



**Lesson: Tilak On Swaraj**

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# Bal Gangadhar Tilak on Swaraj

## Introduction

**Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920)** was the Hercules of Indian nationalism. He freed the people of India from sluggishness and stagnation and inspired them with a new goal of free India. He transformed the Indian National Congress in such a way that it could be used as an effective instrument against the alien rulers. He changed the Congress from a debating and petition presenting society into an entity which demanded Swaraj. As Aurobindo said, "Tilak was the first political leader to break through the routine methods of the Indian National Congress which was dominated by the moderates."<sup>1</sup> He used methods which indianised the national movement and brought it into the masses. From his childhood, he inherited a vision of a new India arising firmly based on the tradition of her civilization and her glorious past. He never lived to see the manifestation of his dream, but his ideas conceptions had awakened the people to achieve the goal of India's freedom.



Source : <http://www.iloveindia.com/indian-heroes/pics/bal-gangadhar-tilak.jpg>

### Value addition-know him more

#### Tilak perception of self rule

" I want to have the key of my house and not merely one stranger turned out of it . self - government is our goal"

<sup>1</sup> Sri Aurobindo. *Early Cultural Writings* , The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo:, Volume 1.- Part -9 , Bankim — Tilak — Dayananda,p-645,Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 2003

## Bal Gangadhar Tilak on Swaraj

### **Tilak's Life**

Bal Gandhar Tilak, popularly called 'Lokmanya' (respected by the people), was born in a middle class Chitpavan Brahmin family in Ratnagiri District, in Maharashtra on 23rd July, 1856 just one year before the first war of Indian independence. The English rulers had kept a vigilant eye on his family as it was supposed to have a revolutionary background. Tilak started his early education from his father—a primary school teacher, who had earned Rs. 10/- per month as his salary in those days. From his teacher-father he inherited his love for Sanskrit, which gave him a deep insight into the ancient religion and tradition of the country and its people. He had specialised in Mathematics and Sanskrit. He went to the Deccan College of Poona and passed his graduation 1816. According to D. P. Karmarkar,

***"Tilak's way of life in college was of orthodox type. He used to sit for meals with a silk dhoti as was common among orthodox Hindus and his outlook in social matters also was more conservative than others."***

After graduation, he studied law so that he could serve his country in a better way, by equipping himself with knowledge of jurisprudence. He got his law degree in 1879 and took to journalism in 1880.

Tilak's parents taught him the values of Indian classical heritage and helped to mould his character. His mother was a saintly woman who had a great impact on him. His father made him proficient in Sanskrit and he was well-versed with the Vedic literature from his childhood. He learned the virtues and the spiritual values from his parents. As the Maratha rule was the last viable native regime in India to be overpowered by the British, he was roused to share the greatness of the Marathas and their glorious marital tradition. He resolved to devote his life for the cause of the country and its people.

In his Youth, he witnessed the atrocities, of the British rulers in the humiliation of the native people under the prevailing rule. This led him to have extreme views against the British people. From his childhood, he inherited a vision of new India firmly based on the tradition of her glorious past. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru rightly observes,

*"We have in Tilak a symbol of India's struggle for freedom and a man who was not only a brave soldier but a great captain, not a captain of an organized government, but a captain of unorganized masses of India. There was inertia not in the minds of everyone but among*

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*most of our people bent to shake them up and to bring out a mass conscience, mass awakening in the sense of struggle was I think, primarily Lokmanya's task."*<sup>2</sup>

### **Career and Activities**

Maharashtra was the field of Tilak's activities. He was the founder of vigorous and vigilant nationalism there. He taught the people of Maharashtra the value of organized self-help and sacrifice. After obtaining his B. A. Degree in 1876 he, along With some compatriots started his public career. In 1880, Tilak and G. G. Agarkar started the Poona English School: In 1884, they established the Deccan Education Society. They also started the Fergusson College at Poona. They published Maratha Weekly "**Keshri**" and the English weekly "**Maratha**" which supported the cause of self rule and nationalism. On account of some differences, Tilak and Agarkar parted in 1890. Tilak purchased the "Keshari" and its English version "Maratha" and devoted himself to journalism. Agarkar and his co-workers remained in the charge of the Deccan Education Society. As an editor, Tilak had surpassed all and his writings were extremely powerful and effective. He tried to revive the spirit of Indian tradition. In "Keshari" he wrote in 1897,

**"The greatest virtue of man is to be filled with wonder and devotion by anything in the animate and inanimate creation that suggest inherent divinity."**

He used to make continuous reference to Shivaji, the great leader and the glorious history of the Maratha people and their work against the Moghul empire. The "Kesari" dominated the politics of Maharashtra for over three decades and had a great impact on its people. People regard Tilak as an invisible hero and a great nationalist and one of the greatest makers in the Indian nation.

Tilak organised the Ganapati Festival in 1894. He was of the view that the Greeks spread their national culture and unity through the ancient Olympic festival and likewise the festivals in India would serve the purpose of establishing a sense of national identity.

Through this national festival, political consciousness of the people of India could be awakened. In 1895, he inaugurated the Shivaji festival with a view to arousing national pride and enthusiasm among the people of Maharashtra. He was right to think that a nation in order to be great must honour national heroes. In one of these festivals he spoke,

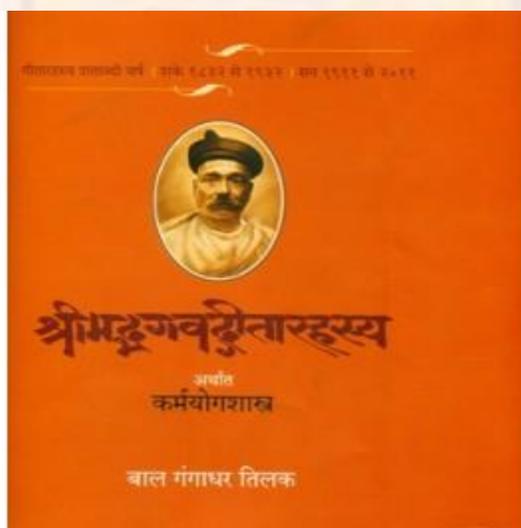
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<sup>2</sup> S R Bakshi ,Bal Gangadhar Tilak: Struggle for Swaraj (1990) ,Anmol Publications New Delhi, pp-34-35

**"If thieves enter our home and we have not sufficient strength to drive them out, should we not without hesitation shut them up and leave them alive and rise above the penal code into the verified atmosphere of the sacred Bhagwat Geeta and consider it the action of great men"<sup>3</sup>.**

He justified the killing of Afzal Khan by Shivaji and hoped the masses to follow the great leader for liberating their motherland from the clutches of the foreigners. Tilak was a great scholar and a profound writer. Some of his important writings used to appear in the pages of the 'Kesari'. His essays on Indian traditions, Mahabharata, Spencer and the determination of the date of Shivaji's birth are still significant.

