



Reminiscences of The Lokamanya





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Sketch of Lokmanya by V. N. Oke
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A Note from the publisher

Lokamanya Tilak was a multifaceted personality. On his death, S.V. Bapat published three volumes on 'Lokamanya Tilak : Reminiscences and Anecdotes'. These volumes contain many fond memories of the Lokamanya. Besides, those who came into contact with him have recorded their recollections of the Lokamanya in many a volume.

Even today there is much that we can learn from his life. Keeping this very objective in view we have selected some reminiscences from the above noted volumes. We are publishing this anthology to commemorate his death anniversary.

In the task of compiling this anthology, we received invaluable guidance from Prof. J. V. Naik, former Head of History Department, University of Mumbai, late Dr. Y.D. Phadke, the well known history researcher and late Judge Srinivas Belavi, a keen student of Tilak and his work. To them we are deeply indebted.

Secretary

Shri Sarvajanic Ganeshotsava Sanstha

Keshavji Naikanchya Chali



A note from the translators

We have the honour and pleasure of translating into English “Reminiscences of The Lokamanya” originally recorded in Marathi and a few in English by some of his notable contemporaries and taken from the three volumes on ‘Lokamanya Tilak : Reminiscences And Anecdotes’ by Sadashiv Vinayak Bapat – edited. Marathi language has its own idiom and flavour which is not easy to render into a foreign language. Despite our best efforts, experts in this field may find some flaws in our translation for which we beg forgiveness of the readers.

Lokamanya Tilak will ever be revered not merely as a peerless patriot but also as a profound scholar who devoted his whole life to bring freedom to our country. We are grateful to the Secretary, Sarvajanic Ganeshotsav Sanstha, Girgaum, Mumbai, for entrusting this task to us. And we have sought to accomplish it as a humble tribute to the great Lokamanya.

Dinker Naik
J. V. Naik



Dr. C. D. Deshmukh

(Independent India's First Finance Minister)

I met Lokamanya Tilak towards the close of 1919. He had come over to England in connection with the Chirol Case. I desired to have his guidance on whether I could contribute in any way towards India's independence.

“Is it my duty to participate in the struggle for national independence even though I have joined the ICS?” I queried.

“No, our country will definitely attain independence very soon. Experienced administrators will most certainly be needed to carry on the governance of Swaraj. You have achieved that distinction by completing your education. So your participation in the national struggle at this stage will not contribute anything more to what has already been achieved,” he responded.

Tilak's advice was quite in keeping with his political philosophy. For he always stood for constructive cooperation with the British government for achieving Swaraj.



Dattatraya Balakrishna Kalelkar

In the course of his conversation with Tilak his friend said to him, “Balwantrao, what office would you occupy under Swaraj? Would you become the Prime Minister or External Affairs Minister?” Tilak replied “Oh No! I shall take up professorship of Mathematics in any native college and withdraw myself totally from all public activities. I detest politics. I still feel like writing a book on ‘Differential Calculus.’ The country is in a very bad state and since none of you is doing anything to improve the state of affairs, I am required to take up the matter.”

From: ‘Lokamanya’, Biography by N.R. Phatak

After writing the ‘Gitarahasya’, Tilak took up the task of writing the ‘Vedic Chronology.’ This was merely the improved version of the ‘Orion.’ Of this book only two chapters were completed. At the end of the second chapter he has given a list of books proposed to be written. It contains the titles of ten books. Those are 1. A History of Hindu Religion, 2. India’s Nationhood, 3. India’s Pre-Ramayana-Mahabharat History, 4. Shankar Darshan (India’s Doctrine of Absolute Unity—Monism), 5. Provincial Administration, 6. Hindu Law, 7. Infinitesimal Calculus, 8. Shrimad Bhagwadgitarahasya—India’s Science of Morality, 9. Shivaji’s Biography, 10. Khaldia Bharat. Of these only the Gitarahasya was completed.



Vasudeo Ramrao Kulkarni

(Prisoner sent to Mandalay from the Yeravda Jail
to serve as cook for Tilak)

There is little doubt that Maharaja's constitution was inherently strong and sturdy. I was there for about three years. During this entire period he fell ill only once or twice even though he was quite old then. Once he was laid low by cholera-like illness. He had heavy diarrhoea once or twice and some vomiting as well. On account of that illness he became very weak and feeble. Even then he did not allow me to touch his body. The jailor brought the doctor and gave him medicines. There is no doubt that on this occasion the authorities there took utmost care of his health. During the above period, however, I myself fell ill several times. But just as my own father would have, Maharaja took good care of my health and despite the advice of the authorities to the contrary, personally nursed me in the prison cell itself instead of sending me to the jail dispensary. To cap it all, he would himself cook and dine only after having fed me first with a part of his own food. And despite the insistence of the jailor he did not allow me to eat prison-doled food. He was my master, but for three years he treated me as though I was his own son. What more should I add! Actually, I was a prisoner condemned to rigorous imprisonment and hence not entitled to various amenities and facilities. But Maharaj would always give me tea along with himself, share his food with me by himself remaining on half-empty stomach, chat with me as though I was his equal, endeavour to ensure my shaving done by his special barber or at least make efforts in that direction, take greater care in my sickness than even my own people would have, explore legal channels for my early release from prison—recollecting these and hundreds of similar instances I am emotionally overwhelmed and confused, and know not what to do.



Veer Waman Gopal Joshi

(Editor: 'Swatantra Hindusthan', Leader of the Non-cooperation Party, Amaravati)

During his Akola sojourn, Dr. Dadasaheb Kolhatkar, the well-known personality of that place, posed the following question to the Lokamanya : "Would it not be convenient to carry on politics under a religious garb?" To that the Lokamanya responded, "No, if politics is given a religious colour, sanctimonious persons gather around and in the end religious matters come to assume greater importance and prevail over political affairs. Politics should indeed have its grounding in religious principles but it should be free of religious overtones. It should have its own identity. If someone desires to carry on politics secretly, he may well do so. But even if it is to be carried on secretly, it should be carried on as politics so that his followers will have a clear idea of what politics is all about, and even if the movement founded by him runs into any difficulty whatsoever, the political principles on which it is founded will not disappear."

Valentine Chirol

(Chief of London Times' Foreign Bureau)

For several years now I have been engaged in the business of writing in the newspapers. During this period I came across only two audacious persons to detain and question me and scold me sharply. Of these one was Tilak and the other was the German Emperor Kaiser William. Many will be dismayed at my bracketing these two personalities together. But frankly these two names are worthy of being uttered in the same breath, of being grouped together.



Yeshwant Ganesh Kulakarni

(Ex-Manager of Taimaharaj and Shri Jagannath Maharaj)

That the Lokamanya was fond of betel-nut is well-known. Whenever he visited the palace of Babamaharaj, betel-nut was offered to him. However, he never accepted it even by mistake. Everytime betel-nut was placed before him he used to say, "I am a trustee and a trustee ought not to touch even a piece of betel-nut of the trust property. How come you do not realize this simple thing and keep offering betel-nut to me? Now, what should I call you for this act? The fruit of this selflessness later became evident in the Taimaharaj affair. While the criminal case was going on, Mr. Clement, the Special Magistrate, put the following question to Taimaharaj : "Tilak did all the work for the sake of personal profit, isn't it?" To that the lady replied, "Whatever Tilak did, he did for the benefit of the estate; he did nothing for personal profit." This answer did not satisfy the Saheb Bahadur. And he said to the lady, "You have not understood my question at all; understand the question properly and then give the answer." So saying, he repeated the question thrice and extracted confession from the lady that she has understood the question, but receiving the same answer to that question, he was left with no other alternative but to record it.



