



Mahatamaji & Netaji: A Bonding Beyond Beliefs

A Retrospective Analysis of the bonding that developed between M.K. Gandhi & S. C. Bose despite their opposed belief system

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Abstract: This paper explores the strange and beautiful relationship of the two contemporary towering figures of the Indian Political struggle and discusses how varied their methods, beliefs and values were. They both had same end(aim) in mind but their ways were different. Though Subhash was influenced by Gandhi in the beginning, however with due course of time, the former chose to part his ways from the Mahatma to go on his own way and proceed on the path of freedom struggle for India because of the inherent differences in his ideology and approach from the Mahatma. The valley of views only became wider and wider with the time but the initial bonds of personal affection remained intact despite the serious and deep differences between them. Gandhi had a deep psychological impact over the young impressionable mind of Subhash and on Mahatma Gandhi's call, Subhash sacrificed his glorious and promising career on altar of national politics only to plunge deep for saving the motherland from the foreign shackles of slavery. Though soon disenchanted with Gandhi's lack of concrete fool-proof methodology as perceived by Subhash and also his slowness, the young impatient Subhash would get frustrated quite often and thus he was forced to carve his own way to freedom, to devise his own methods based on his own individual beliefs and principles. Had he been fully convinced with Gandhi's plan and methods, he would have worked under Gandhi's guidance and would have remained his mere shadow, the country would not have witnessed the culmination of a great patriot in the form of Subhash who later organized the Indian National Army fearlessly, mobilizing foreign support around the world for the poor motherland and going abroad to seek help for the country. The more dissatisfied and disenchanted he was with the Gandhian methods, the more determined and vigorously & desperately he sharpened his ways to strike deeper and stronger at the British. However, before doing anything significant, every time he considered and thought what would Gandhi think about his action, how would he react, will he call his action patriotic or unpatriotic. He shuddered at the thought of being called "unpatriotic" by Gandhi. Both praised each other profusely every now and then. They admired each other, valued each other's efforts and contribution in the freedom struggle, trusted each other but never approved of each other's ways and ideologies. Gandhi admired Subhash as a great Patriot while Subhash considered Gandhi as an undisputable charismatic leader of the masses. Both held each other in great respect but knew in their heart of the hearts that though their ends were same, their ways were totally different from each other. They had differences in opinion without having personal differences. Though they openly admitted honest differences in opinion, they never permitted these differences to permeate in their relationship nor allowed it to turn sour due to these differences. As a matter of fact, they chose to agree to disagree amicably.

Index Terms – Ideological Differences, mutual respect and admiration, Contemporary Indian politics, similarities in approach, unique bond

I. INTRODUCTION

Subhash Chandra Bose was sent by his father Janaki Nath Bose (a well-off public prosecutor in Cuttack) to England to keep him away from the nationalism of Bengal and to carve out a lucrative career for himself. Soon as expected, he passed the Indian Civil Services with flying colors. He secured 4th rank and highest marks in English. The thought of white skinned people serving him and cleaning his shoes thrilled him. However soon the unfortunate Amritsar massacre (13th April 1919) took place. The horrors of Jallianwala Bagh angered the Indians and Gandhi gave the call to all the Indians to renounce all British titles and appointments. This triggered the dormant nationalism in Subhash and he immediately made up his mind to resign from the service. His family tried to convince him a lot but ultimately all arguments subsided When Subhash was adamant with the view that continuing to serve British after what has happened is nothing less than slain of one's self-respect, ideals and principles. Therefore, fully convinced, he returned to his motherland and on the same day met Gandhi. This return marks his plunge into the active Indian politics.

