

## Examrace

# Indian Thought Bal Gangadhar Tilak Political Science YouTube Lecture Handouts

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## Title: Indian Thought Bal Gangadhar Tilak

### Introduction

- If political philosophy means the speculative construction of an idealistic utopia, then Tilak has not given us any picture of the politically perfect society in this sense of the term political philosophy.
- He does not discuss the features and possibilities of the best State as Plato, Aristotle and Cicero do: He does not create the architectonic of the conceptually perfect State in the manner of Hegel and Bosanquet. His main problem in life was the political emancipation of India and hence there is an element of great realism in his political ideas and outlook.

### Political Philosophy of Tilak

- The dominant metaphysical assumptions of Tilak also influenced his political ideas. He was a Vedantist. The metaphysics of non-dualism of the Vedanta, implied, according to him, the political conception of natural rights.
- Because the spirit is the supreme reality and because all men participate in that absolute essence, hence all have the same autonomous spiritual potentiality. Hence Adventism taught him the supremacy of the concept of freedom. Freedom was the soul of the Home Rule Movement.
- The divine instinct of freedom never aged soul which Vedanta declares to be not separate from God but identical with him. This freedom was a principle that could never perish.

### Nationalism, Revivalism and Hinduism

- Tilak's nationalism had a revivalistic orientation. He wanted to bring to the front the message of the Vedas and the Gita for providing spiritual energy and moral enthusiasm to the nation. A recovery of the healthy and vital traditions of the old culture of India was essential.
- He said: "a true nationalist desires to build on old foundations". Reform based on utter disrespect for the old does not appeal to him as constructive work. "We do not want to anglicize our institutions and so denationalize them in the name of social and political

reforms.” **Hence, he pointed out that the Shivaji and the Ganapati festivals had been encouraged by him because they served to link contemporary events and movements with historical traditions.**

### **Tilak’s Critique for Being Anti-Muslimism Politician**

- Some historians blame Lokamanya Tilak and Sri Aurobindo Ghosh for their identification of national awakening with the revival of Hinduism cut off the Moslem masses from the national movement.
- But all these are partial and even incorrect interpretations of the political thought and action of Lokamanya. Jinnah, Dr. M. A. Ansari and Hasan Imam have praised the nationalistic sentiments and spirit of compromise of the Lokamanya, because due to his wise counsel and moderation the Lucknow Pact of 1916 could be achieved.

### **Swarajya & British Dominion over India**

- Tilak held that the attainment of Swarajya would be a great victory for Indian nationalism. Hence, he gave to Indians the Mantra: “Swarajya is the birth-right of Indians” .
- Although in his speeches and writings Lokamanya always said that Swarajya did not imply the negation and severance of ultimate British sovereignty, still people knew that in his heart of hearts he always wanted complete independence.
- He once wrote that Swarajya is “the foundation and not the height of our future prosperity.”
- During the Home Rule days Lokamanya always was careful to say that he was not opposed to the King-Emperor but he only wanted to change the Anglo-Indian bureaucracy. He confidently asserted that to preach against the despotism of the bureaucracy was not sedition. Since Lokamanya did not advocate the doing away with the King-Emperor whence **Bipin Chandra Pal says that Lokamanya was a believer in ‘imperial Fédération’ which would be composed of Great Britain, Ireland and Egypt, India and the dominions, each absolutely autonomous internally but combined for the purposes of protection and progress.**

### **Questions**

1. Compare and contrast between the nationalism of Tilak and Aurobindo?
2. Swarajya of Gandhi and Lokamanya?