

Introduction to Modern Indian Political Thought
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Lecture – 17
Savarkar: Introduction

Hello and welcome friends to this lecture on Vinayak Damodar Savarkar. And from Savarkar we are going to study his views on Hinduism and Hindutva. Hinduism and Hindutva and his views on Hinduism and critique to Savarkar's views on Hinduism and Hindutva we are going to do in the next lecture. In this lecture we will study basically his personal life; Savarkar as a revolutionary as a patriot or as a political thinker of Hindu nationalism and the different sets and different shifts in his personal intellectual life.

This we will do through looking at some of the key ideas or key thinking in his thought influence on his thought, and basically his views on nation Indian ancient Indian past or Hindu past and also his views on social change or social reforms.

So, in this lecture we are going to basically discuss his personal political life, as well as his intellectual engagement with some of these themes. Now before we also need to seriously reconsider some of the appropriation, misappropriation and also outright rejection that is being done in contemporary political discourse in India; where some takes some thinkers, some idea is either celebrated or completely rejected.

And there is a kind of rigidity in support and in rejection of some ideas some thinkers some text. But when Savarkar was writing so, there is a lot of fluidity or flexibilities of dialogue and discussion even when there is a unbridgeable differences between 2 thinkers or 2 opinions on any issue.

So, one of the example that comes to mind is Gandhi or Savarkar or Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose or Savarkar. They had lot of differences, and yet they were able to communicate with each other and the possibilities of dialog was always open. But somehow that fluidity, that openness to dialogue and discussion even when there is a difference of opinion and unbridgeable differences of opinion, that has certainly shrink in contemporary political discourse. And that is not the healthy one, and that makes the

academic analysis or examination of a thought and ideas even more challenging and certainly complex to do.

Savarkar remains one of such thinker who is celebrated at the same time the opinion about his thought and contribution to his thought remains somewhat divided, among the followers, among the supporter of Savarkar and also those who critiques Savarkar.

So, we have to think about Savarkar and his life and his ideas in such a context, where it becomes increasingly impossible to have the dialogue or conversation even with whom we differ or there are difference a difference of opinion. And his ideas will remain inevitable for any political discourse, even for those who outrightly reject every ideas and opinion that Savarkar had offered.

So, we will look at Savarkar and his thought in this context, and try to examine academically his ideas on Hinduism and Hindutva, and what is the critique to such ideas. So, that is something we need to keep in mind when we engage with Savarkar; as in his time there is lots of fluidity, lots of openness about engaging or having conversation despite of differences.

So, Gandhi went to Savarkar's place to maintain the dialogue or the discussion despite of having serious differences with each other's method and opinion on politics, and the role of religion in politics. Even Subhas Chandra Bose went to meet Savarkar, and there is very less exploration and writings done on that, but they maintain the relationship or the conversation even with those they differ seriously or substantially.

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Introduction

- Vinayak Damodar Savarkar was a revolutionary, patriot, political activist and one of the most prominent intellectuals and founder of Hindu nationalism in modern India. The tradition of Hindu nationalism that began with Tilak, Aurobindo and Lajpat Rai was given a more virulent and rationalistic foundation by Savarkar. And today his name is synonymous with Hindu nationalism or Hindutva. His contributions in the fields of social and religious reforms and struggle for freedom are immense however are by and large ignored.
- Deeply influenced by utilitarianism, rationalism, positivism and pragmatism, Savarkar is also perhaps one of the most celebrated and equally despised thinkers of modern India. However, it is the power and influence of his thought which makes him and his thought inevitable in any political discourse even in contemporary India.
- Being situated in the larger framework of Hindu nationalism, he can be seen in response to two distinct historical trajectories in colonial India. Firstly, he belongs to the radical and revolutionary strand of middle class Indians who rose in reaction to the limitation or ineffectiveness of the moderates. Secondly, as a result of the divide and rule policy of the British there developed an environment of social tensions between different communities in India such as Hindus and Muslims, Hindus and Depressed classes, Hindus and Sikhs, Hindus and Jains etc. It also had a dangerous influence on the body politic of anti colonial freedom struggle in India and provided the psychological and material background for future communal politics. In such context, Savarkar was trying to consolidate Hindu community and nationalize their history, politics and 'glorious past' in all walks of Indian life.

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So, to think about Vinayak Damodar Savarkar and his ideas in such a context, we see a kind of shift or a kind of evolution of Savarkar as a revolutionary. So, first and foremost Savarkar was a great revolutionary thinker and he was deeply influenced by the nationalist ideals of Mazzini Garibaldi and many other nationalists. So, in my diagram Savarkar we find him as a revolutionary patriot, political activist and one of the most prominent intellectual and the founder of Hindu nationalism in modern India.

The tradition of Hindu nationalism in modern Indian political thought began much earlier than Savarkar. So, these ideals of Hindu nationalism which began with Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Aurobindo Gosh and Lala Lajpat Rai; Vinayak Damodar Savarkar gave it a more virulent or rationalistic foundation. And today therefore, Savarkar's name and his political thought and philosophy is almost synonymous with Hindu nationalism or Hindutva.

And his contribution in the fields of social and religious reforms, and struggle for freedom are immense; however, it is less and less explored and largely ignored by his critique, because of his reduction or his synonymous with the Hindu Hindutva or in Hindu ideas. But Savarkar was equally a revolutionary a patriot or wanted to reform society and religion as well especially the will practices dogmas and superstitions in religion.

So, that part of Savarkar in contemporary discourse and debate zones on his ideas and thought is by and largely ignored. So, that we have to focus equally when we discuss about his ideas on Hinduism and Hinduthva.

Now, deeply influenced by utilitarianism, rationalism, positivism and pragmatism, so Savarkar in his politics and thought was deeply influenced by this rationalistic utilitarian philosophy or positivism of the contemporary analytical philosophy, and also the pragmatism in the politics and he never thought of achieving something which is otherworldly which is divine. So, he understood the possible pragmatic objectives that a human being or a society can aspire to.