Damodar Vishwanath Gokhale

(B.A., LL.B., Editor: Maratha, Pune)

Preparations began for filing an appeal for bail to the Lokamanya. Lokamanya had given his Vakalatnamah to Barrister Jinnah. While discussions were going on as to how to plead the matter from the legal standpoint, Lokamanya told Barrister Jinnah, “I shall not suggest that you ignore the pros and cons of law while pleading the case but then do remember that this case is against Tilak, and in it not this magistrate but my countrymen are the real judges. I want to convince them; not this magistrate. If the people derive some lessons from this case and it leads to the advancement of national use by a few paces, then alone this case is worthy of being fought; not otherwise.” From the above it is quite evident as to what was Tilak’s real aim and his policy with regard to the national struggle.



Vishnu Digambar Paluskar

(*Gayanacharya* (Master Singer),

Principal of Gandharva Mahavidhyalaya, Mumbai)

I became acquainted with Vidvadvarya Tilak for the first time at the time of the Banaras Congress and that acquaintance lasted till the end. I consider that to be a fortunate circumstance for me. With great solicitude he drove home a point concerning my Gandharva Mahavidyalaya Saunstha which is as under: “An association, irrespective of the fact whether it is geared for popular welfare or not, will not attract attention of the people unless you strive to bring it to their notice. For this reason do not ever forget to bring to the notice of the people through all newspapers the aims and objectives of your Saunstha, and its daily, monthly and annual programmes.” I constantly remember this one sentence of the Lokamanya’s advice. Until then I was deluding under the impression that people would naturally be drawn towards a Saunstha whose aim is to promote welfare of the public at large. Let alone constructive interest, the general public is not inclined to show even idle curiosity in the activities of such associations. Till the end of my day, I shall never forget this farsighted advice of the Lokamanya born out of his personal experience. Later on the Lokamanya started free subscription of the ‘Kesari’ and ‘Maratha’ to the Mahavidyalaya, Lahore. Besides, paying Rupees one hundred, he became a life member of the Vidyalaya.



Mr. J. Chaudhary

(Barrister deputed to Mumbai by the Calcuttans to fight the 1897 case against Tilak along with other Barristers)

Altogether the history of the case is far too lengthy and hence likely to be boring. Therefore, without narrating the entire story, I shall quote here only one or two instances which indicated Tilak's uncommon intellect. By the time justice Stratchey pronounced Lokamanya Tilak guilty and imposed the sentence, it was rather too late. It was, therefore, decided that taking a copy of the judgement we all should go to the Byculla Club the following morning and note down points to make an appeal before the Privy Council. Accordingly, when we went there we found a peon from the jail waiting for us with some papers. On going through those papers we all were simply flabbergasted. Those papers contained the points of appeal which we were to prepare. Tilak had merely heard the judgement but it was so firmly etched in his memory that the moment he entered the jail he wrote down in pencil all the points of appeal. On going through those points Barristers Pieu and Sir Garth unreservedly admitted that they could not have prepared points of appeal in a better manner than Tilak had.



Ramchandra Balwant Tilak
(Lokamanya's eldest son, Pune)

When we were at Sinhagad, he said to us once that “you do whatever business you want. I shall not feel bad even if you engage in manufacturing footwear, nor would I complain that my children, born of a Brahman, have become cobblers. At the same time, however, keep this in mind that whatever you make should be so exquisitely good that should anyone be inclined to enter that trade your name should take precedence in his memory. For instance, the moment you remember tea brand ‘Lipton’ springs before your eyes, Huntley Palmer when you think of biscuits or for that matter when the question of physical strength arises, you remember at least a modern ‘Sandow’ or ‘Rammurti’, if not Bhimsen of yore, likewise whenever discussion centres round the calling you have adopted people should remember your name first. And in a country where every person who takes to business possesses such a bent of mind, that country is bound to prosper. Take that for granted.



Parshuram Vyankatrao Gharpure
(Barrister, President : District Board, Wardha)

To collect funds for the Home Rule, the Lokamanya undertook a tour of the Central Provinces & Berar in 1918. On that occasion I had the good fortune of being in his company and sharing his thoughts on diverse subjects. On the subject of politics he once opined thus:

“Unless there is unity, it is not possible to achieve political goals. Politics is not an easy task. Opposition has to be neutralized by means of a careful forethought and planning. And while doing so one has to keep a smiling countenance without showing any trace of choler or malice. Politics is a strange game. Unlike other games it is a never ending game, and one that keeps expanding continuously, and the beauty of it is every chapter in this game comes to a close apparently in a compromise. This compromise, however, has to be adroitly imposed on the opposition party.”



Gangadhar Balakrishna Deshpande
(Leader from Karnatak, Belgaum)

A meeting had taken place in the Sardargriha between the Lokamanya and Mahatmaji on the eve of the War Conference. A resolution to the effect that ‘the government should be helped to obtain recruits’ was to come up before the conference for consideration. Mahatma Gandhi was to speak in favour of the resolution. Lokamanya had decided to bring before the conference his proposal stating ‘We should be prepared to assist the government provided the government supported the demand for Swaraj.’ Lokamanya desired Mahatma Gandhi to second it. Accordingly he was trying to persuade the Mahatma in that direction. In this process moving his hand on the back of Mahatma Gandhi he said, “My good friend, you have not burnt your fingers as yet while playing with this government. During the last forty years my fingers have (been) burnt more than once. When you will get your fingers burnt, I am sure, you will go ahead of me.” Thereupon Mahatma Gandhi smiled and probably considering that discretion was the better part of valour decided not to speak at all rather than speaking against the proposal.



Shridhar Balwant Tilak

(Younger son of the Lokamanya)

Lokamanya left the Mandalay Jail on Monday the 8th June 1914. For several weeks thereafter there appeared to be no sign of the government returning the note-books containing the manuscript of the Gitarahasya confiscated from him in the Mandalay Jail. As days rolled by people began becoming increasingly suspicious of the government's intention. Finally some persons frankly spoke out thus : "Government intention does not appear to be honest. It seems to have decided more or less not to return the manuscript note-books." When these conjectures and inferences reached the Lokamanya's ears, he observed, "Do not worry in the least. Though the note-books are in possession of the government, the whole book is in my head. When I have leisure, I shall re-write the entire book by residing at Sinhagad for a month or two."



M. G. Abhyankar, Pune

In 1897 when Tilak was residing with Dajisaheb Khare at his bungalow, a European Police Superintendent arrived at about 9.30 at night and summoning him outside showed him a warrant issued against him under Section 124. Asking the Police Superintendent to wait for five minutes, Tilak went inside and discussed the provisions of the said section with Dajisaheb. At about 10 P.M. Tilak proceeded to the prison along with the Police Superintendent after having instructed Dajisaheb to go to the Presidency Magistrate's Bungalow, make an application for bail and inform him about its outcome in the jail. The moment Tilak entered the jail at about 10.30 P.M. he hit the bed. Soon he was fast asleep. When Dajisaheb arrived at the jail at about 11.30 P.M., he found Tilak snoring. Only when Dajisaheb called out to him twice, did he wake up.



