
SUBJECTIVE ANALYSIS OF TILAK'S LEADERSHIP USING PRINCIPLES OF SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE

SANKET KALAMBE¹

Abstract

One of the foremost as well as earliest leaders of the Indian nationalist freedom movement, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, dedicated his entire life morally, spiritually, and politically, to serve the country during the freedom struggle. His life's work has inspired countless Indians to join the independence movement and fight for the nation. Tilak was a public leader, who established several institutions, newspapers, and organisations, to educate and awaken the masses. In this article, the qualities of an ideal leader are discussed, and Tilak's journey resonates well with the concept. Emphasis is given on the importance of Danah Zohar's theory of Spiritual Quotient (SQ) as a paradigm to determine the sustainability of leadership. Further, a subjective analysis of Tilak's leadership is done on the basis of the principles of Spiritual Intelligence. His qualities are classified according to the principles of SQ and described with special references to events from his life.

Keywords: Lokmanya Tilak, Spiritual Intelligence, Public Leadership, Qualities of a Leader, Spiritually Intelligent Leadership, Freedom Struggle

¹ Founder, Sukeindia

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Introduction

One of the leading architects of the Indian freedom movement, Lokmanya Tilak was an exceptional leader. Sir Valentine Chirol, the British journalist, historian, and a passionate imperialist, acknowledged him as “the Father of Indian Unrest” (Chirol, 1910, 41). His contributions to the freedom struggle have inspired many leaders during the pre-independence era to join the fight for independence.

Before we dig deeper into Tilak's leadership skills, and his advent to the struggle for independence in the early era of India's freedom movement, let us get some insights into the qualities of an ideal leader. It can be analysed by defining the components that can help us judge a personality or an organisation in a subjective manner. Let us discuss the essential and desirable qualities that characterise an ideal leader.

Qualities of a Leader

The qualities of a leader are well defined in the ancient texts of the Indic Philosophy. From the foundational text of political science, *Kautilya's Arthashastra*, to the Tenets of Buddhism, or *Thiruvalluvar's Kural*, the major aspects of leadership are scientifically and logically explained in all the above-mentioned texts (Gautam, 2019).

Self-development and self-control are among the major attributes of a leader. *Kautilya's Arthashastra* talks about controlling the senses by casting out the group of six enemies. The six enemies are as follows: *kama* (lust), *krodha* (anger), *lobha* (greed), *moha* (attachment), *mada* (conceit), and *matsarya* (jealousy).

The *Kural*, which is referred to by some as the ‘Tamil Veda’, also describes self-control in one of its chapters. One of the translations of the last verse of chapter 13 of the *Kural*, by Drew and Lazarus, explains the attribute very clearly, stating “Virtue seeking for an opportunity will come into the path of that man who guards against anger and has learnt to control himself” (Gautam, 2019, p. 35-36).

Mastery of self-control can be correlated to the emotional quotient (EQ) of an individual. A leader with a high EQ and high IQ can bring success to any organisation or endeavour. It is ideal for a leader to have a good command over

emotional intelligence, and strong rational intelligence to deal with complex problems. In addition to these two traits, spiritual intelligence also plays an important role in determining the behaviour of a leader while helping them to succeed in their pursuit.

The Spiritual Quotient (SQ) is a new paradigm of intelligence, which delves more into the deep-seated sources of power within the individual, and which the individual can express based on their deepest meanings, values, and purpose (Zohar, 2005). We will discuss more about SQ in the next section.

Spiritual Quotient: A New Paradigm of Intelligence

Visionary leadership can be acknowledged by its intellectual capabilities, emotional strength, and spirited values. In an organization, if there is a short supply of vision among leaders, it is mostly found because of their interest in material pursuit and having concern about money it can bring, as well as how much authority it will give in terms of power.

To aspire for long-term goals of sustainability, the leadership needs to follow other forms of capital as well, which are categorised as social and spiritual capital. The trio resembles '*the layers in a wedding cake*', as Zohar (2005) explains in her theory. The upper layer consists of Material Capital (IQ), which deals with *What one can think*, the middle layer consists of Social Capital (EQ), which talks about *What one feels*, and the bottom layer, which supports the three layers, consists of Spiritual Capital that talks about *What I am* (Zohar, 2005).

Intelligence quotient (IQ) was coined by William Stern in 1912, to explain the scoring of his intelligence tests. IQ scores are used for educational placements, analysing job performance, incomes, etc. The tests determine the intellectual ability, and cognitive abilities like rational and logical skills of an individual. Having a high IQ means a person has better problem-solving abilities and they can provide logical answers and assumptions. It resonates well with goal-oriented thinking.