And therefore, a lot of views on same morality or ethics or whether violence or non violence should be used as a political tool or not, he had a very pragmatic approach other than Gandhian kind of absolute position on the application of non violence and such method in politics. So, in Savarkar we find the influence of pragmatism, rationalism and utilitarianism in his philosophy and also political thought.

So, Savarkar is also perhaps one of the most celebrated and therefore, equally despised thinkers of modern India; however, it is the power and influence of his thought which makes him and his thought inevitable in any political discourse even in contemporary India. So, his stature or the influence of his thought is perhaps more (Refer Time: 09:17) more dominate dominating in our contemporary politics than in his time. And his critique is also grown tremendously. And yet his supporter or his critique cannot ignore the powerful ideas and in influence of Savarkar about nation, state, democracy and social and religious relationships, harmony or reforms.

So, Savarkar remains inevitable in the political discourse even in contemporary times even by those who despise Savarkar. And that is the power, the influence of his thought and his ideas on Indian politics or imagination of nation. Being situated in the larger framework of Hindu nationalism, Savarkar can be seen in response to 2 distinct historical trajectories unfolding in colonial India.

The first world he belongs to the radical and revolutionary stance of middle class Indians, who rose in reaction to the limitation or ineffectiveness of the moderates. So, first stands as it was unfolding during the colonial era was the growing feeling against the effectiveness of moderate leaders of the congress. So, Savarkar belonged to such

group of radicals and revolutionaries who developed a critique of moderates and their method of politics.

And second which was related to the colonial policy of divide and rule. So, as a result of divide and rule policy of the British, they developed an environment of social tensions, between different communities in India, such as Hindu and Muslims on the one hand, Hindu and depressed classes on the other, Hindus and Sikhs on the another, and Hindus and Jains on the other. So, there are growing tension and estrangement among and between different communities in India. Savarkar was responding to such growing estrangement or tensions among the communities and trying to consolidate Hindu committee for from further fragmentation or as a result of this divide and rule policy of the colonial government.

In Savarkar's opinion it also had a dangerous influence on the body politic of anti-colonial freedom struggle in India, and provided this psychological and material background for future communal politics. So, this politics of divide and rule as conceptualized and practiced by the British rule provided the psychological and material background for the emergence of communal politics in India. And Savarkar was very concerned about these fragmentation of the Hindu communities, not just on religious land, but also on caste land or any or linguistic lines or regional lines etcetera. So, Savarkar was trying to consolidate Hindu community and nationalize their history politics and glorious past in all walks of Indian life.

So, he was trying to conceptualize a nation or a Hindu nation, in such a way which nationalizes the politics past and glorious history of ancient Hindus and Hindu civilization. And he was trying to limit the consequences or the evil consequences of these divide and rule policies of the British.

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A brief history of his life

- Vinayak Damodar Savarkar was born on 28 May, 1883 in a Chitpavan Brahman family of Maharashtra.
- He was born in a period which was characterized by the vigorous critique of economic and political dimensions of British Raj by one section; and also by the revitalization of religious-cultural traditions of the native population.
- The impact of this period is evident in his childhood. Savarkar was disturbed by the news of communal riots and developed a deep admiration for Hindu traditions and past. He was anguished by the brutal repressions of the British rule and considered it responsible for suppression and devaluation of the pious Hindu traditions. He took a life-long vow to fight the British and regarded as a young firebrand revolutionary by the colonial government.

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Now, if you look at the brief history of Savarkar, we find he was born on 28 May 1883 in a Chitpavan Brahman family in Maharashtra, and he was born in a period which was characterized by the vigorous critique of economic and political dimension of British Raj. So, there was a kind of growing assertion or realization of the exploitative or extractive nature of British rule.

So, Savarkar was developing his critique to British rule on the one hand and consolidating the Hindu community on the other by rewriting their history, their past and preventing it from further fragmentation. Savarkar was developing those thoughts and ideas in this context when there is a kind of increasing realization and growing critique of the economic and political dimensions of British Raj by one section, and also by the revitalization of religious and cultural tradition of native populations.

And this thing we have discussed in our previous lectures as well. Well, there is a kind of critique which was developing against the British rule, at the same time resorting to the cultural or the religious resources of Indian civilization or Indian religious tradition to develop a self-develop a modern Indian self which will give them the confidence to fight against the British.

So, if you remember in one of our lecture we have discussed Partha Chatterjee, the ideas of inner and outer domain. So, the auto domain is the domain of politics and economy; where they thought they need to learn from the British and they can master it. In the

inner domain that is the domain of religion or spirituality they consider themselves superior and nothing to learn with the learn with the bit British.

So, Savarkar was developing his political thought or articulations in a time where there is a growing realization of the economic or political exploitative nature of British rule, and the cultural and religious revitalization of Indian social life. So many thinkers including Gandhi, Tagore, Vivekananda, Aurobindo Gosh, they were all in a way deeply influenced by the cultural and religious traditions of their communities including Iqbal we have discussed in the previous lecture.