II. THE 1ST MEETING OF SUBHASH WITH GANDHIJI

Subhash Chandra Bose met Mahatma Gandhi for the first time at Mani Bhawan in Bombay on 16th July 1921. Their maiden encounter was a historic one and drew the outline of their relationship over the coming quarter of a century. Gandhi was surrounded by a bunch of his followers, all clad in hand-woven khadi which made Subhash a bit uneasy and ashamed of his western outfit. However, Gandhi's gentle smile restored him to comfort. He was curious to know Gandhi's action plan in detail. In his own words, "I began to heap question over question and the Mahatma replied with habitual patience."¹ He asked three questions to him, "Firstly, how were the different activities conducted by the Congress going to culminate in the last stage of the campaign, namely the non-payment of taxes? Secondly, how could mere non-payment of taxes or civil disobedience force the government to retire and leave us with freedom. Thirdly, how could the Mahatma promise "Swaraj i.e., home -rule within one year as he had been doing ever since the Nagpur Congress? The reply to the First question satisfied him but the answer to the last two questions failed to satisfy him and at the end of an hour 's conversation, in his own words, "Though I tried to persuade myself at the time that there must have been a lack of understanding on my part , my reason told me again and again, that there was a deplorable lack of clarity in the plan which the Mahatma had formulated."² So he was extremely disappointed to know that Gandhi relied on non-violence to change the heart of the opponent. This disenchanted Subhash and it was this dissatisfaction that made him to disassociate himself with the Gandhian ways. Utterly disappointed, on Gandhi's suggestion, he returned to Calcutta to work under Chittranjan Das, an aggressive Bengali nationalist who later on became his mentor till the latter's death in 1925. Bose joined the Indian National Congress and became active in the left youth wing.

III. BOSE AND GANDHI DIFFERED ON SEVERAL GROUNDS BUT THEY ACCEPTED THESE DIFFERENCES IN EACH OTHER'S OPINION. THE MAIN DIFFERENCES WERE:

a) THE CONCEPT OF SWARAJ

While Subhash Chandra Bose wanted complete freedom from the foreign shackles in all senses of the term, Mahatma Gandhi defined swaraj to mean 'self -government within the British empire if possible and outside if necessary.' His definition was vague and mis-leading as it meant self-rule in certain spheres within the empire. However young Subhash as early as 1914 dreamt day and night about a free India. He believed political freedom to be indivisible and meant complete independence of foreign control and tutelage.³ He was inspired by the ideal of sacrifice set by Aurobindo Ghosh.

Presiding over the All-Bengal Youth League in December 1923, Subhash advocated "complete Independence as India's goal rather than the beautiful but vague swaraj which Gandhiji had refused to define concretely."⁴ When Subhash along with Nehru passed a resolution at the Madras Congress of December 1927, declaring complete national Independence to be the national goal of Indians, Gandhi rejected it by saying that time was not ripe for such a drastic and ambitious aim. According to him, the resolution was "hastily conceived and thoughtlessly passed".⁵

According to Gandhi, His swaraj was poor man's swaraj. He wanted Ram-Rajya for the people. The necessities of life should be enjoyed by the haves and the have-nots alike. He was convinced that till the ordinary amenities are available to the poorest man, the swaraj cannot be Poorna Swaraj. However later on, Gandhi himself in the Lahore Congress in December 1929, passed the resolution advocating complete Independence.

b) RELIGION AND POLITICS

Subhash was not in favor of mixing religion with politics but Gandhi did not mind combining both. In fact, Gandhi was in favor of "spiritualized politics". Let's not forget the Khilafat question which Gandhi looked upon as an opportunity to unite both the Hindus and the Muslims.

The analytical and rational mind of Subhash refused to accept the intermingling of religion and politics. While visiting the Chettiar Temple in Singapore, he was asked to collect funds for the ongoing freedom movement, Subhash refused the offer by saying that temple was a place of worship and religion should not be mixed with affairs of state. However, on repeated requests, He agreed only on the ground that he would take with him a band of followers ranging from soldiers to officers belonging to different castes and creed.

