accused’, Bhagat Singh wrote: “Imperialism is the last stage of development of insidious exploitation of man by man and of nation by nation. The imperialists, with a view to further their piratical designs, not only commit judicial murders through their law courts but also organize general massacres, devastations and other horrible crimes like war. Under

49. Ibid.
the garb of custodians of ‘law and order’, they break peace, create disorder, kill people and commit all conceivable crimes.” (Singh, 1930)\(^53\)

He fought against British imperialism and popularized the slogan ‘Down with imperialism’.

On 8 April 1929, Singh, along with Batukeshwar Dutt, threw bombs and leaflets inside the Central Legislative Assembly while shouting the slogans "Inquilab Zindabad!" ("Long Live the Revolution") and ‘Down with imperialism’. His anti-imperialism stance was not only more radical than that of Lokmanya Tilak, Dadabhai Naoroji and Gandhi, but also was soundly grounded in the Leninist understanding of imperialism (Sehanavis, 2007).\(^54\) He struggled to liberate his country from the foreign rule. He had understood well that just freedom from foreign slavery is not sufficient rather strategies have to be devised to fight against the underlying system which was responsible for producing slavery. Bhagat Singh’s vision was not only to make India an independent republic by overthrowing British but to bring out a socio-political revolution (Mishra, 2007, pp. 44).\(^55\)

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53. Ibid.
In the statement before the Lahore high court bench, he boldly described the meaning of revolution as follows: “Revolution does not necessarily involve sanguinary strife, nor is there any place in it for individual vendetta. It is not the cult of the bomb and the pistol. By ‘Revolution’ we mean that the present order of things, which is based on manifest injustice must change….For this capture of state power is necessary. The state apparatus is now in the hands of the privileged class.” (Singh & Dutt, 1929)

(ii) Political Freedom: Anarchism

According to Bhagat Singh, political freedom means freedom from all sorts of tyrannical forces. He warned against “a replacement of a white rule at Delhi by a brown rule,” saying that such a rule “once installed on the throne runs the risk of being petrified into a tyranny.” Bhagat Singh clearly said that his goal was not just to replace white rule with brown rule (Singh, 1931). He said that there was no difference in the rule of capitalists, local or foreign. It didn't matter from which country the ruling class came from, rather the matter of concern was the condition of the working class in the existing system. If the workers are exploited then the


system must be changed and it needs a socialist revolution. He said in his message, “We want a socialist revolution, the indispensable preliminary to which is the political revolution. That is what we want. The political revolution does not mean the transfer of state (or more crudely, the power) from the hands of the British to the Indians, but to those Indians who are at one with us as to the final goal, or to be more precise, the power to be transferred to the revolutionary party through popular support. After that, to proceed in right earnest is to organise the reconstruction of the whole society on the socialist basis.” (Singh, 1931)58

Thus not only he wanted to overthrow the British but hoped that India’s poor workers and peasants would rule the country.

Bhagat Singh published a series of articles on anarchism in Kirti. Anarchism advocates stateless societies or self-governed voluntary institutions. It is a political philosophy that considers the state to be unnecessary or harmful institution and may involve opposition to the opposing authority or hierarchical organisation. He was aware that the public misunderstood the concept of anarchism, writing that "The people are scared of the word anarchism. The word anarchism has been abused so much that even in India revolutionaries have been called anarchist to make them unpopular." He clarified that anarchism refers to the absence

58. Ibid.
of a ruler and abolition of the state, not the absence of order, and wrote: "I think in India the idea of universal brotherhood, the Sanskrit sentence Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam has the same meaning." He believed that the ultimate goal of anarchism is complete independence, according to which no one will be obsessed with God or religion, nor will anybody be crazy for money or other worldly desires. There will be no chains on the body or control by the state (Rao, 1997).\(^5\) So he propounded that anarchism refers to a completely independent society which is free from all social discrimination based on caste or religion etc. (Chopra, 1985)\(^6\)

Bhagat Singh believed in secular and socialist values and disregarded the caste based system. He was of the view that caste or religion based discrimination was giving impetus to the ‘Divide and Rule’ policy of British rulers (Singh, 1928).\(^7\) Furthermore, he suggested the society to overthrow the caste system so as to promote social justice (Singh, 1928).\(^8\) He was fully aware that even after independence, capitalist class would exploit the working class on caste based system and

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in these circumstances independence would hold no meaning. Therefore he highlighted the need of social-restructuring through socialist revolution so as to attain complete independence.