Sadashiv Vinayak Bapat

(Editor : Reminiscences & Anecdotes of Lokamanya Tilak)

Returning home via the Lakdi Bridge after Ganapati immersion on a *Anant Chaturdashi* night, Lokamanya after having his bath, dinner etc. was quietly resting in his armchair. It was quite apparent, however, that he was both mentally and physically disturbed. Just then Professor Kosambi walked in and engaged in some philosophical discussion with him. But even he did not fail to perceive that Tilak was not in his usual cheerful mood. Therefore, at long last he did say to him, “you do not seem to be keeping well to-day. ” Tilak quickly responded by saying “Oh no! Nothing of that kind. I am fine. But returning home after the Ganapati immersion I always feel as though something is missing. I become restless and feel a little angst-ridden. That’s all. Nothing more.” Surprised, Prof. Kosambi said, “So it must be said that even erudite persons like you do get affected by such popular practices!” Lokamanya replied, “Dear Sir, all said and done, influence of the *Samskaras*¹ cannot but affect anyone to some degree at least. Besides, if knowledge which has emerged out of *Bhakti* (devotion), finally merges into *Bhakti*, it will be a state of bliss. You will agree with this if you pay some careful thought to it.”

1. Essential and common purificatory rites or ceremonies amongst the Hindus.



Keshav Balwant Joshi
(Headmaster, Mumbai)

It happened in the year 1915. A select band of persons including the Lokamanya, Dr. Deshmukh, Shri Annasaheb Nene, Vedshastri Godseshartri, Shri Chaudebuva etc., had assembled at the residence of Nanasaheb Deshmukh. I also went there to have a *darshan* (to see) of the Lokamanya. After having discussed several political matters, Narharshastri Godse put forth the following request: “Gitarahasya should be versified in the *omvi* (stanza of a particular measure) form so that like other sacred books it will become a part of everyday study and might well form a part of the narrations of the discourses and *Puraniks* (Brahmans well-versed in the Puranas) on a regular basis. Entrust the work to me. I shall surely and quickly do it.” At the time Lokamanya quietly listened promising to consider the proposal sometime later. What happened to the promise subsequently is not known.

(Vedshastri Narharshastri Godse was a resident of Keshavji Naik Chawl)



Rare Homage Paid to Lokamanya Tilak

Learning that Hon'ble Tilak would be coming over from Pune, people here seem to have decided in advance to honour Tilak in a special way. Anyone would so conclude from the programme that took place on the Ganesh Chaturthi day. With the dawn of the sacred day, news began floating all around the city of Hon'ble Tilak gracing one or two functions as President, Tilak to be honoured at some other places with *Pan-supari* (offering of betel-nuts and betel leaves as a mark of respect) and so on. On Monday after two *prabars* (*prabar* in Marathi signifies eighth part of a day) at about 3.30 P.M. Tilak entered Keshavji Naik Chawl in Kandewadi. The road right upto the chawl was covered with spotless snow-white cloth walking upon which the Lokamanya made his entry into the chawl. Dr. Nanasaheb Deshmukh and other dignitaries had already taken their seats. Under the Presidency of Tilak, Vedshastrī Narharshastrī Godse delivered a discourse on the Grihasthashram¹. Residents of the Keshavji Naik Chawl welcomed Hon'ble Tilak and expressed their reverence and gratitude for the work done by him. Shri Madhavrao Patankar, the owner of Patankar Sangeet Mandali and a resident of Keshavji Naik Chawl suggested the raising of a befitting memorial to Tilak, promising to contribute rupees five hundred for the purpose. From here Tilak proceeded to the Jagannath Chawl in Fanaswadi.

Daily 'Kal' 19th September 1901.

The above described incident completed 100 years in 2001. To commemorate the occasion, the Keshavji Naik Chawl's Ganeshotsava Sanstha recreated the said event in a novel way under the caption 'Return of Tilak.'



Narayan Balkrishna Kelkar

(Writer; Manager: Animal Protection Society, Dhule)

When the question arose as to what modern youth should do, the Lokamanya made the following observation: “Everyone is running after government jobs these days. Youth should learn to be self-reliant and to stand on one’s own legs. Has the son of a Marwari ever complained that he is unable to get a job? They are always preoccupied with their own business. Take the ordinary vegetable vendor, who cannot even properly count numbers from one to ten, but even she makes seventeen to eighteen annas out of a merchandise of one rupee. And if a rupee is given to you for business there in no telling whether you would bring back even twelve to thirteen annas. Students should not hanker after jobs now. For, service means servitude.”



Vinayak Vishnu Ranade

(B.A., LL.B., A prominent contractor, Pune)

After the congress session was over, Balwantraoji had to pay a visit to the Math of Swami Vivekanand at the invitation of the Swami himself. Along with Balwantraoji ten-twelve of us set out in a boat across the Ganges and after sailing a distance of about one to one and a half miles we disembarked on its bank to visit that serene ashram located on the bank itself. The Swami was present in person to welcome Balwantraoji and extended his hand to help him to disembark and then both held one another in an intensely affectionate embrace bathing each other unabashedly in tears of love. Looking at that spectacle it seemed as though it is a living monument to the meeting of hearts of Maharashtra and Bengal. The Swami welcomed us all and then conducted us to the Math. After a slight repast of milk and fruits, both had some intimate and hearty talks. The crux of the talks was that since we are under alien rule, our political policies should be as self-reliant as possible and should be such as to compel the government to accept its defeat through the adoption of delaying and obstructionist tactics. The Swami had already toured Europe, America and other Western countries, and delivering discourses on the Sanatan Dharma and the Vedanta had evoked universal praise and applause. Being thoroughly acquainted with the nature and ambitions of the different nations as a result of his wide travels, the Swami seemed to have come to the conclusion that this work could not be accomplished by anyone except Balwantraoji and had, therefore, brought about the meeting.



Shripad Amrut Dange

(High Priest of the Working Class Movement)

On 20th February 1920, Lala Lajpatrai was accorded a grand welcome in a huge public meeting in Mumbai. Tilak and Annie Besant made speeches at this function which was presided over by Barrister Jinnah. On the second day i.e., 21st February, a special welcome was extended to him at the same venue on behalf of the Mumbai Students' Union. Tilak had agreed to accept the presidency of this function. At this meeting both myself and R.S. Nimkar had delivered speeches.

A few days after this event, myself and a friend of mine by the name of Patwardhan went to meet Tilak at his residence in Khare's Bungalow. We requested him to give us guidance in respect of furthering the movement. The first task assigned to us was to prepare ourselves to organise demonstrations and obstructions at the headquarters of those contractors and Dadas (leaders of goondas) who were engaged in recruiting and exporting indentured labourers to Fiji and other places including the tea gardens. Both Tilak and Gandhi had resolved to put an end to this problem. Secondly, we were also directed to carry on work among the workers, build up the Trade Union Movement and make preparations for the purpose of organising All India Congress (of workers).

Finally 'INTUC' came to birth; came to birth with great fan fare. Unfortunately the person who had contributed so much for its establishment could not witness its birth. For Tilak passed away on 1st August 1920.