### **Work of Tilak –A philosophical insight into the teachings of Gita.**



Source : <http://pullzone2.medianextinfopro.netdna-cdn.com/1261-large/srimad-bhagavad-gita-rahasya-karma-yoga-shastra-hardcover-lokmanya-bal-gangadhar-tilak-tilak-bandhu-prakashan-buy-online.jpg> accessed on 3 feb 2015

<sup>3</sup> N. C. Kelkar, *Life of Tilak* Vol1(Hindi Translation) , P 3

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As an indologist, he had **three great books** to his credit, the '**Orion**', '**The Arctic Home in the Vedas**' and the unfinished '**Vedic Chronology and Vedanta Jyotisha**'. He used astronomical data in determining the historical antiquity of the Vedas. On this basis, he came to the conclusion that the Vedas were written about 4500 B.C. the view which was supported by the most of the Indian and some of the European Scholars. Tilak's greatest work was the '**Gita Rahasya**', a scholarly book in the philosophical inquiry into the secrets of the teachings of the Gita, which is the holiest book of the Hindus. In this book, Tilak reinterpreted the Gita in its classical sense, giving proper emphasis on the theory of action- the Karmayoga. This book gave Tilak a place among the greatest intellectuals of India. He combined active politics with the vision of philosophy and hence, he was called by the people a "Rajarshi" who had given to the modern world the two inspired and elevating doctrines of **Swarajya and Karmayoga**.

A young man assassinated the Plague Commissioner of Poona and Tilak was blamed for the assassination. He was brought to trial in 1897 and was sentenced to 18 months rigorous imprisonment. He was asked to apologise in lieu of the punishment but he refused. Again in 1908, he was prosecuted on the charge of sedition for his ideas published in the editorial of the 'Kesari'. He was convicted and sentenced to deportation for 6 years which he spent in a jail in Burma. There he was placed in solitary confinement in a prison cell. With all difficulties, he survived and came back to India in 1914. He wrote his famous book 'The Gita Rahasya' while in the jail.

After his break with the Deccan Education Society , Tilak joined the Indian National Congress in 1889. At that time the Congress was dominated by the moderate leadership which was loyal to the British administration. The moderates believed in the method of petitions and prayers to the British Government for securing genuine rights and redressing the grievances of the people. The Indian Council Act, 1892 did not satisfy the aspirations of the Congress people including the moderates. The British policies were causing great harm to the economic interests of the country.

### **Value addition-for better understanding**

#### **The book-The Arctic home in the Vedas**

The Arctic Home in the Vedas is a book on the origin of Aryans by Lokmanya Bâl Gangâdhar Tilak,. It propounded the theory that the North Pole was the original home of Aryans during pre-glacial period which they had to leave due to the ice deluge around 8000 B.C. and had to migrate to the Northern parts of Europe and Asia in search of lands for new settlements.

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In support to his theory Tilak has presented certain Vedic hymns, Avestic passages, Vedic chronology and Vedic calendars with interpretations of the contents in detail. The book was written at the end of 1898, but was first published in March 1903 in Pune.

Considering the constitutional approach of the Congress as a sign of weakness, the British rulers were doing many arbitrary and unjust things in India. In 1905, Lord Curzon announced the partition of Bengal. This revealed the evil intentions of the Britishers to weaken the country. Tilak and some other Congress men like Lala Lajpat Rai, B. C. Pal, etc., strongly opposed the Congress policy and threatened to revolt. Tilak took the leadership of the extremist group and emerged as a national leader in 1905. Having no faith in the constitutional methods, Tilak said that, "Protests are of no avail. Mere protests not backed by self-reliance will not help the people. Days of protests and prayers are gone." A split in the Congress weakened the forces of nationalism. Tilak had no other alternative but to adopt violent path in order to restore the prestige of the people of India. He asked people to build their own future through resistance and self-help. He was branded as the evil genius of the Congress who had always created troubles. But the history of modern Indian had to acknowledge the contribution of Tilak and his fight for radical approach. The policies and programmes of the Congress which brought a change in the history of the nationalist movement ultimately made the Congress a really effective body to fight for the independence of the country.

### **Political journey**

From 1898 to 1908, Tilak was at the peak of his political career. He along with Lala Lajpat Rai and Bipin Chandra Pal constituted the national leadership tried, which was popularly referred to as "**Lal, Bal, Pal**". When Lord Curzon partitioned Bengal in 1905, Tilak condemned the action of the Government. He popularized a four-fold programme of action, namely Swaraj, Swadeshi, boycott of foreign goods and national education. In his tour of India, Tilak came to be identified with his famous slogan, "Swaraj is my birth-right and I will have it". Soon Tilak took the leadership of the extremist group and emerged as a national leader. Differences between the moderate leaders and Tilak were gradually increasing after the Banaras session of the Congress. Eventually there was an open split in the Congress Party at the Surat Session in 1907. This split in the Congress weakened the forces of nationalism for some time. For Tilak there was no other alternative but to adopt violent path in order to restore the prestige of the Indians.

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Due to his anti-government activities and on the basis of an article, "**The Country's Misfortune**" published in the Keshari, Tilak was arrested again in 1908. He was sentenced to six years rigorous imprisonment and was sent to Mandalay. His imprisonment caused a great resentment among the people and at several places riots broke out. In the Mandalay Jail, Tilak wrote his classics--"The Artistic Home of the Vedas" and "Gita Rahasya"<sup>4</sup>. These two monumental books revealed the qualities of Tilak as a great scholar and thinker. In the "Gita Rahasya", he analysed the teaching of Gita, comparing it with other Indian and Western schools of thought. Tilak was finally released from the Mandalay Jail in June 1914.