(iii) Economic Independence: Anti-capitalism

Bhagat Singh, being an outright socialist was against capitalism and imperialism. The socialist philosophy considers capitalism responsible for most of the social problems and advocates a post-capitalist system which is based on social control of the means of production. Capitalism is an economic system which is based on private ownership of the means of production for profit. Its major characteristics are private property, capital accumulation, wage labor and competitive markets. In such a system, control and decision-making lies with the owner of means of production or wealth. Thus capitalism leads to the accumulation of capital and power within a small segment of society. This system divides the society into two extremely opposite classes, a large but weak working class which earn wages and a small but powerful capitalist class which controls means of production and wealth. Thus working class is subject to exploitation by the capitalists. Therefore socialists considered capitalism as a cause of poverty, low wages, economic or social inequality and a lack of economic security.
Socialists advocated replacement of capitalism with a moneyless society through a collective public control over the means of production or by facilitating direct worker ownership (Horvat, 1982). Bhagat Singh was fully convinced with socialists’ anti-capitalism ideology. Bhagat Singh clearly said that his goal was not just to replace white rule with brown rule. He said that there was no difference in the rule of capitalists, local or foreign. It didn't matter from which country the ruling class came from, rather the matter of concern was the condition of the working class in the existing system (Singh, 1931). If the workers are exploited then the system must be changed and it needs a socialist revolution. He made it clear that his vision is not only to transfer the power from the hands of the British to the Indians, but to those Indians who belong to working class. The statement of Bhagat Singh and B. K. Dutt which was read in the court clearly illustrates the vision of Singh and his colleagues. They stated, “Producers or labourers in spite of being the most necessary element of society are robbed by their exploiters of the fruits of their labour and deprived of their elementary rights. The peasant, who grows corn for all, starves with his family, the weaver who supplies the world


market with textile fabrics, has not enough to cover his own and his children’s bodies, masons, smiths and carpenters, who raise magnificent palaces, live like pariahs in the slums. The capitalists and exploiters, the parasites of society, squander millions on their whims.” (Singh & Dutt, 1929). So they explained that to bring the social justice and reconstruct the whole society on the socialist basis, a socialist revolution is needed.

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**Fig. 2: Diagrammatic illustration for the different aspects of Socialism**

Bhagat Singh was greatly influenced with Lenin’s ideology. During his appearance in court, he had announced in the court, “The proletariat will win. Capitalism will be defeated. Death to Imperialism.” He was not in the favour of a bourgeois republic. He was of the view that India would only attain complete freedom when the poor workers and peasants would rule the country (Singh & Dutt, 1929).\textsuperscript{66} He set forth this view by propounding Proletariat as the Vanguard of Revolution. He emphasized on need of the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat (Verma, 1986).\textsuperscript{67} He urged the workers to unite and organize into unions. In his article ‘Achhot ka Sawal’, he wrote, “Workers unite – you have nothing to lose but your chains. Arise and rebel against the existing order. Gradualism and reformism shall be of no avail to you. Start a revolution from a social agitation and gird up your loins for political economic revolution. You and you alone are the pillars of the nations and its core strength. Awake, O sleeping lions! Rebel, raise the banner of revolt.” (Singh, 1928)\textsuperscript{68}

Bhagat Singh was fully aware that even after independence, capitalist class would exploit the working class on caste based system and

\begin{itemize}
  \item 66. Ibid.
\end{itemize}
in these circumstances independence would hold no meaning. Therefore he highlighted the need of generating class consciousness. He wrote, “The poor, toilers and peasants need to recognize the capitalist as their real enemy. It’s in their interest to get rid of discrimination on the grounds of religion, color, race, nationality and nation, and unite to take power in their own hands. This will free them of their shackles and give them economic freedom.” (Singh, 1928)⁶⁹