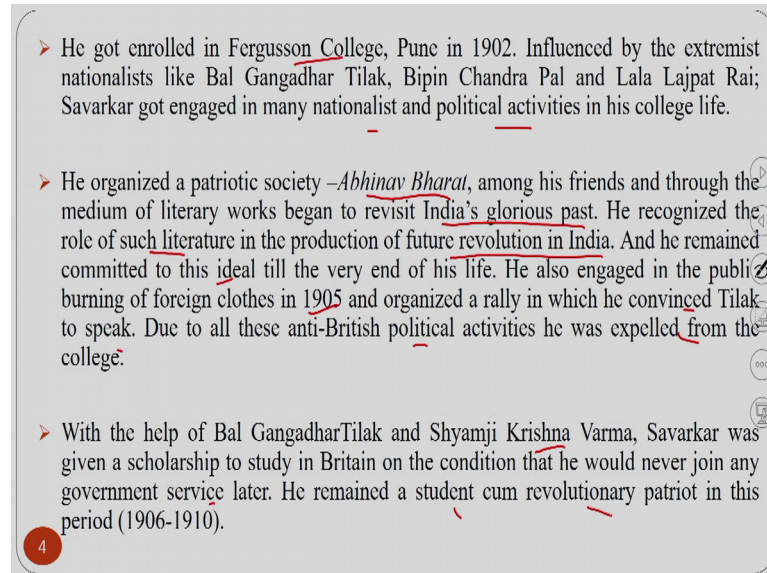
So, the influence of political as well as the cultural religious background on his thought needs to be taken seriously when we try to engage with his thought. This impact of the temporal, the period in which Savarkar was developing his thought is very evident from the earliest days on his life. And he was disturbed by the news of communal rights and developed a deep admiration for the Hindu tradition and past. And he was engaged by the brutal repression of the British rule, and considered it responsible for suppression and devolution of the pious Hindu tradition. And he took a lifelong vow to fight the British and regarded as a young firebrand revolutionary by the colonial government.

So, Savarkar from the early childhood develop a kind of, and because of his elder brothers also younger brothers were also revolutionary active in the politics. So, Savarkar developed a taste for politics from the very beginning. He was deeply disturbed by the growing communal tension and the communal rights, disharmony between Hindus and Muslims, and thought of conceptualizing Indian nationhood or Indian nation on the basis of Hindu religion. And he derived a lot of strength and inspiration from the ancient Hindu glorious past, and try to revive it to develop a Hindu nation or Hindu Rashtra in India.

At the same time, he was also very critical of the brutal repression and suppression of the British rule. There are many instances of such expression. One was a (Refer Time: 17:46) who was hanged by British because they were involved in the assassination of Rand and the who is the colonial administrator who was supposed to look after the victims of the plague, instead of that he was celebrating, and not paying attention to the needs and health and other requirements of the victims of the plague. So, this nationalistic patriotic

feeling in Savarkar was there from the very beginning and he developed it further when he went for higher education in England.

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- He got enrolled in Fergusson College, Pune in 1902. Influenced by the extremist nationalists like Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal and Lala Lajpat Rai; Savarkar got engaged in many nationalist and political activities in his college life.
- He organized a patriotic society –*Abhinav Bharat*, among his friends and through the medium of literary works began to revisit India's glorious past. He recognized the role of such literature in the production of future revolution in India. And he remained committed to this ideal till the very end of his life. He also engaged in the public burning of foreign clothes in 1905 and organized a rally in which he convinced Tilak to speak. Due to all these anti-British political activities he was expelled from the college.
- With the help of Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Shyamji Krishna Varma, Savarkar was given a scholarship to study in Britain on the condition that he would never join any government service later. He remained a student cum revolutionary patriot in this period (1906-1910).

So, after his primary education he enrolled in this Fergusson college in Pune in 1902. And he was influenced by nationalist leaders who differed from the moderate politics within the congress. And if you remember 1907, there was a divide not just between the moderates and the extremists within the congress, but also the growing disenchantment between Hindu and the Muslims. So, congress claim itself secular, but in a position to that there is a growing claim by the Muslim league as the representative of the Muslims of India. Similarly, Hindu Mahasabha and many other religious and the sectarian or magicians were being formed.

So, Savarkar enrolled in this Fergusson College in Pune in 1902, and he was influenced by the politics of Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal and Lala Lajpat Rai. And there he got engaged in many nationalists and the political activities in the college life. Although the college forbid any kind of political activities or anti-government protest and demonstration.

Savarkar continued to organize the youth involved in the protest, organized the demonstration and also invited Tilak; which greatly infuriated many administrators and as well as the teachers in the college.

He organized the a patriotic society called a Abhinav Bharath, which he continued to do and organize and reorganize even in England. So, this Abhinav Bharath he organized in the college among the friends. And through the medium of literary works, began to revisit India's glorious poise. And he was the one who recognized the role of such literature in the production of future revolution in India.

So, there has to be a cultural resources on the basis of which one can imagine oneself, derived the strength and inspiration to fight the operation and suppression of the British rule and create a new Hindu India or revive the glorious past. And he remained committed to this ideal of producing literature or revolutionary literature and it is role in the freedom struggle or in the freedom movement.

So, this production of literature despite of his political activities has shift from a revolutionary patriotic to a founding father of the imagination of Hindu Rashtra or Hindutva. Till the end of his life he continued to write literatures and through that try to revive and articulate his thoughts on Hinduism and Hindu Hindutva. So, this he did till the end of his life.

He also engaged in the public burning of foreign clothes in 1905, if you remember the partition of Bengal, which lead to lot of criticism and protest in different parts of the country. Savarkar organized one such protest of burning foreign clothes, and he convinced Bal Gangadhar Tilak to speak on that occasion. And this infuriated the principal of the college and he was expelled from the college because of this political activities.

Now, with the help of Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Shyamji Krishna Verma who is trying to provide a scholarship to those Indians committed to the freedom struggle and independent movement. So, with the help of Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Shyamji Krishna Verma, Savarkar was given a scholarship, scholarship to study in Britain with the condition that he will never accept government service in his later life. And he remain a student cum revolutionary there and help in the organizing of the political movements and especially the youth, revolutionary youth in Britain from 1906 to 1910.

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- During this period, he was associated with the *Abhinav Bharat Society* which was also known as the Young India Society. He along with his fellow members learned the method of bomb making and other revolutionary activities.
- He was greatly influenced by the Italian revolutionary Mazzini. He wrote a biographical essay of Mazzini in Marathi and translated several essays from the volume *Life and Writings of Joseph Mazzini*. He considered reading Mazzini and Italian history very necessary as it can, in his opinion, serve as a guide to India's struggle for independence.
- He wrote his book *The Indian War of Independence* which was published in 1909. He considers the war of independence synonymously with revolution. He criticized that neglecting the actual long term revolutionary roots of the 1857 struggle, emphasis, in scholarly debates and discussion, was given to the short term accidental causes of this revolution.