### Value addition-know it more

#### Revivalist thought of Tilak

- The revivalist Tilak was deeply rooted in the rich cultural heritage of India.
- Opposed to idea of blindly following the Western culture and education system and British philosophy of life.
- Initiated a movement for national education and established a network of schools to enlighten the masses.
- Set up New English School , Poona in 1880 and Deccan Education Society in 1884, and Ferguson College in 1885 to achieve his objective.
- Rejected rationalism and scepticism of western philosophy and sought India's own philosophy.
- Spread his thought of Indian philosophy through "Keshari"- a Marathi weekly.
- Agreed with the thought that a nation to become great must honour national heroes.

In 1916, he started a Home Rule League, along the lines of the Irish Home Rule Movement, in order to further the cause of India's self-rule. As he himself said, "I may state once for all that we are trying in India, as the Irish Home-rulers have been doing in Ireland, for a reform of the system of administration and not for the overthrow of Government." He assured the Government of his loyalty to the Crown. Thus Tilak's main object was to attain Home Rule or Self-Government within the British Empire by all constitutional means. He went on a whirlwind tour and appealed to the people to unite under the banner of the Home Rule League: He observed, "India was like a son who had grown up and attained majority. It was right now that the trustee or the father should give him what was his due. The

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<sup>4</sup> Tilak, *Speeches & Writings*, p 218

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people of India must get this done. They have a right to do so." Tilak's Home Rule League played an important role in the political life of the country. It created a generation of ardent nationalist who formed the backbone of the nationalist movement in the coming years. It also created organizational links between town and country which were to prove invaluable in the later years.

In 1916, Tilak rejoined the Indian National Congress. He played a leading role in bringing about the 1916 Lucknow Pact between the Congress and the Muslim League. In 1918, Tilak went to England for a case against Valentine Chirol, a British journalist. During his absence from India, Mahatma Gandhi emerged as the leader of the people. At the 1919 Amritsar Congress, Tilak was able to get a resolution adopted in favour of responsive co-operation with the government in regard to the new Reforms Act. His death on 1st August 1920 closed an era in Indian National Movement.

### Tilak and Ganesh Utsav



**Source:** [http://guruprasad.net/wp-](http://guruprasad.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/GaneshUtsavMandal1900.jpg)

**content/uploads/2013/09/GaneshUtsavMandal1900.jpg** accessed on 4 february 2015

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## **Political Goals of Tilak**

Bal Gangadhar Tilak was not an idealist thinker like Plato, Hegel, Rousseau or Green. He never thought of any ideal State. His main aim was the political emancipation of India. He was realistic in his political thought. He was a Vedantist and believed in metaphysical assumptions. He considered spirit as the supreme reality. Since all men are portions of that absolute being, all have the same autonomous spiritual potentiality. This led him to believe in supremacy of the concept of freedom.

The concept of freedom is central to Tilak's political ideas. He was of the view that metaphysics of Vedanta resulted in the political conception of natural rights. The spirit is the only reality, man is soul not body. His aim was the political emancipation of India. He was realistic in his political thought. The western theories of national independence and self determination had a great influence upon Tilak's mind. The following are the main political goals of Tilak.

### **1. Revival of the glorious past:**

Tilak was a revivalist in the sense that he wanted to revive all that was good and noble in India's past culture and civilization. He never wanted to have a complete break with the past. Tilak criticized and repudiated the blind imitation of the West by the Indian moderates. Therefore, he organized the Ganesh Puja and Shivaji Jayanti.

He knew that the people liked festivals and participated in them enthusiastically. It was his earnest desire to give a constructive orientation to the Ganapati festival and create a social platform for educating the people. Simultaneously Tilak also organised the Shivaji festival in Maharashtra. In 1895, he started the movement for restoration of Shivaji's samadhi at the Raigad fort-the fort where Shivaji was crowned as the king. It was at Tilak's instance that the first Shivaji festival was celebrated at the Raigad fort on 15th April 1896. Regarding the celebration of Shivaji festival, Tilak observed

"We should be ever grateful to those heroes who upheld the honour and dignity of our nation. Shivaji was our national hero, who established Swarajya and liberated the people. The celebration of Shivaji festival is an occasion for expressing our gratitude to him. If we cherish the memories of our national heroes, we can promote in ourselves a nationalist attitude. For promoting the sense of nationality, it is necessary to have national heroes whom people can worship as idols."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Tilak, Speeches & Writings, p-216

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Tilak also studied the Vedas, the Ramayana, the Mahabharat and the Shrimad Bhagwat Gita and preached the noble ideas among the ignorant Indian mass. For sake of national unity and to drive out the Britishers from India, he established various associations. But this does not mean that he was a narrow minded person. He appreciated the introduction of English education in India. He studied the works of western thinkers like Hegel, Kant, Spencer, Mill, Bentham, etc. In fact Tilak was not against westernization but against those who wanted to remake India in the image of the West and had the one sided and dogmatic attitude.

### 2. Patriotism :

Among the Indian leaders, Tilak was a lover of motherland of first order. He had immense love for the country. Throughout his life, he made all sorts of efforts and sacrifice for the prosperity of the country. From his very childhood, he inherited love for his own country. He wanted to make India prosperous and strong country in the world. He, therefore, organised several festivals to inculcate patriotism among the people of India. He had deep and immense faith in Indian culture, religion, art and-tradition. He further compared our nation with God. To quote Tilak, "God and our country are not different. In short, our country is one form of God. The love of nation like love of God has to transcend narrow provincialism and communalism. "

### 3. Swaraj or Self-rule:

The political goal of Tilak was to attain Swaraj or self-government for the people of India. He said that the idea of Swaraj is an old one. For the individual Swaraj means the exercise of his lawful freedom; the individual cannot live in his true nature without complete Swaraj.