Yeshwant Ganesh Kulkarni

Lokamanya's knee was badly injured. On account of the rising magnitude of plague in the town, most of the compositors from the Aryabhushan printing press used to remain absent. Consequently its owner, Haripant Gokhale arrived at the Lokamanya's hut on Monday morning at 9 O' clock. The hut was then located at a place where stands to-day the Servants of India Society. Arriving there he told the Lokamanya "Many of the compositors are absent to-day. Consequently, it will be quite late by the time composing work is finished. For the same reason printing of 'Kesari' will be greatly delayed. Therefore, to-night I shall print only enough copies of tomorrow's issue for distribution in the town, and print 'Kesari' to be sent to outstations tomorrow, mailing it the day after. At this Tilak flared up and said, "If your compositors are absent get them from other presses. Even if the two of us die tomorrow, notwithstanding our funeral rites spread over fourteen days, 'Kesari' should be mailed on time as usual on Tuesdays. If you cannot find compositors, I shall bring them and give you." Thereupon Gokhale said, "I inquired, but I am not getting them." To that Tilak said, "You go; I shall bring compositors." So saying he told me, "Come along with me to the town right now; compositors are to be collected and brought over to-day itself." "I shall go to the town and get a tonga," said I. To that he said, "It is almost 10 O'clock now; by the time you reach the town and bring the tonga it will be rather late. Once the printing press owners mark out and allot work to their compositors, then getting people will be difficult for us. We will keep walking and take the tonga wherever we get it." So deciding we started out. That day we could not get any tonga until



the Budhwar Square. He limped upto that point. There we hired a tonga and visiting four-five presses picked up one to two compositors from each press and taking them to Haripant before the clock struck 12 noon set them to work. 'Kesari' issue was thus brought out that day on time.

Dattatraya Waman Potdar

(B.A., Professor at New Poona College; Secretary, Itihas Sanshodhak Mandal, Pune.)

I had not much personal contact with Tilak. Hence I have nothing noteworthy to record by way of remembrance. However, once while discussion centered round the services rendered by 'Kesari' to the Marathi language he told this writer, "Our policy is to ensure that no English word is ordinarily allowed to creep into 'Kesari' write-ups. Sit down for writing with the resolve to keep writing the account without inserting any English word. Matters not even if the pen comes to a stop, but no question of proceeding further until a Marathi equivalent is found and substituted for the particular English word. This obstinacy helped coin Marathi equivalents and in this way many Marathi words were introduced rough 'Kesari.' "



Gopal Ravji Gogate

(Lokamanya's disciple from New English High School;
Lawyer-Bhusawal)

To write the book on the Arctic Home of The Aryans, Lokamanya had taken me to Sinhagad in the summer of 1902. I had thus an excellent opportunity of being close to his person for about a month to month and a quarter. This time he was at Sinhagad with his entire family. Feeling that the publication of the book had been somewhat delayed, he had taken up his quarters at Sinhagad with the resolve to complete the book. To that end he had left a warning below the fort that no one should come up the fort to distract him unless there was work of a very pressing nature. Work of writing the book was taken up in right earnest on the very second day morning of the arrival at Sinhagad. The speed of dictating the contents was proceeding at a rapid pace. Sometimes the work of writing was going on for fourteen to fifteen hours a day. Normally he would not leave the writing room and move about hither and thither. In between if a new idea struck chord, he would remain so absorbed in it that I had to wait for hours together holding pen and paper in hand. During such reveries, without having dictated anything, he would inquire 'finished', 'written down.' Throughout this period only once did he lift up with both hands his youngest son Shridharpant, then about 4-5 years old, momentarily and immediately put him down after inquiring 'how are you?' (काय रे.) Chatting with the children was very rare. Children were even scared to convey the message about food being ready. For him, even this message was like a great hurdle in the task of completing the book. On the day of leaving the fort, writing of the last chapter of the book was in progress and it continued



until the last minute of descending down. With the completion of the book he appeared to be satisfied. He had a feeling of some kind of joyous pride about this particular work. Sometimes he used to give vent to such sentiments as that the westerners bragged that Indians can never write books delineating new ideas with a critical faculty. He believed that there might be no more than seven to eight intellectuals in the whole of the western world capable of grasping the ideas analysed in the book and therefore, its real importance.

**From : ‘Lokamanya’, Biography of Tilak
by N. R. Phatak**

Tilak commenced his arguments for defence on the third day (15th July) of the case and concluded the same on the 8th day i.e., on 22nd July after a brief speech. In these six days he spoke, more or less, for about 21 hours and 10 minutes. In keeping with the legal provisions, he had no time to reply to the second speech of the plaintiff. In the event, he had the additional responsibility of anticipating and refuting the points the plaintiff might put forth. And he did that ably despite the fact that he was not keeping good health. In this task Tilak was confronted with certain difficulties like wrong translations, what precisely was objectionable in it, hearing of all the charges simultaneously and a jury with no knowledge of Marathi.



Dr. Dattatraya Vinayak Patwardhan
(LM&S, well-known National Haridas¹; Wai)

Once I went to have *darshan* of the Lokamanya at his *wada* (mansion). I told him that I have come over here for the Ramnavami festival. “Buva, how do you interpret the story of Ram and his exploits in the course of your *kirtans*²?” he queried. “Do not keep telling that Ram was god. For the story of Shri Ram’s career advocates strenuous activity to achieve things. Our people are in the habit of saying, nay, it is ingrained in their nature and character that ‘Ram was god; Krishna was god. We are but ordinary mortals; being so what can we achieve!’ This kind of spineless and negative thinking brings ruin upon the nation. Therefore, tell the people loudly and emphatically that the secret of Ram’s success was owing to the emphasis he laid on personal endeavour and effort. Ramdas Swami taught that ‘effort is identical with god.’ Keep propagating this teaching of Ramdas Swami.”

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1. Literally worshipper of Vishnu. Hardas from Haridas - A celebrator of the praises of Hindu deity in his incarnations. He performs kathas narrating the marvellous exploits of gods and heroes with music & chanting.
 2. Kirtan : A discourse celebrating praises of god with music & singing.



Pandit Nardevshastri

(Vedtirtha Editor 'Shankar', Haridwar)

In 1905 I had *darshan* of the Lokamanya in Calcutta on the occasion of the Shivaji festival. Shri Khaparde and Dr. Munje were with him. Lokamanya delivered as many as 22 lectures there. Those were tumultuous times in Bengal. Everyone is aware that Bengal was then animated with the spirit of 'Shivaji has come', 'Shivaji has come.' One day the Lokamanya proceeded on foot to have a holy dip in the Ganges. Since it was a sacred day, countless persons accompanied him for the same purpose. That gives us a measure of his greatness and pre-eminence. The way Surendranath Bannerjee and Tilak greeted one another in a tight embrace at the Shivaji Festival was indeed a sight to behold. First of all Surendranath Bannerjee welcomed him by hailing him as the 'Uncrowned King of Maharashtra.' Then spoke A. Chaudhary and he was followed by the fiery oratory of Barrister Bipin Chandra Pal. Then there was the humorous talk of Khaparde. Then spoke Dr. Munje. A singer from Maharashtra—I forget his name—sang a heroic ballad. Lokamanya then asserted "in terms of intellect Bengal is second to none, but it should acquire physical strength. The country is infected with the disease of servitude. To lift her up from that state what is required is a concord between the intellect of Bengal, strategy of Maharashtra, physical prowess of the Punjab and comprehensive knowledge of Madras—recollect the career of Shivaji and make a concerted effort to become heroes—" and so on. Delivering a lecture at the Maharashtra Club, he observed, "It is in the fitness of things that wherever Maharashtrians go they may reside by creating a mini Maharashtra but there is much which they can learn from



Bengal as also much that they can teach Bengal.” Responding to the scroll of honour conferred upon him by the Marwari Brahman Sabha he said, “Brahmans were known for their learning and meditation—their bounden duty is to protect and preserve the same.”*

* The above account is in Hindi.