During this period, he was associated with Abhinav Bharath society which was also known as Young India Society, and he along with his fellow members learned the methods of many revolutionary tools and techniques, like bomb making and other kind of revolutionary activities there.

He was greatly influenced by Italian revolutionary Mazzini, and he wrote a biographical essay on Mazzini in Marathi, and translated several essays from the volume life and writings of Joseph Mazzini. He considered reading Mazzini and Italian history very necessary as it can in his opinion serve as a guide to India's struggle for independence. So, he had although this is less explored, but he was also intellectually engaged with the revolutionary ideals revolutionary ideals for political freedom or political independence, and himself claimed to be a revolutionary.

So, and this ideas of revolution and revolutionary is very different for say instance communist revolution, or the revolution as conceptualized by Marx. His conception of revolutionary and revolution is very different from such conception or anti-capitalist thinking. And therefore, many scholars refute his contribution in revolutionary thinking, but Savarkar developed a different articulation of revolution. And on that basis he was able to write a very successful or influential treaties on the first war of independence about 1857 revolution. And there he was influenced by Mazzini Garibaldi and many

other Italian nationalist leaders, and he thought that the Italian history of nationalist movement can help as a guide for India in its struggle for freedom against the British.

Then he also wrote this text called the Indian war of independence which is published in 1909, this is the same year when Gandhi published his famous treatise Hindu Swaraj. And it is also interesting to know that Gandhi met Savarka for the first time in England. And then after a long time when Savarkar returned from Andaman to Maharashtra, Gandhi again developed a conversation and personally visited his home to discuss about different methods and tools of freedom struggle.

So, despite of their serious differences that openness to have conversation, to dialogue is something that is missing in our contemporary discourse on these thinkers and their ideals which was there when they were articulating and expressing their differences.

Now, in this text on the Indian war of independence, Savarkar considers the war of independence synonymously with revolution. And he criticized that neglecting the actual long term revolutionary roots of 1857 struggle emphasis in scholarly debates and discussion was given to the short term accidental causes over this revolution. So, for the first time he argued on the 1857 rebellion as if first war of independence and this was very influential and immediately banned by them, but the British government.

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- Savarkar's life in Britain came to an end when he was arrested in the accusation of being involved in the killing of an official of the India office and taken back to India for trial. But, he escaped from the ship when it stopped at Marseilles by swimming back to the shore of France.
- He sought asylum in France but recaptured by the British soldiers. France considered this as an act offending its sovereignty and registered a case in the International Court of Justice. The judgement came in favour of Britain which created a political turmoil in France.
- In India, Savarkar was sentenced to 50 years of imprisonment in Cellular Jail of Andaman. This jail was known for the cruelest environment and higher rate of suicides among the prisoners.

And this text was translated in many Indian languages as well as in European languages, like a Spanish, German, French besides many others. And they had provided a different perspective to the whole struggle of Indian movement, and enable a kind of confidence against fighting the British through revolutionary method and not as Gandhian later developed non-violent movement in the form sathyagrah.

Now, Savarkar life in Britain came to an end when he was arrested in the acquisition of being involved in the killing of an official of the India office and taken back to India for trial. So, Savarkar was developing his revolutionary ideals, and as well as inspiring and involved in many revolutionaries activities also; when he was there in England. When he was transported to India, he escaped from the ship when it stopped at Marseilles by swimming back to the shore of France. He sought asylum in France, but recaptured by the British soldier, and France considered this as an act of offense against their sovereignty, and registered a case in the international court of justice in The Hague. The court gave the judgment in favour of Britain, and this created a political turmoil in France.

So, one can very easily imagine the stature of Vinayak Damodar Savarkar by 1910 or 1909. And it gave him in this instant access to the not just Indian popular movement and leaders, but also in the world. And there was divided opinion on the Savarkar and his method of politics and his involvement in the revolutionary movement, and this happens with a number of nationalist movement. So, when they fight against the oppressor, for the oppressor that fighter or evolutionary may be a terrorist, but for the committee for whom that person is fighting for him he may be a revolutionary or a liberator. So, such opinion was there with them revolutionary or a patriot Savarkar.

Now, in India when he was brought back, he was given the 50 years of imprisonment. This is the double life imprisonment, and that is to in him cellular jail of Andaman, infamous cellular jail in Andaman and this jail was known for which is also known as Kala Pani. So, this is the severest kind of punishment a revolutionary or a political activist can imagine, and he was given 50 years of. So, one can very well imagine the revolutionary zeal in Savarkar thought and his political activities, and why British consider him as the young firebrand revolutionary and he they wrote confidential note to the British official when he went to England for studying law.

So, he was sent to Cellular jail in Andaman, and this was known for the cruellest environment and higher rate of suicide; because many of them would not withstand the harsh treatment of them jailers and also the environment in Andaman. So, the a large number of them committed suicide.

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➤ After the harsh treatments and solitary confinements for 10 years there have been serious attempts for the release of Savarkar. And many nationalist leaders including Gandhi, were involved in putting efforts for the release of Savarkar. He also wrote mercy petition to the British. His petition was heard and he was transferred to other jails in Western India till he was finally released in 1924. Till 1937 his movement was restricted and he was barred from taking any part in political activity.

➤ In this period, he wrote a book *Essentials of Hindutva* under the penname of 'A Maratha'. In this book he describe his philosophy of Hindu nation and how is it different from the religious notion of Hinduism.