On the other hand, Gandhi laid great stress on the spiritual side of the Civil Disobedience movement by saying "politics bereft of religion was a death trap". He believed that only through the marriage of religion and politics could there be an upliftment of morality in politics. Gandhi's attitude of stressing the spiritual side of the movement was disliked by many contemporary leaders including Subhash. Even the use of words like "Ram-Raj" as a golden age was abhorrent to Subhash. He was of the firm opinion that combining both religion and politics could wreck a havoc on the integrity of the Nation.

c) ECONOMIC ASPECT OF SWARAJ

Both Gandhi and Subhash wanted India to be a free nation. Gandhi wanted free India to be an embodiment of Ram-Rajya whereas Subhash envisaged free India to be an advanced industrialized state. Gandhi considered India to be his Karmabhumi (Land of duties) and not Bhogabhumi (Land of enjoyment). The ideal of Simple living and high thinking allured him. However, the rationality of Subhash rejected the renunciation of Gandhiji. To him, the spinning wheel and potter's wheel were mere symbols of primitive life. He wanted India to quickly get rid of her poverty and march towards development in leaps and bounds through modern means of production, advanced machines and reforms of socialism. Gandhi was not in favor of such mechanization. He feared that the craze for machinery would generate unemployment and concentrate wealth in few hands.

d) NON-VIOLENCE AS A POLITICAL TECHNIQUE

For Gandhi, non-violence was the first thing always on his agenda. It was the first and the last article of his creed. Gandhi advocated Ahimsa as the only means to gain freedom for India. According to him, He would not care to live in free India, if the freedom attained by India was through violent means. In his own words, “My patriotism is subservient to my religion. India would cease to evoke any pride in me.”⁶ However, Subhash had little faith in the Gandhian strategy of non-violent non-cooperation which made room for negotiation, bargain, compromise and conciliation.⁷ He was of the opinion that non-violence was one of the factors that brought about a downfall of India. He was in painful disagreement with Gandhi that India should refrain from modern warfare and remain in peaceful contentment by adhering to Ahimsa to the most absurd length. What he stood for was “an uncompromisingly militant plan of action”. He firmly believed that the British rulers could be uprooted from Indian soil by solid militant action which is why in his last message to the INA he advocated violence as the only technique to attain liberation for India.

e) MILITANT NATIONALISM V/S RELUCTANT NATIONALISM

Another sign of ideological discord appeared between them both on the form of different strategies they followed regarding nationalism. Subhash was a thorough nationalist. His nationalistic fervor was reflected in whatever he did right from his resignation from civil services to his INA formation, he always exhibited unparalleled nationalism. Both of them suffered lot of racial insults at the hands of British but while Gandhi’s spirituality helped him swallow these insults and forgive the wrong-doer by assigning him his own valid reasons, on the other hand, Bose’s young blood would boil at such instances and his rationality could never make him forget the rude bitterness. The latter wanted to get back through armed militant action what rightfully belonged to the Indians and what was unjustly snatched from them. He was not ready for any kind of compromise with the British and wanted nothing less than Complete freedom while Gandhi wanted dominion status within the British Empire. With long and prayerful discipline, he had learned how not to hate anybody.

However, one thing was certain that such instances of inter-racial character which both of them suffered personally made them strong, confident and determined to fight back in their own way which they deemed fit.

f) ATTITUDE TOWARDS WAR STRATEGY

During the World War II, Bose wanted to take advantage of the situation and use it to India’s benefit but Gandhi was of the view that such an action would be ethically inappropriate on India’s part. For Subhash, English difficulty was India’s opportunity. He wanted to surround England from all the sides, pressurize her internationally and thus gain freedom for India but Gandhi thought it was ungraceful for a true satyagrahi to take advantage of enemy’s weakness and was nothing less than back-stabbing. His attitude till Amritsar massacre was much pro-British and the only charge that Gandhi had against the British was “oppression of the poor”.