EQ or Emotional intelligence quotient was articulated in 1990, by Peter Salovey and John Meyer, as a psychological theory to understand how we recognize, understand, and manage our emotions. EQ consists of four main parameters, where Self-awareness remains the core of all competencies. Relationship Management, Self-management, and Social Awareness are the other three components that determine the EQ level of an individual.

Managers or leaders of an organization might do well technically, but if they can't engage or collaborate effectively with their colleagues, their other skills might get overlooked. Hence, emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in advancing careers (Landry, 2019).

SQ: As described by Zohar, SQ, "...is an ability to access higher meanings, values, abiding purposes, and unconscious aspects of the self and to embed these meanings, values, and purposes in living a richer and more creative life. SQ is the ultimate intelligence of the visionary leader." It underpins EQ and IQ both (Zohar, 2005, p. 46).

One who has the ability to think unconventionally, shows humility, and can look beyond daily concerns of life and self-ego, shows the signs of having high Spiritual Intelligence.

Literature Review

"Spiritually Intelligent Leadership", an article by Danah Zohar (2005), is the primary source of inspiration for this exercise to have an idea of analysing the leadership qualities of an individual or an organization. Zohar is a philosopher, management thought leader, and author who has contributed works in the field of spiritual intelligence, physics, and leadership.

Her framework, which has been used in this article, categorizes spiritual intelligence into 12 components, to analyse the works of Bal Gangadhar Tilak and discuss his leadership and management skills.

The following 12 principles, taken from her article, provide a framework to nurture spiritually intelligent leadership (Zohar, 2005):

- Self-awareness: Knowing what I believe in and value, and what deeply motivates me.
- Spontaneity: Living in and being responsive to the moment.
- Being vision- and value-led: Acting from principles and deep beliefs, and living accordingly.
- Holism: Seeing larger patterns, relationships, and connections; having a sense of belonging.
- Compassion: Having the quality of "feeling-with" and deep empathy.
- Celebration of diversity: Valuing other people for their differences, not despite them.
- Field independence: Standing against the crowd and having one's convictions.
- Humility: Having the sense of being a player in a larger drama, of one's true place in the world

- Urge to ask fundamental ‘Why?’ questions: Need to understand things in-depth, not just superficially.
- Ability to reframe: To stand back from a situation or problem and see the bigger picture.
- Positive use of adversity: Learning and growing from mistakes, setbacks, and suffering.
- Sense of vocation: Feeling called upon to serve, to give something back (Zohar, 2005).

To get the gist of life led by Tilak during his freedom struggle, several of his biographies (Jog, 2015; Tilak & Ghose, 1922) as well as some critical opinions on him have been consulted, to understand his role during the mass movement of India’s independence.

To understand his early life and how he emerged as an outstanding leader among his peers, *Bal Gangadhar Tilak*, by M.H. Syed (2011) has been used as an important source. Establishment of organisations and institutions by Tilak has also been discussed in detail in this work.

A lot of previously published interviews, discourses between Tilak and Agarkar (Khangai & Satya, 2019) have been referred to, in order to find suitable events to acknowledge SQ parameters. Further study on his purpose to start festivals for unity (Tilak D.G., 2019), his role in the freedom movement, his trial, and response to the jury before the sentencing in Mandalay (Angadi, 1992) was done to collect facts for forming a well-founded subjective opinion for this article.

Application of 12 Principles of Spiritual Intelligence (SQ) into Tilak’s Leadership Journey (with references to life events)

Self-Awareness

To become a public leader, one needs to attain self-mastery and have self-control before inspiring and commanding the masses. The traits of being self-aware were visible since childhood in Tilak.

He joined the Deccan college in 1873 to do a Bachelor of Arts in Mathematics. He was seen attending the lectures only if he believed that he would benefit from it. It wasn’t that he was not fond of studying, he loved Mathematics and Sanskrit; but, he was quite blunt in his approach. He usually left the classroom after roll-call. Once the principal noticed him and took him to task. Tilak gave a straightforward reply, “I am not going to appear for the examination this year” (Syed, 2011, p. 7). His dialectical skills and striking outspokenness made him win a nickname of “Mr. Blunt” (Sharma, 2009, p. 14).

Tilak knew he was frail. The first task he decided to take up in his hands was to become stronger and fit. Gymnastics and swimming became his favourite ex-

ercise routines during college. He was so intensely driven to physical exercises that he skipped a year during the final B.A. examination. However, as a result he became much stronger than before, which worked as an asset for his future at the time of suffering and struggle. Later, he cleared the examination with a first-class degree (Syed, 2011).