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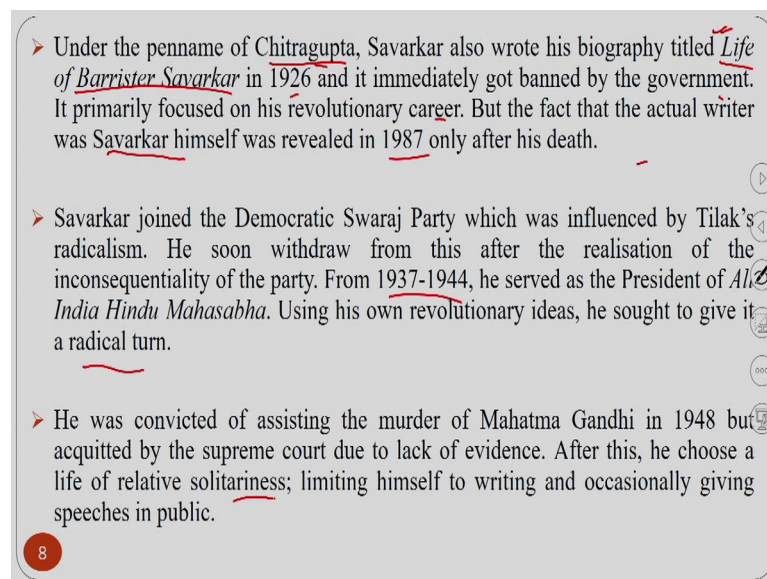
Now the after the highest treatment and solitary confinement for 10 years, there have been serious attempts for the release of Savarkar. And many nationalist leaders including Gandhi were involved in putting efforts for the release of Savarkar. So, despite of their political differences, there are differences in terms of method or imagination of modern India, they regarded they developed the mutual respect for each other's contribution in the freedom struggle in the in the movement. It is very unlikely to happen in the contemporary times where there is a kind of clear-cut separation and less and less dialogue and conversation and mutual acceptance even when maintaining the differences.

So, Gandhi and Savarkar differ from each other seriously substantially, and yet recognize each other's contribution in the freedom struggle. So, for his release many nationalist leaders were putting efforts including the Gandhi, and Savarkar also wrote a mercy petition twice, I believe, mercy petition to the British. And this petition was heard and was and he was transferred to the western India in the Ratnagiri jails, and there was the

condition put on him that he will not involve in any political activities, and will not move out of his district without the prior permission of the authorities.

So, and finally, he was released in 1924 from the jail, until 1937 his movement was restricted and he was barred from taking any part in political activities including the national movement. Now in this period when he was brought back to India, he wrote a text called *Essentials of Hindutva* this becomes the basis of his political thought and later his conceptualization about Hindu Rashtra or Hindutva and how it is different from Hinduism. And this we will discuss in the next class. And this text he wrote in with the pen name A Maratha to conceal his identity from their constant surveillance of the colonial regime. In this book he described his philosophy of Hindu nation and how it is different from the religious notion of Hinduism.

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- Under the penname of Chitragupta, Savarkar also wrote his biography titled *Life of Barrister Savarkar* in 1926 and it immediately got banned by the government. It primarily focused on his revolutionary career. But the fact that the actual writer was Savarkar himself was revealed in 1987 only after his death.
- Savarkar joined the Democratic Swaraj Party which was influenced by Tilak's radicalism. He soon withdrew from this after the realisation of the inconsequentiality of the party. From 1937-1944, he served as the President of *All India Hindu Mahasabha*. Using his own revolutionary ideas, he sought to give it a radical turn.
- He was convicted of assisting the murder of Mahatma Gandhi in 1948 but acquitted by the supreme court due to lack of evidence. After this, he chose a life of relative solitariness; limiting himself to writing and occasionally giving speeches in public.

This we can we will discuss in our next lecture. Savarkar also wrote his biography which is called *Life of Barrister Savarkar*. This he wrote in 1926 under the penname Chitragupta. Now this text which basically deals with his revolutionary life and Savarkar as a revolutionary patriot the patriot thinker, this text got immediately banned by the government and it remains so till India attained independence. It primarily focused on his revolutionary career, but the fact that the actual writer was Savarkar himself. So, somebody writes his own life and what his own life that is called autobiography. But Savarkar wrote a biography which is a third person writing about someone else that is a

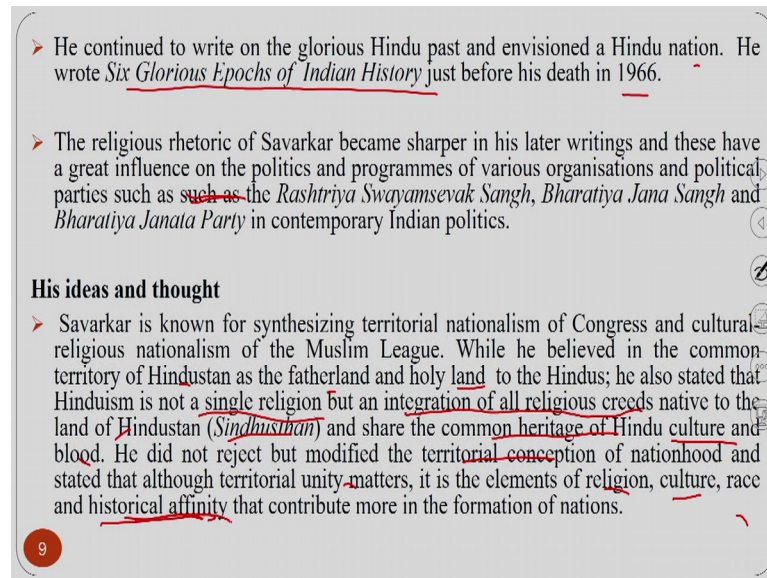
biography; but Savarkar interestingly wrote his own biography, and not the autobiography which later he wrote as a memoir.

So, the point; however, is in this text again Savarkar seriously contemplate about revolutionary and revolution and revolutionary tactics and which method of revolution will be more suitable and appropriate in Indian context. This fact that Savarkar wrote his own biography came to light in 87 much after his death in 1966. Now after his release from jail Savarkar join for a brief moment the democratic Swaraj Party, and soon withdraw from it as if he realized the ineffectiveness or in consequentiality of the party. And from 1937 to 44 he served as the consecutively he served and single handedly prescribed the political program and policies for the realization of Hindu Rashtra.