Subhash wanted to stir the nation to immediate action while utilizing the golden opportunity of war. His fiery speeches did move many hearts but Gandhi said, “There can be no question of my approval of Subhash Babu’s policy. The old difference between us persists. This does not mean that I doubt his sacrifice or patriotism.”⁸

IV. THE LAST MEETING OF SUBHASH AND GANDHI

Three months after the Ramgarhi anti-compromise conference and just after the Nagpur Forward Bloc conference, Subhash went to Sevagram, in Wardha on 20th June 1940 to appeal to Gandhi for the very last time to lead the congress in the international crisis and thus utilize this opportunity for India’s benefit but all his ardent appeals went in vain.

The only witness to this last meeting between them was Natha Lal Parekh, a very close associate and friend of Subhash Chandra Bose who accompanied him to Sevagram. He has described its details in his reminiscences.

Subhash tried to convince Gandhi to launch a mass movement that would get response from the whole countrymen and would pressurize the British to leave God’s beloved Country (India). However, Gandhi replied, “even if the nation is ready, at a moment like this, I must not do anything that is inopportune.” To which Subhash said at least give me your blessings for starting such a movement but even this request was turned down by Gandhi, “You don’t need my blessings Subhash! How can I bless a movement which I consider inopportune? You have got the quality of a great leader and if your conscience tells you that it is the best time for striking out, go ahead and do your best. If you come out successful, I shall be the first one to congratulate you.”⁹ Even Subhash, according to Ganpuley had decided in his heart of the hearts that if ever he was to succeed, he would straight-away come to Gandhi to be blessed by him.

V. SIMILARITIES BETWEEN GANDHI & BOSE

Both Gandhi and Bose were honest and highly principled. They were sincere in accepting their mutual differences and transparent in their dealings towards each other. Both Gandhi and Subhash never questioned each other’s devotion and sacrifice for the country. They both were courteous and had disciplined themselves to honor the other even if the person is supporting opposite ideas.

a) SAME GOAL

Both Gandhi and Subhash dreamt day and night of a free India. According to Nathalal Parekh, out of twenty-four hours a day, Subhash dreamt for twenty hours with open eyes for India to be a free Country. He once in Calcutta, had an ecstatic blessed vision everything lit up and he experienced divine significance of human existence, this vision continued to inspire and thrill him later on in life whenever he felt little depressed, it gave him redoubled energy to fight back with double vigor for the freedom of India. For

accomplishing this great goal before him, he had decided to stay a brahmachari all his life like Gandhiji decided for himself though a little late in life, However, destiny had some other plans for him when he found his soul-mate Emile Schenkel.

Initially, Gandhi wanted India to be free from oppression and exploitation of all sorts, that could be under the British or detached from British. He had faith in the goodness of the British however it was later on after the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, that his view point underwent a serious change and he began to think of Dominion status within the British Empire and in Lahore Congress in 1929, he himself passed the resolution of Poorna Swaraj and thus complete Independence became his aim as well. Though Subhash had clarity of vision since his early childhood that India should be a completely free country, free from all kinds of foreign shackles.

b) SECULAR OUTLOOK

Both of them were completely secular in their outlook. In the Azad Hind Fauz, there was no discrimination of any kind. The Hindus, the Muslims, the Christians and the Sikhs all were equally treated. They lived and dined together as brothers and sisters just as in any of Gandhi's ashrams- be it Tolstoy, Sabarmati or Phoenix, the people of all religions, belonging to all caste and creed lived and dined together as brothers and sisters.

c) SIMILAR OUTLOOK TOWARDS WOMEN

They both respected Women and wanted the women in India to uplift their position and participate as much as possible in the freedom struggle. Gandhi detested child marriages, female illiteracy, devadasi system, dowry system and poor plight of Muslim women. His heart specially bled upon seeing the child widows. He had urged the young unmarried men around him to marry only the child widows. In all his ashrams, all women were treated as equal to men and there was no purdah system.¹⁰ Attributing the slavery of India to ill-treatment of women and child -widows, Gandhi once said, "I am superstitious enough to believe that all such sins that a nation commits react upon it physically. I believe that all such sins of ours have accumulated together to reduce us to a state of slavery."¹¹ He wanted women to have equal voting rights and equal legal status as men. Gandhiji believed that women should come out of their kitchens to take part in active national politics. They should not make only cooking for the family the ultimate aim of their lives, they should utilize their time in achieving worthwhile goals and nothing was more worthwhile than national freedom.