#### Value addition

#### Concept of swaraj

#### ***Swaraj is my birthright and I will have it.***

The word *Swaraj* is an old Vedic term. Tilak lent it from the *Shastras* and the life of the great Shivaji.

Literally, *Swaraj* means *swa*(self) *raj* (rule/government).

Tilak practised *swaraj* as not merely a right, but as a *Dharma*. He also presented political, moral and spiritual meanings of Swaraj.

For the attainment of Swaraj, he opposed the Britishers. For Tilak Swaraj referred to both the self-rule of the individuals-and the self-rule of the political community. Swaraj was both

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a part of the philosophy of life and the philosophy of politics. He derived the idea of "Swarajya" from the Veda.

Further Tilak gave the following four views of Swaraj :

- (i) firstly, Swaraj meant that the ruler and the ruled must belong to one group and one nation.
- (ii) Secondly, Swaraj referred to as rule of law. The State should be governed by law.
- (iii) Thirdly, government must be elected by the people and must be responsible to them.
- (iv) Lastly, Swaraj means the State should be established for the overall development of the individuals.

Tilak was the most significant and dominant political personality of the early years of the 20th century who gave to the, people of India the first lesson in form of the consciousness of the right of Swaraj or self-rule. He defined Swaraj as 'people's rule instead of that of bureaucracy is Swaraj.' To Tilak, Swaraj meant Home Rule or self-government for right, I will have it." He again said, "We demand Swaraj, as it is the foundation and not the height of our prosperity."<sup>6</sup>

According to Tilak, Swaraj was not only a right but also a dharma or religion. He was of the opinion that self-rule under Dharmarajya either existed fully or did not exist at all. He, therefore, wanted complete Swaraj. He started Home Rule League in 1916 in order to push forward his ideal of Swaraj. He thought of a federal type of political structure under Swaraj. Tilak thus rightly said that "no nation can be strong and healthy unless it is free."

### **Techniques to Achieve Swaraj**

Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak possessed a fighting spirit .He was the first political leader to break through the routine methods of the Indian National Congress which was dominated by the moderates. He was against the western culture and tradition. He had a great inclination for Indian culture' and tradition and made all round efforts to preserve it. As an ardent nationalist, a committed politician and a profound philosopher, Tilak followed different methods and applied different techniques to achieve his goal i.e. 'Swaraj'. The following are the political techniques of Tilak :

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<sup>6</sup> Vishnoo Bhagwan, *Indian Political Thinkers*, p-148

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## **i. Swadeshi**

Tilak was an advocate of Swadeshi movement. He was against the Britishers and hence preached Swadeshi. Swadeshi movement first began as an economic movement but in the gradual process, it became an important political weapon to turn down the British economy. Swadeshi meant self-help and to become self-reliant. It asserted the feeling of independence. The Indians were inclined to use Indian made goods rather than to rely upon British goods. Tilak has rightly said, "The object is to bring about the spread of Swadeshi things, visible and invisible, to bring about the gradual disappearance of visible foreign things and to bring about the gradual disappearance of foreign ideas.

Swadeshi movement was a movement of national generation and economic self-sufficiency. By this movement the local small scale, industries got an opportunity to become self-sufficient. Indian products were' recognized in the world. Post Indians also got the opportunity of employment and the standard of living also increased. Thus Swadeshi was a practical application of love of the country. To quote Tilak, "To recognise the land of the Aryas as mother earth is the Swadeshi movement". It was an economic, political and spiritual weapon. In 1905, at the Banaras session of Indian National Congress, Gopal Krishna Gokhale in his presidential address made a plea for Swadeshi. In this session Tilak put forth a resolution regarding famine, poverty, land revenue and the economic survey of India. He presented a devastating picture of India's poverty. Tilak believed that emphasis on economic issues and the demand for removal of poverty would give a fillip to the struggle of Swaraj. Only through the Swadeshi movement, the economic exploitation of the British rule could be ended.

## **ii. Boycott:**

Boycott involved the refusal of the people to purchase the British manufactured goods. Like the other extremists Tilak also believed in the method of Boycott. It meant the refusal of the Indian people to purchase British manufactured goods. Tilak asserted that belief in Swadeshi could not have any practical utility till the boycott of foreign goods was resorted to. He said that "when you prefer to accept Swadeshi, you must boycott as without boycott Swadeshi cannot flourish."

### Value addition-Did you know

#### Boycott and Swadeshi

*Swadeshi & Boycott movements brought the masses nearer to the core political movement to free India from the British rule. It was an structured and planned attempt for the affirmation of the democratic principle that the predominant political opinion of the inhabitants of country must not be contravened by the rulers.*

In 1906 in the Calcutta session, the Indian National Congress adopted the technique of boycott. Boycott movement had a great appeal and the Indian mass accepted it whole heartedly. People from all walks of life rejected the British government and boycotted the various institutions. Indian people boycotted the British manufactured goods, schools, colleges, offices, etc. which were owned and run by the alien rulers; This boycott movement was so vigorous that it caused to tremble the whole British administration. It was a weapon and a substitute for war. Further, Tilak wrote that to drive out the alien ruler we do not have any weapon and it is also not necessary. Through boycott, which is a powerful weapon, we can remove the Britishers. Again he compared our nation with a tree and said that Swaraj is its root and Swadeshi and boycott are its branches. In fact, Swadeshi and boycott movements brought masses nearer to the political movement.

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#### iii. Passive Resistance:

Tilak was a great noble son of Maharashtra who is rightly compared with Shivaji, the strong fighter of Maharashtra. Tilak was a violent revolutionary but he did not appreciate war and bloodshed. He adopted 'new methods to bring down the Britishers. For this, he substituted the use of passive resistance for constitutional means. Taking clue from the Partition of Bengal in 1905 by the Britishers, Tilak tried to assimilate Indian people in the Passive Resistance Movement He opined that Swadeshi and Boycott were the techniques of passive resistance. He described the method of petition, prayer and persuasion of the moderates as begging.

Being a practical political leader and a realist, Tilak foresaw that violence would be wasteful and futile in India. He ruled out the use of violence in India's struggle for self-government. However, he was not a preacher of 'Ahimsa' or violence, He said "Passive resistance was

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not the means to an end but was the end or goal in itself'.<sup>7</sup> To Tilak non-violent resistance was at best a policy, a matter of convenience. He believed that action must be direct but it must be passive as well.