So, from 1937 to 1944, he served as the president of all India Hindu Mahasabha, and using his own revolutionary ideas he sought to give it a radical turn. So, from then on Hindu Mahasabha began to play a more active, more dynamic and radical role in Indian politics.

Later on in after the independence Savarkar was convicted of assisting in the murder of Mahatma Gandhi or assassination of Mahatma Gandhi in 1948 by Nathuram Godse, he was a Hindu fundamentalist member of right wing Hindu groups. And along with him he was trialed by the government of India. But due to lack of evidence he was acquitted by the Supreme Court. And from then on he chose a life of relative solitary nice limiting himself to writing and giving occasional public speech.

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- He continued to write on the glorious Hindu past and envisioned a Hindu nation. He wrote Six Glorious Epochs of Indian History just before his death in 1966.
- The religious rhetoric of Savarkar became sharper in his later writings and these have a great influence on the politics and programmes of various organisations and political parties such as such as the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, Bharatiya Jana Sangh and Bharatiya Janata Party in contemporary Indian politics.

His ideas and thought

- Savarkar is known for synthesizing territorial nationalism of Congress and cultural-religious nationalism of the Muslim League. While he believed in the common territory of Hindustan as the fatherland and holy land to the Hindus; he also stated that Hinduism is not a single religion but an integration of all religious creeds native to the land of Hindustan (Sindhustan) and share the common heritage of Hindu culture and blood. He did not reject but modified the territorial conception of nationhood and stated that although territorial unity matters, it is the elements of religion, culture, race and historical affinity that contribute more in the formation of nations.

But he continued to write on the glorious Hindu past and envisioned a Hindu nation. And he wrote 6 glorious books of Hindu history just before his death in 1966.

So, the religious the rhetoric of Savarkar became sharper in his later writings, and these have a great influence on politics and programs of various organizations and political parties; such as the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Bharatiya Jana Sang, Bharatiya Janatha party in contemporary politics, they derived a lot of ideas and inspiration from the writings of V Savarkar or Swatantra Veer Savarkar as they call.

Now, to look at his idol and thought, we find in Savarkar a kind of synthesizing of territorial concepts and of nation on the one hand, as defined by congress and many other nationalists. And the religious and cultural notion of nationalism on the other as it was conceptualized by Muslim mix.

Savarkar tried to combine or synthesize between these territorial concepts and of nation, and the religious and the cultural conception of nation. So, while he believed in the common territory of Hindustan as the fatherland and the holy land which he called Pithrabhumi or punyabhumi and more on this in the next lecture.

He also stated that Hinduism not a single religion, but an integration of all religious creeds which includes Buddhism, Jainism, therefore. Natives to the land of Hindustan which he also calls Sindhustan, Sindhu that is the name of a river and on that the name

came a Hindustan. S is pronounced as H in person, and therefore, those who are living in that land depending upon their different religions and linguistic and other differences, they are all Hindus.

So, his definition of Hindu is very different from a religious and a kind of narrow of fundamentalist conception of Hindu and Hinduism. So, therefore, he included Buddhism Jainism within the Hindu fold, because they consider India both as a pithrabhumi or punyabhumi. And he declined such status to some religion because for them the holy land is not in India.

So, for Savarkar Hinduism is not a single religion, but an integration of all religious creed's native to the land of Hindustan. And share the common heritage of Hindu culture and blood. So, there gives a kind of racial conception of Hindu and Hinduthva also. So, he did not reject, but modified the territorial conception of nationhood, and stated that all the territorial unity matters it is the elements of religion culture race and historical affinity that contribute more in the formation of nation.

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➤ His basic contribution to the literature of Hindu nationalism lies in his idea of Hinduism and Hindutva which will be elaborately discussed in the next class. Here the discussion will be limited to his conception of history and other significant contribution to social thought.

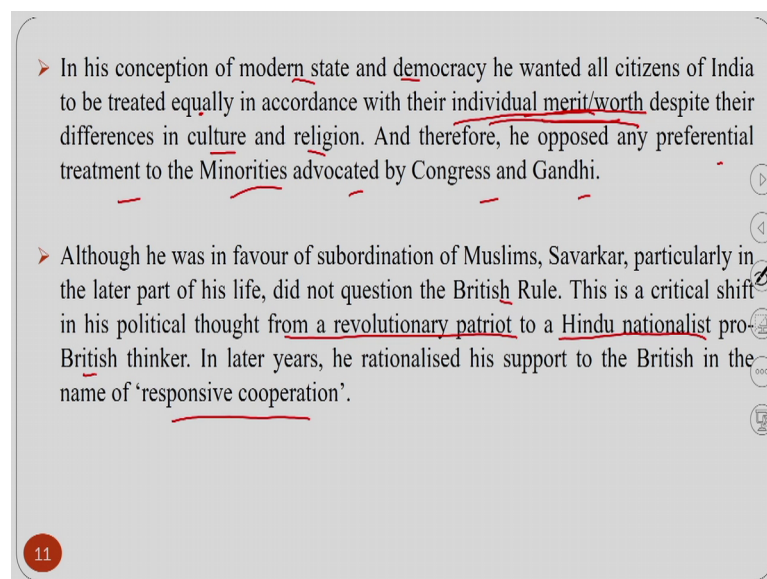
➤ Savarkar was in favour of the ideal of Hindusthan for the Hindus. Occupation of this land by any non-Hindu race was considered an act of aggression. Thus in his views, the right of the non-Hindus of living in Hindusthan depended on their acceptance of the Hindu dominance. This indicates the ideology of cultural chauvinism. Yet Savarkar did not totally negate the right of minorities to co-exist although he made it conditional.