Bal Gangadhar Tilak believed, "If one only attends to one's body as one does to one's mind from the age of 16 to 25, and if the physical strength thus stored up is not dissipated by gluttony or vice, one can stand any amount of hard intellectual work till one's old age" (Syed, 2011, p. 7).

Self-development was the key to his journey. He mastered his physical strength and also made himself strong in understanding values through the reading of *shastras*, like the *Manusmriti*, the Vedas, the *Bhagavad Gita*, etc. He also calculated the age of the Vedas using astronomical calculations. He had a strong command over his mother tongue and the Sanskrit language since childhood.

Spontaneity

Tilak was spontaneous in his approach. His high levels of self-awareness since childhood helped him later to take decisions naturally and speak in front of the authorities without any fear.

One such incident explains his spontaneity. After being tried for the sedition charge in 1908, Justice Davak asked Tilak if he had anything more to say before announcing the judgment. Tilak gave a bold reply, "All that I wish to say is that in spite of the verdict of the Jury I still maintain that I am innocent. There are higher powers that rule the destinies of men and nations and I think it may be the will of Providence that the cause I represent may prosper by suffering than by remaining free" (Kulkarni, 2020).

NG Jog, who wrote a biography on Lokmanya Tilak, explains this historical moment in his apt words. He writes, "These words delivered on the spur of the moment have a spontaneous dignity and almost a Socratic sublimity. They breathe the spirit of dedication to freedom and of defiance against the might of the British Raj. And, they could have been uttered by only one man in India's contemporary history – Bal Gangadhar Tilak" (Jog N.G., 2015, pp 1-2).

Tilak's spontaneity was also evident in his starting and editing the newspaper *Kesari*, where he used to criticise the works of the British Government audaciously. He took responsibility for every article that he wrote and was also

charged, or warned, several times for his fearless writing, which inspired the masses to go against the British power.

Being Vision- and Value-Led

Visionary leaders understand the deeper meaning of the purpose of their mission, and the milestones they achieve in the journey act as landmarks for their success.

Tilak had a broad vision for India and her people. After his college, he, along with Agarkar and Chiplunkar, opened the New English School in 1880 at Poona (Syed, 2011). The establishment of this school marks an important event in the freedom movement because it was a remarkable effort to break British control on education.

Later, in 1884, the Deccan Education Society was established with a motto to increase the accessibility of education by opening new schools and colleges.

Tilak, with Agarkar, also started '*Kesari*', a Marathi newspaper in 1882, and '*Mahratta*', an English weekly, as a weapon to bring an awakening among the masses. Tilak formed opinions and wrote criticism in his newspapers about the British Raj, which ignited the entire nation to stand with his ideology (Syed, 2011).

When Bengal was partitioned by the British under Lord Curzon's rule, Tilak, in association with Lala Lajpat Rai and Bipin Chandra Pal, decided to convert the agitation of injustice towards Bengal into an all India struggle. The trio, Lal-Bal-Pal, came up with a 'Four Point Programme' to allow common people to join the movement (Reddy, 2015).

Swadeshi, Swaraj, Boycott, and National Education were the prime objectives of the programme. He also started a Bombay Swadeshi Store in 1906 to promote the swadeshi movement (Chatterjee, 2012).

The nationalist movements he started in the early 1890s received such a huge response from the common people that later his approach became an idealistic path to fight for India's freedom. It was then carried forward by other eminent members of the national leadership, like Mahatma Gandhi and many others, to make India independent.

Holism

The consciousness of patriotism was ignited by Tilak among the masses during the worst times of freedom struggle. The aftermath of 1857 brought darkness and disenchantment among people which continued for decades (Saha, 2015).

When the Indian National Congress was formed in 1885, there was a new hope to find a political voice while fighting the British regime. Tilak joined INC in 1890, but he was opposed to the moderate views of the party leaders, especially for the fight for self-government. He rather chose to give it a radical approach (Reddy, 2015).

Soon, he led to the growth of national consciousness among the masses, which ignited the youths and other patriots to join the movement for the freedom struggle.

Compassion

Tilak was ruthless towards the British government because of their atrocities on Indian people. But, he was equally compassionate toward his people. He cared for people in his community regardless of their caste and religion. He also empathised with the feelings of people when they were brutally handled by the British Government during the Plague outbreak in 1895. He educated people about the alien rule and helped everyone to understand the real meaning of Self Rule.