### **iv. National Education :**

From ages it is true that education has an important role to play for national reconstruction. National education was an important element for effective political action. Tilak believed that western education was ruinous and dangerous for the progress and future of the nation. It made the Indian youths Indians only by name. They forgot the glorious past and rich heritage of the motherland. Apart from this, western educational institutions made the students economically ruined and they remained away from national mainstream. So Tilak tried to establish schools without the British governmental help and to make the youths aware of nationalism. He called this policy as "New National Education". The main aim of the new national education was to make the youths self-reliant and create a feeling of self-help with themselves. Tilak's main ambition was to create the feeling of nationalism in the minds of the Indians from the very childhood.

#### **Value addition-Did you know**

##### **Objective of National Education Policy**

Tilak as the leader of the movement launched this against the partition of Bengal by Lord Curzon, made national education a major part of the four point programme which developed in to a nationwide movement.

Tilak always regarded education as a powerful instrument of social transformation and used it as a weapon not only in the movement against Bengal Partition but in the struggle for Swaraj so to Tilak, the object of National Education was not to disturb the freedom of personal expression of the students. To create national awareness patriotism, love for country and national unity for getting freedom were the main objects of National education according to Tilak.

In Maharashtra Tilak started his educational programme. He established a school in Poona, in the south he established an educational society and also established a college. It is true that he began his career as a teacher, which led him to believe that education is essential for all individuals and it is the prime duty of the teachers to make the students aware of the glorious past of the motherland. He pleaded that education is for the masses. It is true that

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<sup>7</sup> Sri Aurobindo, *The Doctrine of Passive Resistance*

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he pleaded for national education, but it is not true that he was completely against the western education. He led emphasis on educational system which included Indian heritage and its glorious past combined with western method for its achievement. Though he was an ardent Hindu and believed in the Veda and the Indian culture, he accepted that English education is necessary for Indian political movement. Therefore, he upheld English as the medium of education. But at the same time, he said that the national education must be given the first priority and national heritage should be reflected in it.

Tilak and his contemporary nationalists therefore stressed the need for national schools and colleges which would inculcate the spirit of self-reliance and self-help in the minds of the youth. Thus in the 20th century national education became an integral part of the nationalist programme for India.

### **4. Tilak and Nationalism**

Lokmanya Tilak as a political thinker, he expressed his ideas about nationalism. He accepted nationalism as a means to achieve Swaraj. The concept of nationalism was based on the synthesis of the Vedentic spirit as self-contained freedom and the western conception of Mazinne, Burke, Mill and Wilson. His nationalism was not devoid of revivalism. Thus he said that "a true nationalist desires to build on old foundation." For this purpose, he organised the Ganapati and Shivaji Festivals. To Tilak, "Festivals are symbolic adjuncts of nationalism."

According to Tilak, nationalism was essentially psychological and spiritual conception. The concept of nationalism flourishes with elements which create a sentiment of unity. Tilak was of the view that the roots of Indian nationalism must be in the sentiments and devotion of the Indian people. He wanted to create a solid nationalistic foundation in the country in order to drive out the Britishers from India.

Tilak knew that the movement for Swaraj could not gather momentum unless the Hindus and Muslims were united. It was entirely due to his efforts that in 1916, at the Lucknow session of the Congress, a pact was made between the Hindus and Muslims. In the political fields Tilak's sole aim was to achieve national unity. He believed that administration of the country should be done through the mother tongue of the people and not through English. He also supported Patabhai's suggestion seeking formation of linguistic provinces. He observed "We would deserve our political rights only if we succeed in achieving unity, first in every village, then in every district, then in every province and finally at the national level the Indian National Congress." Due to his endless efforts for promoting national unity Tilak is rightly described as "**the architect of Indian nationalism.**"

### **5. Military Recruitment of Indians :**

During the British rule in India the Indians were not allowed to join army. Tilak opposed it and made various attempts to include the Indians in military. His aim was to make the country strong from military point of view. By including the Indians in the army, the Indian people can become united and get knowledge about military which would help, for the attainment of Swaraj. In 1891 he introduced the Arms Act in the Central Legislature and compelled the British Government to include the Indians in army. Also by this act, the Indians got the right to possess arms for self-protection. It is a fact that this provision in India helped a lot for the attainment of Swaraj.

### **6. Opposition to Divide and Rule Policy:**

The Britishers applied the policy of divide and rule in India. But the Indians were quite ignorant to understand this policy of the British Government. They divided the Indians on the basis of religion, caste, language and community. For their own interest, the Britishers divided the Indians into Hindu, Muslim, rich and poor, etc. Tilak strongly opposed this policy of the Britishers. He advised the Indians to live in unity and harmony and fight united for the emancipation of the motherland. He strongly opposed the Partition of Bengal in 1905. Thus the main aim of Tilak was unity of India.

### **7. Fight against corruption :**

Tilak was not in favour of injustice, humiliation and corruption. He opposed the British government for its corrupt practices. He always tried his best to establish an impartial and just government in India. During his time, the British officials were fully corrupt and bad. To remove these officials, he appealed before the British government. Through journals and newspapers, he criticised the corrupt practices of the British government. For example, in his journal "Keshari" he published the news of bribery, which was taken by 'the revenue Commissioner of Bombay Mr. Crow Ford in appointing the Deputy Collector. Similarly Tilak appreciated the Indian mass, for killing Lt. Ayerst, who mishandled the job while there was plague in Bombay. Any act of injustice moved and activated Tilak to take bold steps to attain justice.

### 8. Home Rule Movement :

Lokmanya Tilak first started the Home Rule Movement. He was against the discriminative attitude of the British government. He was of the opinion that the Britishers were responsible for the degrading condition of the Indians. He said that they made the Indians economically weak. In order to uplift the Indians from their degrading condition and make them strong enough to fight the war of independence, he establishes the Home Rule League in India in 1916 along with Mrs. Annie Besant. His main aim was to drive out the Britishers from India and establish a self-government in India. His main political goal was the political emancipation of the motherland.