So, his basic contribution to the literature of Hindu nationalism lies in his idea of Hinduism, and Hinduthva which we will elaborately discussed in the next lecture. And here the discussion will be limited to his conception of history and other significant contribution to social thought.

Savarkar was in favour of the ideal of Hindustan for the Hindus, occupation of this land by the non-Hindu race was considered as an act of aggression. This in his views the right of the non-Hindus of living in Hindustan, depended on their acceptance of Hindu dominance. So, Hinduization of national life or quality, this indicates the ideology of cultural chauvinism. Yet Savarkar did not totally negate the right of minorities to coexist although made it conditional. So, this we can discuss further in the next lecture, but in his conceptualization of Hindu Rashtra or Hindu nation, he did not negate completely the right of minorities. He made it conditional to their acceptance of this land as a Hindu nation.

Now, in his conception of modern state and democracy also we find, he wanted all citizens to be treated equally in accordance with their individual merit or worth, without any consideration to their cultural and religious differences.

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➤ In his conception of modern state and democracy he wanted all citizens of India to be treated equally in accordance with their individual merit/worth despite their differences in culture and religion. And therefore, he opposed any preferential treatment to the Minorities advocated by Congress and Gandhi.

➤ Although he was in favour of subordination of Muslims, Savarkar, particularly in the later part of his life, did not question the British Rule. This is a critical shift in his political thought from a revolutionary patriot to a Hindu nationalist pro-British thinker. In later years, he rationalised his support to the British in the name of 'responsive cooperation'.

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So, this is kind of as we were discussing about the fluidity of the circulation of ideas. So, despite of his religious travel you will not be a correct word, but a kind of religious conception of nation or nation nationhood, his conception of a state is more or less modern and republic. So, and therefore, he was against the British rule and wanted the authority or the power to rule over India in the hands of Indians themselves.

So, in his conception of modern state and democracy he did not want citizens to be treated differently on the basis of their religious or cultural differences, but on the basis

of their individual merit and worth. And he also therefore, then opposed any kind of preferential treatment given to minorities as it was being advocated by the congress and the Gandhi. Although, he was in favour of subordination of Muslims Savarkar particularly in the later part of his life did not question the British rule.

And that is a kind of radical shift in his approach to the politics, precisely because of the pragmatic historical circumstances; here on the one hand there is a congress promoting or propagating the secular notion of politics, they are going assertion or Muslim separatism by the Muslim leagues. The emergence of depressed classes and increasing fragmentation of Hindu community and demands by the Sikh, and many other religious communities make Savarkar to respond to colonial rule in a much more what he called responsive cooperation and distance himself and his politics from the mass movement. And this is something which developed in little parts in Savarkar career.

So, from a revolutionary patriot to a Hindu nationalist, Savarkar also developed a pro-British pragmatic approach in the later parts of life and that remains a controversial side of Savarkar politics and activity.

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His conception of Indian history

- Savarkar glorified the great Hindu rulers of the past. His ideal was Shivaji, who for him represented the rule of Swadharna and Swaraj. He deeply appreciated Shivaji in his tract Hindu-Pad-Padshahi (1925) for his militarism against the Muslim rule.
- His interpretation of modern Indian history was quite radical. This is evident from his analysis of the 1857 revolt. He criticised the efforts of reducing it to a mere mutiny of sepoys resulting from the immediate cause of greased cartridges. Instead he stressed on the inherent revolutionary roots of it and portrayed it as the mass movement of liberation against the oppressive rule of the British. It was for him the first war of independence.
- He had sincere admiration for the militant methods of protest in the 1857 revolt. He thought it best suited in response to the brutal oppressive rule of the British.

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Now, if you look at his conception of Indian history, Savarkar glorified the great Hindu rulers of the past, and his idol was Shivaji and Rana Pratap, and for him Shivaji represented to the rule of Swadharna once on religion and Swaraj, governing once own

self. Now he deeply appreciated Shivaji in his tract Hindu pad padshahi which he wrote in 1925 for his militarism against the Muslim rule.

His interpretation of modern Indian history was quite radical. This is evident from his analysis of 1857 revolt, and he criticized the efforts of reducing it to a mere mutiny or a rebellion of sepoys resulting from the immediate cause of greased cartridges. Savarkar was critical of such reduction in the analysis of the first war of independence. Instead he stressed on the inherent revolutionary roots which was accumulating over a period of time against the brutal suppressive policies of the British rule.

So, instead he stressed on this inherent revolutionary roots of first war of independence and portrayed it as the mass movement and not just as sepoys mutiny as britisher's and many scholars have argued of the liberation against the oppressive rule of the British. It was for him the first war of independence hence the title of the book. So, he had sincere admiration for the militant methods against the Gandhian non-violence method of protest in 1857 revolts. And he thought it best suited in response to the brutal oppressive rule of the British.

Now, if you look at his social thought. We find Savarkar as it is argued by Ashok Chousalkar that, Savarkar thought is characterized by 3 distinct tenets of social change; which was an influence of European tradition on his thought and thinking.

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Social thought

- Ashok Chousalkar argues that Savarkar's thought is characterised by three distinct tenets of social change which was an influence of European traditions. These are-a) survival of the fittest, b) inevitability of violence in society and c) absence of absolute morality.
- All human society is characterised by struggle in life of the individuals. In this, only the fittest can survive and others get eliminated.
- Violence is inbuilt in nature. It is only in the later development of society the principle of non-violence got intertwined with violence. However, absolute non-violence is something he rejected.
- He believed in relative morality. Morality or immorality of an act is judged in accordance with the specificity of the action/objective concerned.

