



Bhagat Singh

There were so many leading lights in India's freedom struggle. India's fight for independence was a united cause in which thousands of people participated and sacrificed their lives. Indian history is rich with such heroes who made incomparable contributions to the country's freedom. Some of them are still remembered by us even after 60 plus years of achieving freedom. One such legendary fighter was Shaheed Bhagat Singh. He is credited to shape the grand nationalist movement of the country. He was a prominent revolutionary whose role in the freedom struggle of India cannot be measured with words. Born on September 27, 1907 at Banga in Lyallpur district to Kishan Singh and Vidya Vati, Bhagat Singh had patriotism in his blood. His father and uncle, both were great Indian freedom fighters who also served terms in prison for their active participation.

During his school days, Bhagat Singh had actively followed the Non-Cooperation Movement called by Mahatma Gandhi. He was ardent follower of Gandhi Ji's philosophy until Babu withdrew the movement in protest to Chauri Chaura incidents. Bhagat Singh was not convinced with this decision and aligned himself with Young Revolutionary Movement. Bhagat Singh flatly refused to marry to the girl of his family choice citing his passion for India's freedom struggle. He joined various radical and revolutionary groups like Hindustan Republican Association, Kirti Kisan Party and Naujawan Bharat Sabha.

To avenge the death of leading freedom fighter Lala Lajpat Rai, he planned assassination of Scott, the Superintendent of Police who had ordered lathi charge that led to Lala Ji's death. He mistook J.P. Saunders as Scott and killed him instead. He fled to Lahore and to hide his identity, he shaved his beard and cut his hair, against the tenets of Sikhism. After the formulation of Defence of India Act, he and his party members conspired to explode bombs inside the assembly premises. He along with Batukeshwar Dutt threw a bomb in the corridors of the assembly and shouted 'Inquilab Zindabad'.

Bhagat Singh along with Rajguru and Sukhdev was charged with the murder. Singh was asked to tender apology but he refused and made strong statements against the British rule. Bhagat Singh was finally sentenced to death and was hanged in Lahore on March 23, 1931. He was regarded as a Shaheed (Martyr) by his supporters and followers. Indian film industry has made several wonderful films based on the eventful life of Bhagat Singh.

Chandrasekhar Azad was one of the most famous Indian revolutionaries. He was a firebrand revolutionary who terrorised British with his bravery and guerrilla tactics. Chandrasekhar Azad was a contemporary to another fierce warrior, Bhagat Singh. Azad, as he was fondly known among his fellow freedom fighters, inspired generations of young Indians to fight for country's independence. He was a crucial cog in the wheel of national movement for freedom. Chandrasekhar Azad was born to Pandit Sita Ram Tiwari and Jagrani Devi on July 23, 1906 in Badarka (Unnao). Chandrasekhar Tiwari was his original name.

After receiving his early education in Bhavra District in Jhabua, Madhya Pradesh, Chandrasekhar Azad went to the Sanskrit Pathashala at Varanasi for further studies. The turning point in his life came during the Jalianwalabagh massacre in Amritsar in 1919. This incident left him shell-shocked and filled his heart with anger and hatred for English rulers. His first foray into the revolutionary activities took place when he was merely 15 years of age. He also participated in Non-Cooperation Movement for which he was sentenced to whiplashes by the court. There is an interesting anecdote of how he came to own 'Azad' as his surname.

When he was caught by British police and was presented to magistrate, he was asked his name. In response, he said 'Azad' meaning independence. Since that day, Chandrasekhar assumed the title of Azad and was known as Chandrasekhar Azad. Withdrawal of Non-Cooperation movement by Mahatma Gandhi alienated Azad and Bhagat Singh from Gandhi Ji's policies and they decided to follow armed revolutionary way. He was fascinated by violent revolutionary ideals and means. Chandrasekhar Azad carried out several attacks on British officials including the famous Kakori Train Robbery in 1926 and assassination of J.P Saunders in 1928.

Azad became the most wanted freedom fighter for British police but he kept evading them. Such as his terror that British police wanted him dead or alive. One unfortunate day, Azad was betrayed by a close associate of his and was surrounded by heavily armed British officials at Alfred Park, Allahabad. He was asked to surrender but he kept fighting courageously and killed three policemen. But his ammunition soon got exhausted and he shot himself in the head with his last bullet. He preferred to die than being caught by the British.