Gajanan Vishwanath Ketkar

(Lokamanya’s grandson; Deputy Editor of
Kesari and Maratha)

That Tilak had diabetes is narrated above. By experimenting upon his own person while in prison, he had devised the right regimen for this disease. In such a disease as this, lesser the intake of starch and sugar the better it is for the patient. *Java* is barley. He began preparing and eating crisp cakes of barley flour since there is less amount of starch and sugar in this corn. He began feeling better with this diet. Later he began extracting gluten from wheat and mix it with barley flour. To educate the people about the beneficial properties of the above regimen, he printed a pamphlet on the same both in English and Marathi. For eight to ten years, he followed the above given regimen regularly. Many people would find it difficult to stick to this regimen, for barley corn is devoid of any taste. But then Tilak did not live to eat, he ate to live. And those who saw him eating would readily testify this. Normally he would never make any observation about the taste of a dish, whether good or bad, while dining. Only when he was specifically asked he would taste the dish again and then give his opinion.



Dr. Balkrishna Shivram Munje

(A prominent leader of the Nationalist Party and
the Swaraj Party, Nagpur)

Event must have been of the year 1900. That year due to the inspiration of the Lokamanya himself Shivaji Utsav had been held at Raigad on a grandiose scale. I must not have seen Tilak until then—at least I did not know this very person to be Tilak. One day at about 10 O'clock in the morning we had gone out swimming in the Gangasagar lake on Raigad. Flattered by the thought, 'we know how to swim', we were naturally totally engrossed in swimming. Just then Tilak arrived there for bathing. At that time Shri Tatyasaheb Kelkar, dressed in a red coloured *sovalet*¹ after his bath and holding an umbrella over his head, was standing on the *ghat*². Lokamanya began taking his bath. While so engaged he noticed us swimming and inquired about us. On our part, the moment we learnt of Tilak's arrival, we came to the bank where Tilak was. He inquired about our swimming abilities and then said that we should cross the lake to its other bank holding aloft this umbrella of Naropant on the head with both the hands, swimming only with the legs. We attempted to do that but could not succeed, and had to return from midway. Then Tilak holding that umbrella on his head with both the hands not only crossed the lake to its other bank swimming merely with the legs but recrossed the lake in the same way. We were simply astounded at his feat. We already entertained a great regard and a friendly feeling for and a certain pride about Tilak. But after witnessing his feat our hearts were filled with wonderment and emotional attachment.

1. A silken dhoti which ensures cleanliness and hence worn at the time of performing religious ceremonies.



Sadashiv Vinayak Bapat

(Editor : Reminiscences & Anecdotes of
Lokamanya Tilak)

On his return from *Vilayat* in 1920, I said to Tilak one night in Mumbai's Sardargriha, "The day judgement was delivered in England in the Chirol case that day your heart must have been filled with bitterness, causing you acute agony, isn't it?" Calmly and in a language I could easily understand he queried, "Come on, what is meant by agony? It is said प्रतिकूलसंवेदनोत्पादकं दुःखम् If the seed of pain itself is uprooted how would it sprout? Expectations, attachment and dereliction of one's duty cause pain and agony. To tell you the truth I have obliterated the very notion from which angle you look at pain. I make my mind quite vacant and allow it complete rest." The longer you keep your mind in a passionless state, the greater will be the peace and bliss you experience. For, this is a type of yoga. To achieve that state what is most essential is unwavering concentration. Without such concentration this state cannot simply be achieved.

I asked him, "How come the moment you hit the bed you get sleep?" He promptly answered "That is due to my concentration. You may not believe me—you will be very much surprised to know that I do not remember to have had a dream during the last twenty years. While in Mandalay I continuously practised for several days the discipline of keeping my mind vacant. Therefore, as pointed out in the Bhagwadgita, I can well imagine how a person can remain indifferent alike to pleasure and pain.



Narayan Sadashiv Marathe
(A celibate who desired to harmonize
religion and politics.)

I am giving below only a part of what the Lokamanya had to say regarding the qualities which a politician ought to possess, and which I had the opportunity of hearing from the Lokamanya himself:

A political leader has to have two attributes. For one, there must be fierce patriotic fire burning in his heart, and second the part about that heart i.e., the head must be as cool as ice. A man in whom you find an intense union of these two qualities is worthy of becoming a leader.

Politics is a subject which may corrupt one's mind with the fury of a contagious disease. To maintain the balance and composedness of that mind, thoroughly brushing aside everyday chores, one should cultivate the habit of keeping it calm and collected as far as possible for a moment or two everyday, and should that not be possible for want of time, at least every three-four days. That would help save one from many a misdemeanour and keep the mind pure or free of defilement.

If the political agitation or movement you set afoot should meet with failure, you should accept it as a matter of course. Such should be your attitude. As a matter of fact you should proceed along taking for granted that success will not come to you. During the last 25 to 30 years of my career, I am so accustomed to defeats that if tomorrow the government decides to concede success to my enterprises, I would feel as though I am missing something.



Daji Nagesh Apte

...the moment a new book on any serious subject was published he would immediately get hold of it and complete reading it within a very short time. Once he finished reading a book on the Russian Revolution entitled '*Rashiyantil Rajkrantiche Prayatna*' consisting of seven to eight hundred pages in a matter of one and a half hours. I thought that he had had only a cursory glance at the contents. When I enquired with him he said, "I have read the whole book." He did not stop with that but apprised me of its general outline and added, "in the middle of this particular page these are the contents; check if you want." I checked up and found him to be correct. Thereafter I queried, "How could you tell so precisely?" "There is nothing surprising about it," he said, "Extensive reading and contemplation leads you to conclude that the author is following a particular line in tackling the subject matter. Once you know the direction of the author's line of argument and his inclination, it is not necessary to go through all the points in his chain of thoughts. You could make them out by inference. And when you practise this art often, you come to acquire skill in it."



Dr. Motiram Balkrishna Velkar

(A prominent colleague of the Lokamanya from Mumbai)

In the course of his conversations with me, he referred to the Labour Movements and said, “Doctor Saheb, observing the labour movements here and delivering speeches before labour unions, it is but natural for you to feel that after returning to Hindusthan similar movements should begin in our country as well. However, we should initiate such movements taking into consideration the conditions prevailing in our country. Unlike in the western countries, I do not want to create antagonism between the labourers and the capitalists in my country. In a country where an educated clerk draws a monthly salary of 10 to 20 rupees, it would be foolish to make the labourers agitate demanding a daily wage of 2 to 3 rupees. I do want Labour Union to be organised but the base of its foundation should be Social Welfare. Towards that end I shall draw the attention of the labouring class towards the organisation of Employment Insurance, Hospitals, Entertainment Rooms, Saving and Co-operative Credit Societies and setting up of *purane* (पुराणे) on modern lines. In 1906 and 1907, I organised a great Temperance Movement (for the prohibition of liquor) throughout Maharashtra in order to save the labourers from addiction to drink. But the government put spanners in the path of agitation. I strongly desire that the condition of the labouring class should improve. In a meeting of the labourers in Mumbai, I remember to have uttered the following words right at the outset of my speech: ‘Mumbai belongs to the working class.’ Mumbai’s opulence is dependent upon the labours of the workers who, abandoning their hearths and homes in the Konkan, come and settle in Mumbai.”