The Home Rule Movement was quite-popular in India during Tilak's time. The main aim of the movement was to give the Indians their rights. Tilak said that every community should have the right of self-determination. Tilak's approach towards emancipation and uplift of individuals was highly acclaimed by the individuals.<sup>8</sup> Further in 1917, the Secretary of State for India, Montague had a meeting with Tilak and accepted the Home Rule League proposal, which was included in the Government of India Act, 1919, otherwise known as the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms Act.

#### Value addition-know it more

##### Home Rule Movement

In India, two Home Rule Movements had started in succession simultaneously in 1916, one led by Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak in April 1916, and the other led by British social reformer Annie Besant in September 1916.

- Home Rule Movement was started in 1916 to achieve the demand for self-government in order to obtain the status of a Dominion within the British Empire, (a rank similar to that of other countries such as Canada, New Zealand and Australia at that time).
- To fulfill this purpose a political party named All India Home Rule League was also formed.

### 9. Political and Social Reforms :

Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak has been described as a great social reformer. He is described as the leader of the extremists in politics, but a moderate leader in the matters of social reforms. Being an ardent scholar, he studied the Vedas, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, Kautilya's Arthashastra and the Shrimad Bhagvat Gita. These great epics had

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<sup>8</sup> V. P. Varma, Modern Indian Political Thought, p 240

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immense influence upon his mind which made him a reformer. Tilak's philosophy of social change has been well portrayed in the various articles that he had written in 'Kesari'.

Tilak believed that social reform could not precede political reform. He was against the social evils and pleaded for its eradication. He appreciated the British government for making laws for social and marital regulation. Tilak was not in favour of child marriage, polygamy, untouchability, etc. He supported the cause of promotion of women education. He believed in gradual evolution of social consciousness. He was not against the State intervention in the social and religious matters in principle but opposed intervention by an alien ruler. Tilak believed that spiritualism was the keystone of Indian culture. He was not a follower of orthodoxy and fanaticism. He believed in Aryadharm and did not excuse the evils in the social system. He wanted genuine and concrete reforms in the society and not simple imitation of western life and manners. Lokmanya opined that reforms must come from the people and these should be directed for their wellbeing.

Regarding political reforms, Tilak viewed that if legislation was going to be employed to bring social reforms, it should not be used to enforce reform practices on the masses who neither understand the reforms nor appreciated their potential benefits. He believed that reforms must grow within the people. It must be based on the value system of the people. He further believed that there must be change in the hearts of the people and not as the reformers believe. He organised the Ganapati and Shivaji festivals to unite the illiterate mass and bring Swaraj to the country. He said that in order to make the country politically free, it is necessary that people must rely on the past heritage and tradition. Further, he said that to emancipate the country, it is necessary for the individuals to sacrifice themselves for the sake of the motherland. No society could survive, if people refuse to participate for its growth actively. Individuals must be Self-confident and self-reliant to meet the various approaches of life. He gave the Indian mass a vivid picture of Dharma or duty. He taught the individuals the Dharma of action and Dharma of unity of India which was greater than the interest of any section. Thus, Lokmanya Tilak is a true social and 'political reformer. He was a practical and pragmatic man and believed more in action than in theory.

The above are the political goals of Tilak. He never opposed any kind of social reform. He understood the problems correctly. His main aim was to attain Swaraj. Thus it is rightly said that Tilak was a moderate socialist and a political extremist.

### **10. Non-Cooperation:**

Non-cooperation was one of the methods adopted to drive out the Britishers from India. Tilak and Gokhale supported it. But the British Government declared it as unconstitutional. Tilak contended that Indian administration by the Britishers was not carried out according to the constitution. So, the Britishers should not regard any act of Indians as unconstitutional. Tilak first gave the clarion call for non-cooperation which was later followed by Gandhiji. On Mahatma Gandhi's concept of non-cooperation, Tilak observed

***"The means of Satyagraha can be adopted but it is not easy to state whether it can be used in all situations and whether it would succeed under all circumstances. However, it must be granted that Satyagraha is indeed a noble method."***

### **11. Revolution:**

Throughout his life, Tilak wanted to bring revolution in the society. He was an ardent nationalist. To bring about economic, religious, social and political changes, Tilak made all sorts of efforts. He did not appreciate the policies made by the Britishers and condemned them as extremely repressive and negative in character.

The anti-partition agitation was suppressed, the Minto-Morley reforms failed and people were suppressed and humiliated by the Britishers. Tilak became very vigorous and through the journals 'Keshari' and 'Maratha', he made an effort to condemn the alien government and tried to create an atmosphere of revolution in the minds of the Indians to revolt against the Britishers. He justified the killing of Afzal Khan by Shivaji.

In 1903 with the help of Khalid, Tilak tried to establish an arms factory in Nepal, though ultimately he failed in his pursuit. But this did not mean that he believed in violence. Rather he was a preacher of nonviolence. But for swaraj and truth, he supported violence. He supported the extremists of Maharashtra, Punjab and Bengal.

As a political philosopher, Tilak said that violence is necessary to deal with the bad and wicked individuals. He thought for the interest of the nation as a whole the terrorists should fight and not for their vested interest. For this reason, he established relationship with some leading terrorists and revolutionaries of his times like Shyamji Krishna Verma, Damodar Panth Savarkar and Vir Savarkar.

In course of a speech in 1907, Tilak observed,

***“The path of duty is never sprinkled with rosewater, nor do roses grow on it. It is true that what we seek, may seem like a revolution in the sense that it means a complete change in the theory of the government of India as now put forward by the bureaucracy”.***

***Further, he said that revolution should be bloodless. Thus he was a true nationalist and an ardent revolutionary.***

Critics regarded him as a violent revolutionary. He preached the gospel of dynamic and militant nationalism. Valentine Chirol in his book "Indian Unrest" described Tilak as the "father of Indian Unrest".<sup>9</sup> According to him Tilak was the first to create an atmosphere which breeds murder. Chirol further alleged that it was at Tilak's instigation that some hot-headed youths had taken to acts of terrorism, Tilak argued that by dubbing the freedom struggle as a terrorist movement, Chirol had indirectly lent support to the repression let loose by British rulers in India. Hence Tilak filed a libel suit against Chirol and went to England to fight for it.