(iv) Spiritual Freedom: Atheism/Secularism

Bhagat Singh was a believer in God in the initial days of his life. But after witnessing the Hindu–Muslim riots he turned away from religion. He believed that religions divide the people and divert them from the cause of independence (Singh & Hooja, 2007).⁷⁰ He believed that if not for religion, people would have been united and fought against Britishers as one. Furthermore, after reading the biographies of Lenin and Marx he was convinced beyond doubt that religious beliefs were responsible for obstructing the freedom struggle by dividing people. His family and friends tried to orient him towards God and to address the question of whether his atheism was born out of vanity, he explained his views in a

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now very popular essay entitled "Why I am an Atheist". Bhagat Singh’s atheism is misunderstood. This essay provides insights into his ideology. Bhagat Singh regarded the origin of God as an imagination of man during his weaknesses, limitations and shortcomings. He believed that man imagined God to get the courage to face difficult situations. He was of the view that the idea of God is helpful to a man in distress. He believed that a man should rise above petty issues and strengthen his spirit (Singh, 1931). He said,” They can crush my body but they will not be able to crush my spirit.” The real purpose of his atheism was to eliminate religious fanaticism from society and promote common nationalism. He wanted the people to set themselves free from the narrow divisions of caste or religion. He was of the view that caste or religion based discrimination was giving impetus to the ‘Divide and Rule’ policy of British rulers. He wanted to unite people in the freedom struggle irrespective of their religious beliefs. He was against communal politics and therefore youth belonging to communal organisations were not allowed to become members of the revolutionary Naujawan Bharat Sabha.

Bhagat Singh wrote two articles titled ‘Achoot ka Sawaal’ (On Untouchability) (Singh, 1928)\(^\text{72}\) and ‘Sampradayik Dange Aur Unka Ilaj’ (Communal riots and their solutions) (Singh, 1928)\(^\text{73}\) for a magazine Kirti. He wrote, “Those who know Russia’s history know that the Tsarist rule divided people and there were riots among communities. But there have been no riots since the rule of the workers has come into being. Now every person is seen as a ‘human being’ not as a ‘religious being.’” He professed that for a bright future for India, instead of seeing themselves as Hindu, Muslim or Sikh people should see themselves first as human beings and then as Indians. So he placed humanity above religious identity and emphasized the separation of religion from politics.

Another major reason behind his shunning of religion was the fanatic caste system. He was against the varna system or social order which Hindu fanatics projected as God’s creation by citing various religious scriptures. He questioned the legacy of Brahmanism and the concept of untouchability, both of which were based on a person’s birth in a particular caste. He highlighted the maltreatment of lower castes and explained religious conversions through his words, “…the harsh truth (is)
that if you (the Hindus) treat them worse than your cattle, they shall desert you, join to the fold of other religions where they hope to enjoy more rights, where they are treated as fellow beings.” (Singh, 1928) On the other hand, he referred to the untouchables as the “real working class” and urged them to set themselves free from the oppressive slavery of the so-called high class. He wrote, “Those who would be free must themselves strike the first blow. It must be kept in mind that everyone belonging to the privileged class, strives to enjoy his own rights, but would try his utmost to keep on oppressing those below him, and keeping the underprivileged under his heel. Thus might is held to be right. Then waste no time and unite to stand on your own feet and challenge the existing order of society. Let it then be seen as to who dares to deny to you your due. Do not be at the mercy of others and have no illusions about them. Be on guard so as not to fall in the trap of officialdom, because far from being your ally it seeks to make you dance on its own tunes. The capitalist bureaucratic combine is, truly speaking responsible for your oppression and poverty. Hence always shun it. Be on guard about its tricks. This is then the way out. You are the real working class. Workers unite – you have nothing to lose but your chains. Arise and rebel against the existing order. Gradualism and reformism shall be of no avail