Vishwanath Gangadhar Ketkar
(Lokamanya's son-in-law)

During his incarceration of 1897-98, Prof. Max Muller, aware of the erudition and learning of the Lokamanya, sent to him, through the prison authorities, his work on the Rig Ved. After receiving the book he read it twice in the prison itself. While reading it, idea struck him from some ऋचा (*shloka*s) that the original homeland of the Aryans must have been in a region which experiences longer days and nights. Especially the ऋचा “सूर्योदयात् प्राक्बहूनि अहानि आसन् (many days passed before the sunrise) strengthened his conclusion. Returning home after his release from prison and while discussing the subject with one of his learned friend in my presence, he said : “The night I gathered the correct meaning of the ऋचा “सूर्योदयात् प्राक्बहूनि अहानि आसन् I passed that night in great joy.” Thereupon his friend exclaimed, “What joy can there be in jail?” the Lokamanya retorted, “Unless you go to jail you will never know what joy is all about.”



Govind Krishna Tilak

(Lawyer; A disciple of the Lokamanya and
one who held him in high esteem)

I saw Tilak in the year 1886 while teaching as a professor at the Fergusson college. He used to teach Meghadoot, the Sanskrit poem. In teaching that poem his thrust was more towards explaining its essence and in what lies its importance and greatness rather than giving a facile translation of its verses. The other subject which he taught was algebra. He was a master at analysing that subject and elucidating the theory in an easy language. Brainy students did their best to push this professor of mathematics on the backfoot by placing before him several types of complicated problems and doubts; but to no avail. Tilak would solve in no time the various steps of the problems just orally and astound the entire class.



Vishwanath Gangadhar Ketkar
(Lokamanya's son-in-law)

In 1902-03 since the epidemic of plague was raging through the town, Lokamanya was residing in a hut constructed in the landed property belonging to Paranjpe near the Fergusson college. But the plague spread even there and a tragic calamity befell the Lokamanya's family, his eldest son falling a prey to that epidemic. Vishwanathpant was then a student of the Fergusson college. How badly his mind must have been afflicted by the deaths of his cousin brother, nephew and the eldest son within the span of just a week's time, is better imagined than described. The very day Vishwanthpant died, this writer had gone to meet the Lokamanya in Pune. Since I learnt the tragic news before reaching the hut, I was at a complete loss to know as to how to enter Lokamanya's private tents, what to say to him and just how to console him. So confused was I that I was rendered speechless. Lokamanya called me inside and said , "When the whole town is on fire, can individual houses remain unaffected! It happened the same way." It is but natural that the loss of his son should have caused him intense grief. The above incident is a pointer to how the Lokamanya conducted himself even during such trying moments.



Sadashiv Vinayak Bapat

(Editor : Reminiscences & Anecdotes of
Lokamanya Tilak)

On his return from Mandalay jail, Hon'ble Annasaheb and the Lokamanya were once discussing some intimate personal matters of pleasure and pain. In the course of the discussion Annasaheb said to the Lokamanya, "In your absence, after your departure, when death snatched away your wife, so overwhelmed was I with grief, that I can scarcely imagine what you must have felt on receiving that tragic news." With a slightly embarrassed demeanour, the Lokamanya said, "Now that you are asking, I am telling this to you. It is not that basically I am devoid of sentiments or emotions; but I never suffer from excess of joy due to favourable turn of events nor from excess of grief due to adverse ones. That does not mean, however, that I am beyond pleasure and pain. At the same time it is equally true to say that contemplation of and meditation upon the Gita and Vedanta, helps get rid of passions. That has been my experience."



Gajanan Vishwanath Ketkar
(Lokamanya's grandson)

During this period of six years Rambhau, Bapu and myself had attended the English school. Dada's letters used to arrive from the prison. Baba Widhvansa used to forward those from Pune to Nashik. I used to read them out to *Aayi* (mother). In keeping with the prison rules, all these letters were in English and contained no reference to any topic of a political nature. There was one letter every month. Through these letters Dada used to take good care of children's education as well. Kavdeshastris was appointed to teach Sanskrit to the children and there was another teacher by the name of Mahajan who used to come to teach English. These letters always contained suggestions to the teachers about the method to be adopted to give instruction to the children. Specifically there used to be suggestions regarding physical exercises on a regular basis. He used to inquire as to how many sit-ups children take every day. He was very particular about the children adopting a simple life-style so much so that he had disapproved of our using the bicycles or wearing goggles. During this six year period Baba twice or thrice, my father, respected Appasaheb once, and the children once had visited Mandalay to meet Dada. Children had been asked to bring their note-books along, and he had tested them by putting them questions on many different subjects. He had sent detailed instructions subject-wise as to how to prepare for the matriculation examination.



Gajanan Vishwanath Ketkar

Lokamanya's grandson; Deputy Editor of
Kesari and Maratha)

A remembrance from the last illness of the Lokamanya: He used to talk a lot in the afternoon and at night in the unconscious state he had fallen into. Sometimes he used to talk as in conversation and at other times in the tone of speech as though he is delivering a lecture. It is not possible to recollect all of his sentences. Overall this much could be said that during those four days he did not utter even a single word regarding private family matters. Only public affairs were revolving in his mind. Even in the unconsciousness of the dying moments, no other matter except the mission undertaken by one should have entered one's mind is the very height of *Karmayoga Samadhi*. The sentences which we could make out are given below:

28th July Night –

“In the year 1818 it happened thus – A few days hence the year 1918 will dawn – A hundred years' history. We have fallen so low.”

“What are you going to do in the Punjab matter? Have you sent a telegram to Patel? We are going to hold a Special Congress.”

29th July at 1⁰ clock at night in the tone of speech –

“I am certain and you too have faith that independence to Hindusthan is the only salvation.”

At 2⁰ clock at night in the tone of speech –

“I thank you and the public for your exertions.”

After 30th his speech began becoming incoherent and inaudible so much so that even the persons close to him could not make out what he was saying. Until the last he never regained consciousness. At the time of death his countenance was extremely serene.



Barrister Vinayak Damodar Savarkar

Learnt the news of the Lokamanya's demise while in the Andaman jail. At first through flying reports at night. Was confirmed in the morning. My soul began aching at the Lokamanya's death. How could that ache be given expression to? That was the problem. Finally, at 8 A.M. it was resolved that all of us throughout the Andamans should observe a fast. Promptly I informed all the colleagues of our *Sanstha* (Association). They in turn informed other prisoners at the next stage, they to the next and so on with the result news of the decision travelled at the speed of a telegram. And when time for lunch came hundreds of persons right from the Andaman jail to the distant Ras island and other areas refused to accept food. The authorities were confounded. What's all this, was the question mark on their faces. No one would give the reason. For prisoners had no right to mourn the death of the Lokamanya. If it was revealed that food was not taken as a token of mourning for the Lokamanya we would have been promptly charged as being hand-in-glove with traitors and put in chains and prosecuted. Gradually the authorities realized that thousands of these prisoners were observing the fast in memory of the Lokamanya. The authorities wondered, though in wrath, as to how the news spread in a matter of just one to two hours and how thousands of prisoners observed the fast unitedly. And, indeed, it was an act to be wondered at! Nine years earlier there was, in the Andamans, barely one in a hundred familiar with Tilak, and hardly one in a thousand fired with national pride so as to give expression to national grief by observing a day's fast and yet put in hard labour on empty stomachs as per prison rules, in the very same Andamans propaganda of 8-9 years helped achieve so solid a unity and gave birth to so strong a political movement as to make thousands of prisoners observe national grief unanimously and unitedly.