#### **Value addition-Did you know**

##### **Political party and Tilak**

Tilak started a new party named **“New Democratic Swaraj Party”**, in 1905-06. He took this initiative by getting disillusioned by the philosophy of moderate nationalists. The goal of the New Party was to achieve self-government. Tilak was chosen as the leader of the new party on account of his ardent patriotism and nationalism. He announced the 'tenets of the new party' on January 2<sup>nd</sup> 1907.

In spite of these allegations, it is contended that Tilak was not a revolutionary by nature. His genius was not destructive but constructive. He wanted the rule of the British bureaucracy to be replaced by a government run' by the Indians. Thus, his method was democratic and constitutional. He rightly said, "I want to have the key of my house and not merely one stranger turned out of it. Self-government is our goal."

## **12. Extremism:**

From 1896 to 1908, for long 13 years, the extremist played an important role in the India's struggle for independence. Tilak along with Bipin Chandra Pal and Lala Lajpat Rai, formed

<sup>9</sup> Vishnoo Bhagwan, Indian Political Thinkers, Atmaram sons, Delhi, p 154

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the national extremist triad called Lal, Bal, Pal. They believed in extremism. Sri Aurobindo also supported them. The famine of 1896, wrong economic policy of the Britishers, ill-treatment of the Indians by the Britishers, Lord Curzon's partition of Bengal, etc. brought a sense of violence in the minds of the Indian nationalists. Tilak and his supporters condemned the moderates of the Indian National Congress. They did not appreciate the prayer, persuasion and petition method of the moderates. They said that India cannot achieve freedom through peaceful method. Therefore, they believed that violence is necessary.

The alien government is a stumbling block in the way of progress for the Indians. Thus Tilak opposed the Britishers and made all round efforts for the uplift of Indians. He believed that social reforms are prime-requisite to get Swaraj. Further, he said that for social reforms, political revolution cannot stop. He believed in direct political action. Tilak's home-rule movement, anti-taxation agitation, national education programme, boycott and revolutionary ideas made him an extremist. He preached the theory of self-determination, Swaraj, self-reliance and self-confidence among the Indian. For the emancipation of the country, he accepted all types of sacrifice. He preached the gospel of dynamic militant nationalism in India. He boldly said, "No nation can be strong and healthy unless it is free."<sup>10</sup>

### **13. Theory of Action:**

Lokmanya Tilak is essentially a 'Karmayogi' who feels that work is God. He eulogised the chapter 'Karmoyoga' or 'Theory of Action' in the book "Gita Rahasya". In his opinion, freedom is the birth right of every individual. This freedom is essential both for the individuals and nation. He laid emphasis more on work or deed than on knowledge. He said that Karmoyoga is better than Sanyasa. Karma or work brings joy and success to an individual. Thus, Gita's Karmayoga theory was the source of inspiration behind his political thinking. In his opinion 'Gita' is responsible for the theory of unselfish work. He regarded work as God.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> V.R. Mehta & Pantham, Thomas (eds.) (2006) 'A Thematic Introduction to Political Ideas in Modern India: Thematic Explorations, History of Science, Philosophy and Culture in Indian civilization' Vol: 10, Part: 7, New Delhi: Sage Publications, pp. xxvii-ixi

<sup>11</sup> B. G. Tilak, "Karmayoga and Swaraj", *Speeches & Writings*, p-245

### Value addition- for better understanding

#### Tilak and Nationalism

*Though Tilak was a staunch Hindu, he stood strongly for Hindu-Muslim unity. He was mainly responsible for the Congress-League Pact at the Lucknow session of the Indian national Congress. Hence he was described as the prophet of Indian Nationalism rather than orthodox devotee of Hinduism.*

#### Summary:

A detailed analysis of Lokmanya Tilak's work, a critical appraisal of his words and a dispassionate probe into his political deeds revealed that he was a profound scholar, a refined Hindu, a true revolutionary, an ardent freedom fighter, an arch patriot and above all a true and faithful son of India. He was an embodiment of intellectualism, idealism and political realism. In the opinion of Pandit Nehru, Tilak is the "symbol of new era." Many regard him as an ardent exponent of Indian nationalism.

Lokmanya Tilak was among those thinkers and leaders of the early 20th century who won appreciation from all walks of life due to his love for the country, simplicity, generosity, charity, scholarship and sacrifice. He regenerated the slumberous people of India and instilled in them patriotism and feeling of freedom. Tilak's contribution to political philosophy of nationalist movement can hardly be undermined. He left a monumental legacy for the posterity. His main contribution was the theory of nationalism which was a synthesis of the teachings of the eastern and western thinkers.

Lokmanya Tilak is one of such figures in Indian freedom struggle who is acclaimed and praised by both his supporters and opponents. Gokhale, one of his life-long political opponent, has paid greatest tribute to Tilak by saying that born a hundred and twenty years before Tilak would have carved out a kingdom form himself. Thus he has secured a high place of honour and prestige in the pages of Indian history of freedom struggle for his valuable works and deeds. He can rightly be described as a luminous star in the firmament of Indian history.

Tilak can be regarded as the chief architect of new India. He not only belonged to Maharashtra alone but also he is the uncrowned king of India. He can be rightly regarded as an institution. He was a man of dauntless courage and energy. He knew no fear and adopted different methods to attain Swaraj. His unselfish deeds and work had made him

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immortal. He is the first Indian to be imprisoned on political grounds. His main aim was to unite the individuals to attain the cherished goal. Mahatma Gandhi has rightly said that "his (Tilak) patriotism was a passion with him. He knew no religion but love of his country." His nationalism was built upon democratic realism.

Though Tilak did not become the President of Indian National Congress, he had a great influence upon it. He gave a new turn to the Indian political thinking by forcing the Indian National Congress to adopt a radical programme of fighting for the emancipation of the country. He laid emphasis on Indianisation. His philosophy of Swadeshi and boycott was afterwards accepted by the Congress. Being a staunch realist, he believed in action rather than in theory. He tried to unite the masses for a common goal.