74. Ibid.
to you. Start a revolution from a social agitation and gird up your loins for political economic revolution. You and you alone are the pillars of the nations and its core strength. Awake, O sleeping lions! Rebel, raise the banner of revolt.” (Singh, 1928)\(^75\)

Bhagat Singh fully understood that the nexus between the capitalists and the high castes was oppressing the working class and until they set themselves free, complete independence cannot be attained. He was fully aware that even after independence, capitalist class would exploit the working class on caste based system and in these circumstances independence would hold no meaning. Therefore he highlighted the need of social-restructuring. He was aware that the prerequisite of this social restructuring was a socialist revolution which can be brought out by the upliftment of untouchables. So he motivated the working class to spiritually uplift themselves and challenge the existing order of society. Thus Singh’s writings reveal that an individual’s freedom from narrow constraints of caste or religion is equally important in the pursuit of national freedom. Not only had he rejected the prejudices of caste or religion but also of race, gender and nationality. He dreamt of a secular nation free of communal politics where no one is exploited on

\(^{75}\) Ibid.
the basis of caste or religion. He knew achieving this goal involves long struggle and in his last Petition to the Punjab Governor, he wrote:

“….Let us declare that the state of war does exist and shall exist so long as the Indian toiling masses and the natural resources are being exploited by a handful of parasites. They may be purely British Capitalist or mixed British and Indian or even purely Indian. … All these things make no difference. … The war shall continue … till the Socialist Republic is established and … every sort of exploitation is put an end to and the humanity is ushered into the era of genuine and permanent peace.” (Singh, 1931)76

Meanwhile, he was hopeful of victory and wrote to Sukhdev a few days before his death: You and I may not live but the people of our country would. The ideology of Marxism and Communism would definitely triumph (Singh, 1929).77

**Mahatma and the Martyr: A Comparison of their Ideologies**

Both Gandhi and Bhagat Singh struggled for one common target i.e. independence. Both adopted different strategies and were equally popular

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among masses (Sharma, 2012, pp. 427-439). Gandhi is affectionately remembered as Bapu while Bhagat Singh is reveredly remembered as Shaheed-E-Azam. This section compares different aspects of the methods and strategies employed by both the two leaders.

(i) Satyagraha

Gandhi invented the concept of Satyagraha which literally means "adherence to truth". He stated that the most important battle to fight was overcoming his own demons, fears, and insecurities.

He summarised his beliefs first when he said "God is Truth". He later changed this statement to "Truth is God". Thus, satya (truth) in Gandhi's philosophy is "God". (Johnson, 2006)

Gandhi considered Satyagraha as a strategic, ethical and pedagogic tool. Due to its non-violent method of political agitation, Satyagraha made it possible for participation of the vast masses in the political struggle for independence. So it became popular with the masses. Satyagraha, for Gandhi, was not only a political but a pedagogic tool. Based on presupposition of a certain degree of rationality on part of the opponent and an acknowledgement of fallibility on part of the satyagrahi, it is essentially an exercise in persuading the opponent about the truth and validity of one’s claim. Thus, for Gandhi satyagraha was a form of ethical-political operation to reinforce rationality in an otherwise irrational and inhuman system of oppression and exploitation that denied humanity of its essential dignity (Gandhi, 1990).

On the other hand, Bhagat Singh criticized the upliftment of satyagraha from a political strategy to a vague moral appeal and declared before the Lahore High Court, “The sword of revolution is sharpened on the whetting-stone of ideas.” But this was not based on any liking for violence as the revolutionaries were not blind adherent of violence.

Bhagat Singh had said, “A mass movement, by its very nature, has to be non-violent,” and further, “Revolution does not necessarily involve

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sanguinary strife, nor is there any place for individual vendetta. It is not the cult of the bomb and pistol. By revolution we mean that the present order of things, which is based on manifest injustice, must change.” (Singh, 2011)\(^{81}\)

His other objection to satyagraha was that it aimed at ‘change of heart’ of the opposition. For Bhagat Singh, such a view was, at best a naivety that failed to gauge the political task at hand. It could be practiced against individuals – even the most hideous ones – but not against a system that was much beyond any individual or group of individuals.