Henry Nevinston

(British Journalist, Liberal Party)

Why people shower so much affection upon Tilak? What spell is he able to cast upon them? Now I have come to know the reason. And the secret lies in nothing else but this. It is that he is not given to procrastination. His actions are never dogged by such indecision as ‘should this be done or not,’ ‘should this be done or not!’ It is not in his nature to leave a thing half done or do a thing just for the sake of doing it. To him the battle-field is like the Garden of Eden. The fear of how and when he might land himself into dangerous situations and how badly he might be hurt in the process, never even touches his mind. This man takes both sacrifice and grief equally in his stride. But do these qualities alone make an entire society to worship a man? Tilak does possess the above cited qualities and to add to those he possesses certain other virtues as well. He makes acquaintances with even the most indigent and downtrodden people from the countryside, welcomes them and sympathetically inquires about their health and welfare. In matters of religious beliefs, social customs, conventions and traditions, in fact whatever is sacrosanct to the people in these spheres, finds his endorsement backed up by reason. Little wonder then that with such qualities he should carry weight with the people and be popular among them.

From: ‘Lokamanya Tilak’, Biography by N.C. Kelkar

The above is translated from the Marathi version as it appears in Tilak’s Biography by N.C. Kelkar



Rabindranath Tagore

The incident which brought me in personal touch with Lokamanya Tilak, I have mentioned elsewhere. It was when he surprised me with a request through a messenger that I should proceed to Europe with the help of Rs. 50,000 which he was ready to offer me. My surprise was still greater, when I was assured that Tilak did not want my help for any propaganda which was his own, that he would be sorry if I followed the path which he himself was pursuing at that moment for the benefit of his country. He wanted me to be true to myself and, through my effort to serve humanity, in my own way to serve India. I felt that this proposal from Tilak carried with it the highest honour that I had ever received from my countrymen. I do not know if I was worthy of it, but it revealed to me the greatness of Tilak's personality which deeply impressed my mind. He had more faith in Truth than in method. His ideal of the fulfillment of India's Destiny was vast, and therefore it had ample room even for a dreamer of dreams, even for "music-maker". He knew that freedom had its diverse aspects, and therefore it could be truly reached, if individuals had their full scope to use their special gifts for opening out paths that were diverse in their directions.



Babu Aurobindo Ghose

Mr. Tilak was the first political leader to break through the routine of its somewhat academical methods, to bridge the gulf between the present and the past and to restore continuity to the political life of the nation. He developed a language and a spirit, and he used methods, which Indianised the movement and brought into it the masses. To bring in the mass of the people, to found the greatness of the future on the greatness of the past, to infuse Indian politics with Indian religious fervour and spirituality, are the indispensable conditions for a great and powerful political awakening in India. Others—writers, thinkers, spiritual leaders, had seen this truth. Mr. Tilak was the first to bring it into the actual field of practical politics. Nothing can be more significant than the fact that the works which had brought him a fame other than that of the politician and patriot, were done in periods of compulsory cessation from his life-work—planned, and partly if not wholly, executed during the imprisonments which could alone enforce leisure upon this unrelenting worker for country. Even these by-products of his genius have some reference to the one passion of his life, the renewal, if not the surpassing of the past greatness of the nation by the greatness of its future.

Two facts of his life and character have to be insisted on as of special importance to the country because they give a great example of two things in which its political life was long deficient. First, the inflexible will of the patriot and man of sincere heart and thorough action which had been the very grain of his character; for aspirations, emotion, enthusiasm are nothing without this; will alone creates and prevails. And wish and will are not the same thing, but



divided by a great gulf : the one, which almost of us get to, is a puny, tepid and inefficient thing, and even when most enthusiastic, easily discouraged and turned from its object; the other can be a giant to accomplish and endure. Secondly, the readiness to sacrifice and face suffering, not needlessly or with a useless bravado, but with a firm courage when it comes, to bear it and to outlive, returning to work with one's scars as if nothing had happened. No prominent man in India has suffered more for his country; none has taken his sacrifices and sufferings more quietly and as a matter of course. Tilak's name stands already for history as a nation-builder, one of the half-dozen greatest political personalities, memorable figures, representative men of the nation in this most critical period of India's destinies, a name to be remembered gratefully so long as the country has pride in its past and hope for its future.



Subhas Chandra Bose

Towards the end of Jan. 1925, when I was a guest of His Majesty's Government, I was transferred to Mandalay Jail in Upper Burma. Soon after my arrival there, some of the detainees who had preceded me, pointed out the building in which Lokamanya Tilak had been confined for over five years. The compound within this structure was situated was adjoining ours.

Summer was the longest season. The heat was simply scorching. I have hardly ever experienced such heat in my life. Wet towels wrapped round one's person would dry up in no time. Till mid-night the air would be hot and the place would be so close and stuffy that sleep would be impossible. In the early hours of the morning the temperature would sometimes drop suddenly and would get up in the morning with cold and cough.

I often used to think and wonder how in those circumstances Lokamanya could go in for prolonged intellectual work for over five years. Only one who had attained complete self-mastery, who was altogether indifferent to pleasure and pain and heat and cold could rise above such dismal surroundings. Lokamanya was all-alone in that horrid cage-the only society that he could get was the none too desirable company of the Jail Officials whenever they dropped in. Even the ordinary prisoners of the jail were not allowed to associate with him. Consequently he would have to be immersed in his books or in his thoughts all the time. What degree of intellectual strain that would mean for the ordinary man, can be easily understood.



Lokamanya was not in the best of his health when he was incarcerated. He was suffering from Diabetes and had to adhere to a very rigid diet. I have heard from the officer who was in charge of the jail at that time that he lived practically on Barley or on wheat.

Mandalay jail was to a political pilgrim like myself a real place of pilgrimage, hallowed by the memories of one of India's greatest men. That pilgrimage is one of the happiest episodes in my life.

C. Rajagopalachari

(B.A., L.L.B., High Court Vakil, Salem.)

No politician led so austere and so simple a life as Lokamanya himself. No one's daily life was marked by such simplicity and plain living as Lokamanya's. His philosophy did not urge asceticism for politicians, but he himself was an ascetic and saint as well as politician. Asceticism may not be Lokamanya's philosophy but it was his daily life. Sacrifice, again, is the sum of Mahatmaji's gospel. And there is no one that can claim to have suffered or sacrificed as Lokamanya voluntarily did. If life and example are greater than precept, the most rigorous doctrines of suffering and Non-co-operation can find no greater leader than Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak.



M.K. Gandhi

(Mahatma, Father of N.C.O. Movement,
Apostle of Satyagraha Dharma, Ahmedabad.)

In 1896 I met almost all the known leaders of India in connection with my South African Mission. I went to Poona. I was an utter stranger there. However I knew that the Sarvajanik Sabha was controlled by the Lokamanya, while Mr. Gokhale was connected with the Deccan Sabha. My host first took me to Tilak Maharaj. I met him surrounded by his companions. When I spoke to him about my intention to hold a meeting in Poona, he asked me if I had seen Gopal Rao. I did not understand whom he meant. He therefore asked me again if I had seen Mr. Gokhale and if I knew him.

“I have not yet seen him. I know him by name and mean to see him.” I replied.

“You do not seem to be familiar with Indian politics,” said the Lokamanya.

“I stayed in India only for a short time after my return from England, and had not then applied myself to political questions, as I thought it beyond my capacity” I said.