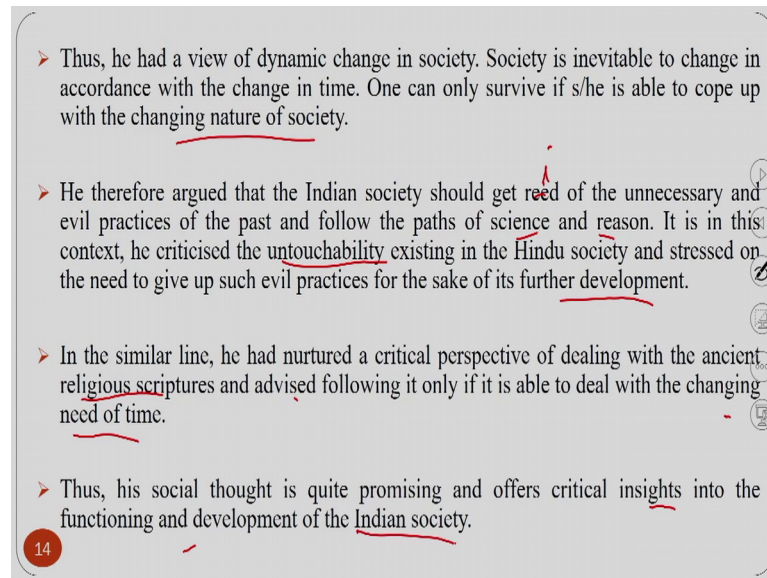
First of all, the survival of the fittest, second the inevitability of violence in society, and absence of absolute morality in the human affairs and human politics. For Savarkar all human society and you find these 3 tenets in his social political thought throughout. In his political programs, political activities, conceptualization of nation and therefore, the pragmatism in Savarkar is one of the characteristic in his thought.

So, all human society is characterized by struggle in life of individuals. In this only the fittest can survive others get eliminated, this is a Herbert Spencer kind of ideal survival of the fittest. That is a modern civilisation, and the root of modulation is the competition. Everyone compete against everyone, and only this fittest will survive. And Savarkar then considered the violence is inbuilt in nature. It is only in the little development of society the principle of non-violence got intertwined with violence.

However, absolute non-violence is something he rejected, the Gandhian idol of non-violence or satyagraha, in all circumstances in absolute form is something he completely rejected and he thought it will make the nation and community weak to respond to the immediate circumstances even the invasion or operation, he the method for him violence or non-violence. So, he do not reject non-violence completely. But to accept it in all the circumstances in the absolute form is something he reject he rejected and criticized.

He believed in the relative morality. That is morality or immorality of an act political act or policy is judged in accordance with the specificities of the excellent objective. So, the means and ends that we have discussed in Gandhian model, is given different interpretation in Savarkar's thought that is more pragmatic, and that depends on the objectives one and through ones act one to achieve in the larger politics of their committee.

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- Thus, he had a view of dynamic change in society. Society is inevitable to change in accordance with the change in time. One can only survive if s/he is able to cope up with the changing nature of society.
- He therefore argued that the Indian society should get rid of the unnecessary and evil practices of the past and follow the paths of science and reason. It is in this context, he criticized the untouchability existing in the Hindu society and stressed on the need to give up such evil practices for the sake of its further development.
- In the similar line, he had nurtured a critical perspective of dealing with the ancient religious scriptures and advised following it only if it is able to deal with the changing need of time.
- Thus, his social thought is quite promising and offers critical insights into the functioning and development of the Indian society.

So, this he had a dynamic a view of dynamics in society, and society an inevitable to change in accordance with the changes in the time. And one can only survive if she or he is able to cope up with the changing nature of society and therefore, he wanted Indians Hindu society to also undergo through this dynamic forces of a change in modern society and quality. And he therefore, argued that Indian society should get rid of the unnecessary and the evil practices of the past, and follow the paths of science and reason.

It is in this context he criticized untouchability existing in Hindu society, and stressed on the need to give up such evil practices for the sake of it is further development. So, Savarkar work for religious and social reforms as well. He allowed the entry of untouchables or excluded community and he fight for their entry. Even in schools the children's of those so-called out cast or untouchable communities Savarkar wanted them to be integrated within the larger fold of Hindu society.

And similarity with the women and also Savarkar wanted to reform Hindu society in line with the modern science and reason and criticize a lot of dogmas and super teases that accumulated in the long stagnation period of Hindu society, and he wanted to reform it, reconstruct it in the line of modern science and reason. Now in this similar line he had nurtured a critical perspective of dealing with the ancient religious scriptures, and advised following it only if it is able to deal with the changing need of the time. So, he is also not someone blindly following the ancient Indian scriptures. He wanted such text to

be read to be engaged with, but it should be followed which enables the individual and community to respond to the contemporary needs or the changing needs of the time.

So, this is social thought is quite promising and offers critical insights into the functioning and development of Indian society or Hindu society. So, Savarkar basically had a far more visionary ease or kind of futuristic approach in his thought when he think about reorganization or restructuring of Hindu society and Hindu Rashtra. And how it can be done or how it should be done we see many political parties or magicians continue to derive their expression and strength from his writings. And that makes Savarkar inevitable in any political discourse in contemporary India. In the next class we are going to discuss his views on Hinduism and Hinduthva.

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Resources

1. *Savarkar and His Times* by Dhananjay Keer, Second Edition, published by A.V. Keer
2. *Sources of Indian Traditions*, Vol.2, edited by Rachel Fell McDermott, Leonard A. Gordon, Ainslie T. Embree, Frances W. Pritchett and Dennis Dalton, Columbia University Press, 1988
3. *Political Thought in Modern India* edited by Thomas Pantham and Kenneth L. Deutsch, Sage Publications, 2016
4. "A Revolutionary's Biography: The Case of V.D. Savarkar" by Vinayak Chaturvedi, *Postcolonial Studies*, Vol.16, No. 02, 2013, page 124-139

The lecture I have given you can look at some of these readings; like, Savarkar and his times by Dhananjay Keer, and also this text which we have done from long time. For many thinkers sources of Indian tradition and also political thought in modern India. And this article you can also read to understand his revolutionary ideals and conceptualization of revolution in Savarkar. So, thanks for listening and thanks for your presence.

Thank you.