Subhas worked hard towards the upliftment of women and their emancipation in his own self-devised ways. He created the Rani Jhansi Brigade exclusively for women led by captain Dr. Laxmi Swaminathan. He believed that it is impossible for one-half of the nation to win liberty without the active sympathy and support of the other half.¹² Subhash encouraged Latika Ghosh, the niece of Sri Aurobindo Ghosh to organize Rashtrya Mahila Sangh whose first president was his mother Prabhavati Bose, vice-president was Bhikhabati, Sarat's wife and Bina and Kalyani Das (the daughters of Beni Madhav Das, his headmaster at Ravenshaw college) were its members.¹³ Bose was an ardent supporter of widow remarriage and abolition of the purdah system.

d) PANCHAYATI RAJ

Gandhi talked of Ram-Rajya and gram swaraj or Panchayat Raj as his concept of the State in free India. He wanted India to flourish as a democratic country based on 'disciplined individual freedom' but he desired its edifice on the village 'panch' as its principal plinth. A Panchayat will be a legislature, judiciary and executive combined to operate for its years of office i.e., perfect democracy based on individual freedom. Similarly, Bose's vision of the political structure of the Indian state was that of a Panchayati Raj like that of Gandhi. He almost echoed the voice of Gandhi when he wrote in the Indian struggle that free India "will seek to build up a new social structure on the basis of the village communities of the past that were ruled by the village panch."¹⁴

VI. CONCLUSION

Some may call Gandhi-Bose relationship as that may of Love-hate relationship, some portray it as a long historic saga of bitter discord but the fact remains that beyond Politics, despite their serious and deep differences in opinion, both Gandhi and Bose shared a very affectionate relationship which is reflected through all their communications, be it their exchange of personal letters or radio addresses.

Bose considered Gandhi as the undisputable and unquestioned leader of the masses. The charismatic personality of Gandhi was so convincing for the masses that lakhs of people were ready to sacrifice their life at Gandhi's beck and call. Let's not forget that it was Bose who in his last address on Azad Hind radio on 6 July ,1944, had proclaimed Gandhi lovingly as "the father of the nation" seeking his blessings and good wishes for the liberation of the motherland. Also, it was Gandhi who during an address to the INA prisoners in 1945-46, addressed Bose as "Netaji". He observed, "Netaji was like a son to me. I came to know him as a lieutenant full of promise under the late Deshbandhu Das"¹⁵

According to Maulana Azad in "India wins freedom", Gandhi was astonished and impressed with Subhash's courage and resourcefulness with which he made an escape from India. He started taking personal interest and cognizance about the INA by 1945-46. In an interview to an American journalist Louis Fischer, Gandhi defended Subhash as "a patriot of patriots". Even Cripps had complained to Azad about Gandhi speaking in glowing terms for Bose to his mother in a telegram as a reaction to a news of his death in an air crash which later on turned out to be fake.¹⁶ According to N.G. Ganpuley, Subhash Chandra Bose always envisaged himself as an essential part and parcel of a bigger National movement under the banner of Gandhi as great the leader at the helm of affairs and he as a faithful follower. Gandhi developed a softness for Subhas after he left the country to launch the struggle from outside.¹⁷