Singh, however, also adopted various forms of struggle such as hunger strike and satyagraha and told his followers that except for the first few days of his career as a revolutionary, he was never a terrorist. However it was undoubtedly Gandhi who perfected the tool of Satyagraha as a potent weapon to fight for the Swaraj that he envisioned.

(ii) Violence

Gandhi was a strict follower of nonviolence (ahimsa) and for him, it was first of all a moral issue: freedom should not be won at the cost of British or Indian lives. He said that if the opponent could be violent, we should

show our moral superiority by not being violent. In addition to morality, for Gandhi non-violence was also a strategy. He preached that by being non-violent, his activists would appeal to the colonial rulers’ conscience and thus convince them to vacate India. The Indian republic formally still upholds the belief that Gandhian strategy of non-violence won India’s freedom (Gandhi, 1990).  

However for Bhagat Singh the question of violence or non-violence was a question of strategy of the political struggle. According to him, the ethical dimension of the struggle, was to be gauged by the objective of the struggle and not the means adopted. As a practical revolutionary, he acknowledged that the methods and forms of the struggle depended a lot on the tactics deployed by the colonial government (Singh, 2011). Bhagat Singh and his comrades developed a rational critique of the utopian element in the ethical normativity that Gandhi infused in his principle. In this perspective, the rationality which Gandhi presupposes for justifying satyagraha is non-existence in the system against which they have raised their canons. For Bhagat Singh, the foundations of colonialism in India rested on exploitation and imperialist plunder of the Indian people. The vile irrationality of such a

system, in the view of the revolutionaries, required uncompromising political struggle and not any kind of moral persuasion.

Although Bhagat Singh’s acts of violence were heroic and truly patriotic yet they yielded not much success because the masses were not ready for violence, and the political leadership also had opted for another strategy. On the other hand, Gandhian non-violence resonated with the Indian masses and offered them a chance to serve the nation. But it is to be noted here that Bhagat Singh was not a blind follower of violence. He is misportrayed as an icon of violence. He himself has once said that except for the first few days of his career as a revolutionary, he was never a terrorist.

The nephew of the freedom fighter and revolutionary Bhagat Singh, Prof. Jagmohan Singh has also observed that Bhagat Singh believed in the principle of Non-Violence. He stated that Bhagat Singh also believed that sustainable peace can only be brought through the Non-Violent means; it was just that he used force for selective purposes (Singh, 2005).\(^{84}\) The points of convergence and divergence between the ideologies of both the leaders have been summarized in the following table:

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ideology</th>
<th>Mahatma Gandhi</th>
<th>Bhagat Singh</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic tenets of</td>
<td>Swaraj</td>
<td>Socialism, rationalism and democracy</td>
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<tr>
<td>philosophy</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sarvodaya i.e. upliftment of all</td>
<td>Anarchism and anti-capitalism in sync with</td>
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<td>Dignity of labor and an equitable</td>
<td>Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam</td>
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<td>distribution of wealth</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Social equality without any</td>
<td>Labour as the real sustainer of society</td>
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<td>discrimination based on caste or</td>
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<td></td>
<td>religion</td>
<td>Secularism and atheism so as to disregard caste or</td>
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<td>religion based discrimination</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Upliftment of untouchables and</td>
<td>Upliftment of untouchables and referred to them as</td>
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<td></td>
<td>referred to them as Harijan</td>
<td>the “real working class”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perception of</td>
<td>Freedom is the full expression of</td>
<td>Freedom is an imperishable birthright of all</td>
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<tr>
<td>freedom</td>
<td>personality</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Freedom is no narrow conception.</td>
<td>Freedom is a state of being where individuals are</td>
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<td></td>
<td>It is co-extensive width the</td>
<td>able to express their creativity unhindered by</td>
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<td></td>
<td>freedom of man in all his majesty</td>
<td>constraints of both material scarcity and</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>coercive social institutions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Gandhi said, “Swaraj for me</td>
<td>Bhagat Singh warned against mere replacement of a</td>
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<td>means freedom for the meanest of our</td>
<td>white rule at Delhi by a brown rule. He said that</td>
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<td></td>
<td>countrymen. I am not interested in</td>
<td>if in place of Lord Reading, Sir Purushottam</td>
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<td></td>
<td>freeing India from the English</td>
<td>Das Thakur becomes the representative of the</td>
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<td></td>
<td>yoke. I am bent upon freeing India</td>
<td>government, how would</td>
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<td></td>
<td>from any yoke whatsoever. I have no</td>
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<td></td>
<td>desire to exchange King Log for King</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stork.</td>
<td>this affect people? How would a peasant be affected if Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru comes in place of Lord Irwin?</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gandhi emphasized that Swaraj means implementation of a system whereby the state machinery is virtually nil, and the real power directly resides in the hands of people.</td>
<td>Bhagat Singh emphasized on anarchism which advocates stateless societies or self-governed voluntary institutions. He clarified that anarchism refers to the absence of a ruler and abolition of the state, not the absence of order.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Gandhi said: &quot;In such a state (where swaraj is achieved) everyone is his own ruler.” He propounded that power resides in the people; they can use it at any time.</td>
<td>Bhagat Singh’s vision was not only to transfer the power from the hands of the British to the Indians, but to those Indians who belong to working class.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategic tools for achieving freedom</strong></td>
<td><strong>Satyagraha and non-violence (ahimsa)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Revolution</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Gandhi propounded satyagraha as a form of ethical-political operation to reinforce rationality in an otherwise irrational and inhuman system of oppression that denied humanity of its essential dignity. | Bhagat Singh criticized the upliftment of satyagraha from a political strategy to a vague moral appeal. He advocated revolution and clarified, “Revolution is not the cult of the bomb and pistol. By revolution we mean that the present order of things, which
Gandhi considered non-violence both as a moral issue and a political strategy. He was of the view that violent means will give violent freedom.

He was a strict follower of non-violence. However he advised that everyone need not keep to non-violence, especially if it were used as a cover for cowardice, saying, "where there is only a choice between cowardice and violence, I would advise violence."

For Bhagat Singh, violence or non-violence were merely strategic tools of the political struggle. He differentiated between violence and force. He was not in favour of irrational violence but considered the use of physical force important when challenged by tyrannical forces.

He wrote on one occasion “What happens when a non-violent attempt fails to achieve the objective? It is here that soul force has to be combined with physical force so as not to remain at the mercy of tyrannical and ruthless enemy.”

For Bhagat Singh, violence or non-violence were merely strategic tools of the political struggle. He differentiated between violence and force.

He was a strict follower of non-violence. However he advised that everyone need not keep to non-violence, especially if it were used as a cover for cowardice, saying, "where there is only a choice between cowardice and violence, I would advise violence."

Aspects of freedom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National independence</th>
<th>Freedom from foreign rule and handing over of power to people</th>
<th>Freedom from imperialism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sovereignty of the people based on pure moral authority and not only the expulsion of English from India rather</td>
<td>Freedom from colonial subjection as well as internal exploitation and not merely a replacement of a white rule at</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political freedom</td>
<td>Full liberty to all individuals</td>
<td>Freedom from all sorts of tyrannical forces</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Right to choose without any fear of oppressive force</td>
<td>Reconstruction of the whole society on the socialist basis i.e. construction of a stateless society by following anarchism</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Access to basic rights like right to freedom of religion, speech, press; right to be treated equally; right to freedom of association; right of minorities to religion and education; right to private property and right to form unions etc.</td>
<td>Rule of poor workers and peasants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic freedom</td>
<td>Entire freedom from British capitalists and capital, and also their Indian counterpart</td>
<td>Anti-capitalism i.e. replacement of capitalism with a moneyless society through a collective public control over the means of production or by facilitating direct worker ownership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Equality between poorest and rich</td>
<td>Proletariat as the Vanguard of Revolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spiritual freedom</strong></td>
<td>He said, “India would only attain complete freedom when the poor workers and peasants would rule the country.”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Freedom from the narrow divisions of caste, religion, race, gender and nationality</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-rule i.e. the elimination of internal obstacles to freedom</strong></td>
<td>Atheism and secularism i.e. elimination of religious fanaticism from society and promotion of common nationalism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-rule as a tool for awakening social and political conscience</strong></td>
<td>He was of the view that caste or religion based discrimination was giving impetus to the ‘Divide and Rule’ policy of British rulers.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