Celebration of Diversity

To bring unity among the Hindus belonging to different castes and classes, Tilak introduced *Sarvajanik Ganesh Utsav* (public celebration of Ganesha Puja festival) in the year 1893. The first and the oldest *Mandal* was set up in the form of the *Keshavji Naik Chawl Sarvajanik Ganeshotsav Mandal* at Girgaum. The 10-day-long festival was then widely celebrated in other places of the country since 1894.

The revival of the festival was considered a masterstroke on Tilak's part as the British had banned Hindu gatherings. Besides, the festival also brought people together on a common stage. They joined public gatherings, speeches, lectures, *melas*, group events, and various competitions (Tilak, 2019).

Before the *Ganesh* celebrations went public, there were events of riots recorded between the Hindus and Muslims. Tilak was well aware of that. He took great pain to explain why the Ganesh festival was celebrated publicly through his passionate editorials in *Kesari*. He also invited Muslims to take part in the celebration, similar to how Hindus participated during the Muharram procession in Pune (Tilak, 2019).

The so-called 'Untouchables', in those times, weren't allowed to enter temples. Tilak's procession to put Ganesh idols on the street or at a public spot, however, gave access to everyone to worship.

He took opportunities to teach *Swaraj*, nationalism, sports, and the importance of education, during the mass gatherings in the festival.

Apart from the Ganesh festival, Tilak also revived the Shiv Jayanti festival to unite the people against the British Raj. With the help of these festivals, the patriotic spirit among people was revived and the larger public attained a realisation of the true state of affairs under the British rule.

The motive behind the festivals, as described by Tilak in his editorials, was to revive the cultural spirit among the people and to take pride in it, rather than being under alien control. He also ensured that the festival wasn't meant to knock up any kind of prejudice against any other community (Kulkarni, 2020).

Tilak's strategy and his thinking seemed more goal-oriented and realistic, which helped him emerge as a great leader in front of people.

Field Independence

After the introduction of the Age of Consent Bill in the Governor General's Legislative Council, Agarkar and Ranade welcomed the idea by lending their support. But Tilak stood against the idea of this social reform brought in by the British-ruled Government of India.

The bill, which was then passed in 1891 as an act, was meant to increase the age of consent from 10 years to 12 years of age. Sexual intercourse for all girls under the age of twelve, whether married or unmarried, was made illegal, violation of which could result in criminal charges of rape (Engels, 1983).

Bal Gangadhar Tilak was not against social reforms in principle, but he prioritised political reforms over them. He understood that if political power remains in the hands of an alien rule, no social reforms can bring about any good or any real difference (Khangai & Satya, 2019).

Tilak stood against the idea of the state interfering in the matters of social and religious practices. He also insisted that no Hindu shall tolerate the foreigners' intervention to tell them how to behave in their own house. He wrote, "If we want that we should be proficient in the art of self-government, the first qualification we should show is the ability to manage our own business among ourselves, and particularly that business which will be better regulated by ourselves than by passing an act of resolution" (Khan, 1992, p. 36).

He continued with a firm statement that "let our people, therefore, form associations, frame rules, and restraints for themselves and do all they can to check evils of this evil custom"

(Khan, 1992, p. 36).

The entire stand of Tilak in this issue shows that he took responsibility for his community and decided to act for the people, despite having his close associates as strong opponents. This quality of him identifies with the spiritual quotient of a leader for having field independence during critical times.

Humility

Works of Lokmanya Tilak weren't ordinary. He was seen as a saint by the masses, although he was working incessantly for political reforms in the country. He preached the learnings of the *Bhagavad-Gita* in his life and lived by its terms.

When he was serving his imprisonment in Mandalay, a Muslim warden made an observation about him. He claimed that he saw many prisoners in jail but there was none like him. He quoted, "Everything about him in Mandalay got as it was a new lease of life, the trees which never bore fruits or flowers began to do so. I was taking the same care of them before as when Tilak Maharaj came here and lived and I am taking the same care of them when he is gone. But they refuse to yield any fruits or flowers now." He added that every animate and inanimate object has become lifeless now (Angadi, 1992, p. 245).

One act of humility was also recorded by Vasudev Ramrao Kulkarni, a convict cook (Angadi, 1992) appointed for Tilak. He records three years of togetherness in the jail. Vasudev writes, "... Tilak shared all his food with me which was of superior quality. What was supplied to me was distributed to the sparrows that used to frequent our wooden cell. Eventually, the sparrows became very bold; they used to perch on his table, books, and papers, gather around him when he sat down to take his food, and sometimes sat even on his shoulders" (Angadi, 1992, p. 246).