As a matter of fact, Gandhi underwent a sudden, unpredictable change in attitude towards the Government. The change in mental attitude was reflected in his writings in Harijan and the stand he took at the time of Cripps mission and all this shocked even the then eminent congressmen including Azad, Nehru and Rajgopalachari. His rejection of Cripps mission was profusely praised by Subhas

who said that the Mahatma has risen to the occasion. In fact, it is said that Gandhi's political thinking reflected Subhash's thinking at this juncture. When Gandhi gave the clarion call for the Quit India movement, this time he departed from his earlier words and no more talked about non-violence or withdrawal or negotiation but spoke of an "open rebellion". He asked the British to "leave India to God. If that is too much, leave her to anarchy." Subhas's happiness knew no bounds. High spirited Subhas congratulated the people of India in a radio broadcast for moving 'from passive fighting to active fighting'. Do or die battle -cry of Mahatma sounded similar to the future cry of Netaji of the Azad Hind revolution.¹⁸ When Gandhi became the target of British attacks, Subhas defended him and appealed the countrymen to obey Gandhiji. The Quit India movement saw these two parallel running lines of thought converging and Subhash had started thinking it as an alternative to his plan. Netaji always recognized that his Azad Hind revolution abroad was the continuum of the August Revolution of the Mahatma at home.¹⁹

How much concerned was Bose with Gandhiji's well-being is reflected when he once lovingly rebuked Gandhi for risking his precious life at trivial matters at Rajkot by fasting without giving a thought that how much his countrymen needed him. It was out of his sheer reverence for Gandhiji that one of the brigades in Azad Hind Fauz was named after Mahatma Gandhi.

Bose shared warm family ties with the Gandhi family. He regarded Kasturba as a motherly figure. Baa also took care of him when he came to meet Gandhiji at Sevagram in 1940. At the death of Kasturba Gandhi in British custody in prison in Poona at the age of 74, Subhash hailed her as "the mother of all Indians". He said that Kasturba died a martyr's death. "I pay my humble tribute to the memory of that great lady who was a mother to the Indian people and I wish to express my deepest sympathy for Gandhiji in bereavement. No amount of mental torture and physical suffering that the British could inflict on Mahatma Gandhi or the Indian nation will make him budge an inch from the stand he has taken. The only way the sons and daughters of India could avenge her death is by complete destruction of British Empire in India".

They both were martyrs who dedicated their entire life, forsook their career and family to the national cause. They both kept believing that the other one was following the wrong path to achieve national liberty. An unbiased and deep examination will reveal that the respective roles that they both played in the freedom struggle were extremely crucial, instrumental and absolutely remarkable. They together exercised an influence that made the continuance of British rule in India impossible.

Gandhi and Subhash shared a twin dimensional relationship – formal and informal. They loved and admired each other personally but when it came to their ideologies and methods, they chose to remain conspicuously distinct. Sometimes these clashes came out in open for instance at the Haripura and the Tripuri sessions of the congress or in his letter to C.F. Andrews (dated 15.1.1940) when Gandhi referred to Him as "spoilt child" or in his writing in Harijan (dated 3.2.1940) calling him "impatient in the dash of youth" while at other times remained under cover between just the both of them. Despite these things, their mutual relationship was based on truthfulness, transparency, sacrifice and suffering.²⁰ Gandhi once wrote in a letter (dated 2.4.1939) to Subhas, "Though we have discussed sharp differences in opinion between us, I am quite sure that our private relations will not suffer in the least. If they are from the heart, which I believe they are, they will bear the strain of these differences."

They were not political rivals at all. The admiration which Netaji had for Mahatmaji was reflected in the radio broadcast given by Netaji on the seventy -fifth birthday of Gandhiji on 2.10.1943, "The service which Mahatma Gandhi has rendered to India and to the cause of India's freedom is so unique and unparalleled that his name will be written in letters of gold in our national history for all the time. The nearest historical paralleled to Mahatma Gandhi is perhaps Mustapha Kamal Pasha who served Turkey after the defeat in last World war I and who was acclaimed by the Turks as Ghazi."²¹ He praised Gandhi profusely for imparting the much-required confidence to the Indians and also for sending the spark of freedom to the remotest villages of India. Similarly, Gandhiji also almost always reciprocated with equal love and warmth expressed from time to time towards Netaji for instance he wrote a telegram to Subhash suggesting the latter to come and live with him when he was seriously ill so that he can be nursed to health and can regain health while they both slowly confer love.