He believed that through self-rule, an individual develops a will power to get free and when that happens, no force can enslave him or her.

He wanted to unite people in the freedom struggle irrespective of their religious beliefs.

He said, “It is my certain conviction that no man loses his freedom except through his own weakness.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class system</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gandhi</strong> was against the class system and dreamt of an India in which all communities shall live in perfect harmony.</td>
<td><strong>Bhagat Singh</strong> believed in a completely independent society, free from all social discrimination based on caste or religion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To bridge the gap between the rich and the poor Gandhi pioneered the trusteeship principle.</td>
<td>He aimed to eradicate class based exploitation from Indian society through social restructuring and for this he emphasized the need of a socialist revolution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gandhi</strong> rejected class warfare and class-based revolution, because these may result in social violence.</td>
<td><strong>Bhagat Singh</strong> advocated revolution and said, “Revolution does not necessarily involve sanguinary strife, nor is there any place in it for individual vendetta. It is not the cult of the bomb and the pistol. By ‘Revolution’ we mean that the present order of things, which is based on manifest injustice must change….For this capture of state power is necessary. The state apparatus is now in the hands of the privileged class.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crux of ideology</td>
<td>Mahatma Gandhi’s Views on Bhagat Singh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truth, non-violence and peace</td>
<td>Gandhi, despite his disapproval of Bhagat Singh’s actions, regarded his sacrifice a patriotic one, and described his death as a great loss to nation. He mentioned that:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Brave Bhagat Singh and his two associates have been hanged. Many attempts were made to save their lives and even some hopes were entertained, but all was in vain. Bhagat Singh did not wish to live. He refused to apologize; declined to file an appeal. If at all he would agree to live, he would do so for the sake of others; if at all he would agree to it, it would be in order that his death might not provoke anyone to indiscriminate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| | Bhagat Singh urged the workers to unite and take power in their own hands so as to free themselves from the shackles of capitalists. |
| | Long live revolution (Inquilab Zindabad) and Down with imperialism. |

Table: A comparison between the ideologies of Mahatma Gandhi and Bhagat Singh
murder. Bhagat Singh was not a devotee of non-violence, but he did not subscribe to the religion of violence; he was prepared to commit murder out of a sense of helplessness. His last letter was as follows: “I have been arrested while waging a war. For me there can be no gallows. Put me into the mouth of cannon and blow me off.” These heroes had conquered the fear of death. Let us bow to them a thousand times for their heroism.” (“Mahatma Gandhi on Bhagat Singh”, 2013)\textsuperscript{85}

**Bhagat Singh's Views on Mahatma Gandhi**

Bhagat Singh believed that Gandhi and leaders like him are not true representatives of society. He called them only the representatives of upper class who do not care of the masses. He wrote,

"No man can claim to know a people's mind by seeing them from public platform and giving them Darshan and Updesh. Has Gandhi, during recent years, mixed in the social life of masses? Has he sit with the peasant round the evening fire and tried to know what he thinks? Has he passed a single evening in the company of a factory labourer and shared with him his vowes? We have, and therefore we claim to know what the

masses think." (Singh, 2011). He also never believed in Gandhi's ways to attain freedom, in spite of being non-violent himself and an active participant in non-cooperation movement.