His fierce acts were very popular among the masses. However, he never forgot his values and served the people with humility whenever required.

The tendency to Ask Fundamental Questions

Tilak was a great scholar. Right from his childhood, he only pursued those things that he found relevant for him. One thing that defined his exceptional character in his leadership was his ability to question the system, current values, and his opponents. This ability made him create his plan and path to attain *Swaraj*. It could distinguish him easily from his peers who worked for the same purpose.

Ability to Reframe

Tilak reintroduced the word "*Swarajya*" or Self-Rule and promoted it among

the masses. The idea of *swaraj* had political, nationalistic, spiritual, moral, and realistic foundations. The idea of *swaraj*, which was propagated in the 1890s, brought a new vision among Indians and also led to the start of the Home Rule League in 1916. Their objective was to achieve self-government by all constitutional means, during the British rule itself. They also considered educating and organizing public opinion in the nation towards the achievement of the same.

The establishment of the Home Rule League led to the inception of a new episode in India's freedom struggle. It was considered to be a solid course of action of forming self-government.

Tilak believed that "Freedom was the soul of the Home-Rule movement. The divine instinct of freedom can never grow old" (Kapoor, 1996, p. 29). Its manifestation, on physical grounds, might get affected due to circumstances; the bodies (working for freedom) might get weakened or wounded for a time but, in the end, "Soul-Freedom must triumph" (Kapoor, 1996, p. 29). He continued by stating, "Our ideal is Swaraj. All past ideals are amalgamated into one pure and simple ideal of Swaraj - government for the people, by the people" (Chausalkar, 1990, p. 51).

Tilak gave a spiritual meaning to the word *Swaraj*. While politically it implied *home rule*, morally, it was about self-control in performing one's duty. As he explains, "a life centred in self and dependent upon self" (Mishra, 2012, p. 163). He was well aware that such kind of spiritual freedom was evident only if there was political freedom.

Positive Use of Adversity

In 1908, Tilak was charged with sedition for supporting the bombings in Bengal and was sent to imprisonment for six years at Mandalay. It wasn't the first time he was going to jail, but this time, he was sent away from India.

During the time of adversities, he wrote books, *The Asiatic Home of the Vedas*, and a commentary on as well as a translation of the *Bhagavad-Gita*. He completed his manuscript of the *Gita Rahasya*, several years before finishing his sentence in Burma. However, the book was published in 1915, a year later since his return to Poona (Wolpert, 1962).

In *Gita Rahasya*, he shared that the real message of the sacred book was more about getting involved with *Nishkam Karma* (selfless action) i.e. *Karma Sannyasa*, rather than renunciation (Mishra, 2012, p. 163).

Wolpert, in his book *Tilak and Gokhale*, wrote, "If in 1898, he had returned

from prison a martyred hero, with his restoration to India in June of 1914, he appeared to his followers a little less than reincarnation of a deity” (Wolpert, 1962, p. 262).

Sense of Vocation

Tilak was highly motivated towards his mission and had a true sense of vocation for achieving freedom of the nation. He obtained his B.A. (Honours) in Mathematics from Deccan College, Poona, and L.L.B. from the Bombay University. Yet, he decided never to take a government job. Instead, he decided to devote his life to the education of his countrymen (Syed, 2011).

He dedicated his entire life to serve the public and educate them to devote their lives to the nation.

Conclusion

The 12 principles of SQ can define Lokmanya Tilak's leadership qualities at different stages of his life. He developed his own path and led value-oriented missions, while retaining strong field independence. His acts of humility and strength at the time of adversities were clearly visible during the times he was in jail, and throughout the movements that he led for the community against the British Government.

He took crucial decisions during complex situations, which was evident in his behaviour as well. It gives an indication of Tilak leading from front with a high level of spiritual intelligence.

The kind of leader and activist that he was, it is apparent that there was a high degree of self-belief in him to convert every thought into action right from the start. He created plans for national unity and put all his energy during the execution of the same. During his journey through the freedom struggle, he was successful in narrating his vision to the common public, filling them with nationalistic ideas and fervour, mobilising them, and above all inspiring them to join the freedom movement.

Till the last moment of his life, he the idea of having *Swaraj* for the nation was his life-breath. “Swaraj is my birthright and I shall have it,” this slogan of his animated the movements that occurred during the independence struggle post the Tilak era, and even when new leadership under Gandhi was formed.

The struggles for modern times are very different from those that existed in the pre-independence era. Now that *swaraj* is attained, modern leaders need to focus on *Surajya* (Good Governance) to strive for a prosperous country.

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