Tilak passed away in 1920 in Bombay, leaving a glorious legacy for the posterity. His theory of secularism had a great appeal to Gandhiji. Tilak was the father of Indian unrest, the prophet of Swaraj, a staunch realist and a committed nationalist, all rolled into one. He was not a utopian thinker. He always did what he said. Thus he is aptly regarded as the father of Indian Nationalism. His only aim was the emancipation of the motherland. Therefore, it is rightly said, "Swaraj was the goal of India and Swaraj was the legacy of Tiiak." To conclude with a scholar, "Some leaders are victims of circumstances and though for some time they earn a measure of success and popularity, gradually they fade into oblivion. A few leaders, however, rise to the occasion to confront all kinds of circumstances and help to shape the destiny of the nation. Such leaders continue to live in the life of a nation long after they are no more. Tilak was a leader who belonged to the latter category and his life is a message for generations to come. He is like a mountain peak which continues to give dignity to our nation, even when fast and far-reaching changes are taking place. He has left his footprints on the sands of time, never to be effaced."

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### Glossary

Boycott	:	It meant refusal of the local people to purchase British manufactured goods
Home Rule Movement	:	The Home Rule Movement was quite-popular in India during Tilak's time. The main aim of the movement was to give the Indians their rights
Keshari	:	Kesari is a Marathi weekly newspaper founded in 1881 by Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak,
Maratha	:	Maratha was an English weekly which supported the cause of self rule and nationalism.
Nationalism	:	Nationalism is a belief or political ideology that involves an individual identifying with, or becoming attached to, one's nation
Non-Cooperation	:	Non-cooperation was one of the methods adopted to drive out the Britishers from India
Passive Resistance	:	noncompliance with the laws or directives of an authority, particularly of a government or occupying power, as a form of protest against injustice
Swadeshi	:	Swadeshi meant do-it-yourself to depend upon Indian made goods rather than rely upon manufactured produce of Birmingham and Manchester
Swaraj	:	Swaraj means swa(self) raj (rule/government).
Gita Rahasya	:	Tilak's greatest work was the 'Gita Rahasya', in which he analysed the teaching of Gita, comparing it with other Indian and Western schools of thought. Tilak was finally released from the Mandalay Jail in June 1914.

### Questions

1. Discuss Tilak's contribution to political thought?
2. "Political reforms must precede and not follow" the social reforms"(Tilak) – Examine.
3. Discuss the concept of swaraj as viewed by Bal Gangadhar Tilak.
4. "Swaraj is my birth right and I will have it"- Justify it.
5. What are the techniques developed by Tilak to achieve swaraj?

## Bal Gangadhar Tilak on Swaraj

### Multiple choice questions

1. What was the full name of Tilak?
  - a. Govind Gangadhar Tilak
  - b. Ganhadhar Namdev Tilak
  - c. Balasaheb gangadhar Tilak
  - d. Keshab Gangadhar Tilak
2. Tilak was born on
  - a. 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1856
  - b. 7<sup>th</sup> January 1856
  - c. 15 February 1856
  - d. 2<sup>nd</sup> march 1856
3. Tilak was an eminent
  - a. Teacher
  - b. Journalist
  - c. Nationalist
  - d. All of the above
4. Which of the following was called as "father of the Indian Unrest"
  - a. Keshab Gangadhar Tilak
  - b. Govind Chandra ranade
  - c. Subhash Chandra Bose
  - d. Bipin Chandra Pal
5. In which of the following year , Tilak started celebrating Ganapati Utshav as a public national event?
  - a. 1889
  - b. 1893
  - c. 1890
  - d. 1896
6. In which year Tilak joined Indian National Congress?
  - a. 1891
  - b. 1900
  - c. 1890
  - d. 1905
7. Tilak died on
  - a. 1<sup>st</sup> august 1920

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- b. 31<sup>st</sup> January 1921  
c. 1<sup>st</sup> September 1925  
d. 25<sup>th</sup> June 1926
8. The Arctic Home in the Vedas is a book on the origin of Aryans by Lokmanya Bâl Gangâdhar Tilak
- a. Dravidians  
b. Aryans  
c. Mughals  
d. None of the above
9. Tilak started the home rule movement in
- a. January 1916  
b. April 1916  
c. November 1916  
d. September 1916
10. Tilak had written which of the following books , in prison Mandalay, Burma?
- a. Shrimad Bhagvat Gita Rahasya  
b. The Arctic home in Vedas  
c. The Orioin  
d. None of the above
11. In which year , Tilak founded the New Party?
- a. 1908  
b. 1910  
c. 1911  
d. 1906
12. Tilak had focussed on a \_\_\_\_\_ action plan to achieve swarajya.
- a. Four-point  
b. Three-point  
c. Five-point  
d. Six-point
13. Match list-I with List-II and select the correct answer using the codes given below the list:
- | List-I              | List-II |
|---------------------|---------|
| A. Home Rule League | 1. 1906 |
| B. Gita Rahasya     | 2. 1916 |

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C. New Party 3. 1914

D. Ganesh Utsav 4.1893

Select the correct code.

	A	B	C	D
(a)	1	4	2	3
(b)	2	3	1	4
(C)	3	2	4	1
(d)	2	4	1	3

14. Match list-I with List-II and select the correct answer using the codes given below the list:

List-I

List-II

A. The Arctic Home in Vedas 1. 1893

B. Shrimad BhagwatGita Rahasya 2. 1881

C. The Orion 3. 1903

D. Keshari 4.1915

Select the correct code.

	A	B	C	D
(a)	3	4	1	2
(b)	2	3	1	4
(C)	3	2	4	1
(d)	2	4	1	3

State whether the following questions are True / False.

15. Tilak's instance that the first Shivaji festival was celebrated at the Raigad fort on 15th April 1896. (T)

16. *Through Ganapati and Shivaji festivals, Tilak attempted to bring unity amongst the people. (T)*

17. Tilak was not in favour of boycott movement. (F)

### Answer Key

1. d

2. a

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3. d
4. a
5. b
6. c
7. a
8. b
9. b
10. a
11. d
12. a
13. b
14. a
15. T
16. T
17. F

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