They had distinct ways of political functioning that did not match. It was such that their personal frequency was always in tune despite the fact that their political frequency was never in sync or at the same wavelength. According to Gandhi, Bose's ways were mistaken and they were not his ways. Initially Gandhi could not digest Bose's joining the axis powers and expressed his dissatisfaction by saying, "My appreciation of his patriotism and sacrifice cannot blind me to the fact that he is still misguided and that his way can never lead to India's deliverance. However, it was only later on that he could come to terms with the Netaji's policies.

Both Gandhi and Subhas had schooled and cultivated discipline among themselves of gracefully dealing with those who were opposed to them in mental constitution. In Gandhi's own words, "By a long course of prayerful discipline, I have ceased for over forty years to hate anybody."²² "Differences in opinion should never mean hostility. If they did, my wife and I should be sworn enemies of one another. I do not know two persons in the World who had no differences in opinion and as I am a follower of Geeta, I have always attempted to regard those who differ from me a matter of perennial satisfaction that I retain generally the affection and trust of those whose principles and policies I oppose."²³ Similar was the case with Bose as well. Netaji Bose was free from any kind of ambitious politics; he wanted no personal gain except gaining freedom for India. This he repeatedly mentioned in his fiery speeches quite often in East Asia that "if the INA succeeded in liberating India he would tops over that freedom to the people and retire into spiritual oblivion. That is why he harbored no rancor or hatred against his contemporaries engaged in freedom struggle. Including Gandhiji. In fact, he looked upon them as his helpful comrades in a common struggle."²⁴

"The Differing strands of their personalities found sublimation in surviving the nation, that was the unifying force which lent them the mantle of greatness. Despite their conflicts and contradictions, they shared the same dreams and hopes, that the two despite all outward differences, were two sides of the same coin- one side displaying the high moral values and ethics of Bharatvarsha and the other the militant, valiant fearless facet of hoary India. Gandhi and Bose together gave meaning to our nationalism. Though poles apart in temperament and attitudes, they basked under the light of patriotism, did their best for the nation."²⁵

Their inter-relationship was that of a very unique kind. It was a bond of deep personal respect and admiration but with a sense of aloofness as far as their principles and ideologies were concerned. Mahatma Gandhi was about twenty-eight years elder to Subhash and the latter respected him like a dear father and looked up to him for ultimate guidance. At every step he would seek Gandhi's blessings. In order to comprehend this unique bonding between them, Let's take a look at what N.G. Ganpuley, a close associate of Netaji has to say, "Subhash Bose, though in all respects a creation of the Gandhian Era, was of a different mould. Yet as many superficial observers have made the mistake of describing Netaji as somebody who was opposing or defying Mahatma Gandhi. This is far from truth. Surprising as it may sound to many, Bose held Mahatmaji to great esteem. Even if he had to differ from the great leader, Subhash always asked himself what would Mahatma think of that. A much more appropriate description of Subhash Bose would be to call him a rebellious pupil of a great master. He was impatient, as a young pupil always is, to the slowness of the Guru's working. Subhash Bose was always confident that Gandhi was a shrewd politician. What he felt was that Mahatmaji's striking power needed greater fury. He only wanted to perfect what he believed to be the angularities of a grand strategy. He did not mind if he differed from Gandhiji but he shuddered if Mahatmaji were ever to think that his action was unpatriotic."²⁶ Thus they shared a rare bonding that transcended their beliefs and rested on the strong edifice of mutual respect of that a seasoned father and a rebellious son, wherein the former disapproves of the novel ways the son wants to try out and the latter wants to go out and eagerly prove himself worthy in the eyes of his able father and the father though confident in his heart of the heart about the abilities of his son, is apprehensive of the shrewd ways of the world.

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