Lokamanya then said: “In that case I must give you some information. There are two parties in Poona, one represented by the Sarvajanik Sabha and the other by the Deccan Sabha.”

I replied, “I know something about this matter.”



Lokamanya: "It is easy to hold a meeting here. But it seems to me that you wish to lay your case before all the parties here and seek to enlist the support of all. You should therefore find out a non-partisan as Chairman. I can only offer suggestions in the matter, and shall not be able to render any other assistance. Do you know Prof. Bhandarkar? Even if you do not know him, you should see him. He is considered a neutral. He does not take part in politics, but perhaps you can induce him to preside over your meeting. Speak to Mr. Gokhale about this, and seek his advice too. In all probability he will give you the same advice. If a man of the position of Prof. Bhandarkar consents to preside, I am certain that both the parties will see to it that a good meeting is held. At any rate you can count upon our fullest help in the matter." I have no firm impression of Lokamanya Tilak, except to recall that he shook off my nervousness by his affectionate familiarity. I admire Lokamanya like millions of his countrymen for his indomitable will his vast learning, his love of country, and above all, the purity of his private life and a great sacrifice. Of all the men of modern times, he captivated most the imagination of his people. He breathed into us the spirit of Swarajya. No one realised the evil of the existing system of government as Lokamanya did. And in all humility, I claim to deliver his message to the country as truly as the best of his disciples. I know, the only offering acceptable to him is the quickest attainment of Swarajya by India, and the nothing else can give his spirit peace.



Abraham S. Erulkar
(A contemporary patriot)

It was he (Tilak) who taught India to assert herself, to demand what is her's by right. Before him indians begged, beseeched, humbled themselves for a few paltry privileges, for a few crumbs from the authorities that govern our country. It was Tilak, by his example, by his sufferings, by his courage, by his defiance, taught us to be men, taught us to demand, and not to beseech; to assert what is our birth-right and not to petition for favours. It was he who taught us to stand up and face Englishmen, men to men, and not as masters and slaves. The change in Indian psychology, this birth of Indian manhood, this to my mind, has been the most revolutionary step in the progress of Indian emancipation, and it has all been due to Tilak; that has been his greatest contribution to our country."



Barriester Jinnah

Jinnah also told me that after Justice Davar sentenced Tilak to six years' rigorous imprisonment the Government conferred a knighthood upon Davar, and the Bar Association of the High Court of Bombay wanted to give him a dinner. A circular went round asking those who wanted to join the dinner to sign it. When the circular came to Jinnah, he wrote a scathing note that the Bar should be ashamed to want to give a dinner to a judge who had obtained a knighthood by doing what the Government wanted, and by sending a great patriot to jail with a savage sentence. It seems that Justice Davar came to know about this, and sent for Jinnah in his chambers. He asked Jinnah how he thought Davar had treated Jinnah in his court. Jinnah replied that he had always been very well treated. Davar asked him next whether he had any grievance against him (Davar). Jinnah said he had none. Davar then asked: "Why did you write a note like this against me?" Jinnah replied that he wrote it because he thought it was the truth, and however well Davar might have treated him he could not suppress his strong feeling about the manner in which he had tried Tilak's case. All this goes to demonstrate the great regard which Jinnah had for Tilak, and also the courage and the spirit of nationalism which Jinnah displayed as a young man.

—From 'Roses in December' by M.C. Chagla



Mr. M.C. Chagla
(First Chief Justice of India)

By a happy stroke of fortune, I myself came to be concerned years later with this trial of Tilak by Davar in 1906. As Chief Justice of Bombay I had a tablet put up outside what used to be the Sessions Court in the High Court of Bombay on July 15, 1956. It was in this court that Tilak sat as an accused in the dock on that sad and memorable occasion, and was convicted to a term of imprisonment. In the speech I delivered at the time I stated that there was no honour of distinction which I valued more than the privilege I then enjoyed of unveiling that tablet. The words which were inscribed on the tablet were the stirring sentiments that Tilak had uttered from the dock:

“In spite of the verdict of the Jury, I maintain that I am innocent. There are higher powers that rule the destiny of men and nations, and it may be the will of Providence that the cause which I represent may prosper more by my suffering than by my remaining free.”

I had always felt strongly about this conviction and I was glad that I had at last had an opportunity to make some atonement for suffering that was caused by this conviction to a great and distinguished son of India.

I said in my speech :

“Disgrace tarnished our record and we are here to remove that tarnish and that disagree. It may be said that this conviction was a technical compliance with justice, but we are here emphatically to state that it was a flagrant denial



of substantial justice. Tilak was sentenced for the crime of patriotism. He loved his country more than his life or his liberty. The verdict that our contemporaries pass on us, the verdict that our times pass on us, is not of much value. We must always await the inevitable verdict of history, and the inevitable verdict of history is that this conviction is condemned as having been intended to suppress the voice of freedom and patriotism, and the action of Tilak has been justified as the right of every individual to fight for his country.”

Referring to myself as occupying the post of Chief Justice, I said:

“If today the High Court is functioning in a free India, if there is an Indian presiding as the Chief Justice of this Court, let us remember that it is due in no small measure to the suffering and sacrifice of Tilak.”

This action of mine was subsequently criticised by some as an attempt to introduce politics into the administration of justice. I remain unrepentant. I think I did the right thing on behalf of myself as the Chief Justice, of my brother judges and of the High Court. Justice according to law becomes a rather empty and futile expression when you are dealing with a much greater and a more exalted force like freedom or patriotism and the love of one’s country. Therefore, without imputing motives to the judges who did their duty according to their light in convicting and sentencing Tilak, it was equally the duty of judges functioning in a free country to make it clear that what constituted a crime in British times had become a positive contribution to the freedom and progress of the country.



I should like to add as a footnote to what I have written above I myself met Tilak only once. This was in London. Although I was a young student and he was a great national leader, he received me with great courtesy and cordiality, and we discussed various topics for a long time. I have no recollection now of the subjects we discussed, but I came away from that interview with a feeling of deep admiration for the great qualities of head and heart which Tilak possessed.

—From ‘Roses in December’ by M.C. Chagla

Gopal Ganesh Agarkar

Tilak and Agarkar were sentenced to undergo together four months of imprisonment in the Kolhapur Affair.

The following is a recollection of that period penned by Agarkar :

In all of three months we could manage to see the moon with great difficulty through the prison bars only twice. For eight to ten days we suffered greatly due to caterpillars. I remember the two of us having spent night after night in chatting and discussing things. Quite often we used to recollect and repeat all that we discussed after the day we took the decision, while staying at the college for our studies, not to accept service under the government but to dedicate ourselves to the service of the nation. We also recollected and discussed various other incidents such as how we lost our way in the darkness of the night while returning from the camp where we had gone to meet a particular person and how moving about round and round we finally found



ourselves at the Bund at about 2 A.M.; how while returning to the college from the town whither we had gone to have discussions with Vishnushastri regarding the school and how we found ourselves shivering all over due to intense cold; which persons went back on the promises they had made after the school and the printing press had been set up; what were our original objectives and to what extent were those realised; in which spheres the country has gained or benefitted and where it has suffered on account of British political domination; what would be the condition of India if mass education progresses with every passing day; what are our mistakes in the Kolhapur episode and how far the punishment inflicted upon us is just and so on. On these and other topics our debate at times used to be so loud that the prison guards often cautioned us saying ‘speak in a low tone’, ‘speak in a low tone’. In this process night used to come to an end and the day dawn.

—From ‘101 days in Dongri jail’