Gandhiji and the magic of the fast

Fasting and diet restriction played an important part in Gandhiji’s life. He would sometimes take an exclusive fruit diet or observe a fast on Ekadashi day or other Hindu festivals. This was more done with a point of view towards self-restraint rather than for any religious purpose. Gandhiji discovered that fasting could be made as powerful a weapon of indulgence as of restraint. In his words, “I did not find much to choose between a fruit diet and a diet of food grains. I observed that the same indulgence of taste was possible with the former as with the latter, and even more, when one got accustomed to it. I therefore came to attach greater importance to fasting or having only one meal a day on holidays. And if there was some occasion for penance or the like, I gladly utilized it too for the purpose of fasting.”

With the beginning of the Freedom movement, Gandhiji’s methods of passive resistance like Ahimsa and Satyagraha grew in popularity. In this mass movement, people followed their leader towards the goal. Fasting was an oft-used weapon as a part of this philosophy. On numerous occasions, Gandhiji undertook fasts unto death without the least hesitation. He said, “A votary of ahimsa cannot subscribe to the utilitarian formula (of the greatest good of the greatest number). He will strive for the greatest good of all and die in the attempt to realize the ideal. He will therefore be willing to die, so that the others may live. He will serve himself with the rest, by himself dying.” On numerous occasions, Gandhiji had used the most effective tool of fasting to prove this point. It is
What Nehru said....

... Mahatma Gandhi made an outstanding contribution not only to the freedom of India but to that of world peace. He taught us the doctrine of non-violence, not as a passive submission to evil, but as an active and positive instrument for the peaceful solution of international differences. He showed us that the human spirit is more powerful than the mightiest of armaments. He applied moral values to political action and pointed out that ends and means can never be separated, for the means ultimately govern the end.

..... from Freedom from Fear: Reflections on the Personality and Teachings of Gandhi.
This Month That Year

Launch of Hubble Space Telescope

The atmosphere of the earth plays a major role in observational astronomy. It has many layers but they are not noticeable to the human eyes. These layers have continuous motion. The atmosphere also contains moisture in the form of very small water droplets, fine dust and smoke particles. As light from the stars passes through the layers of the atmosphere before reaching the earth, the direction of the rays of light change continuously, though very slightly. Some of this light is also scattered or absorbed by the dust and moisture present in the atmosphere. This results in a twinkling star that we see from the earth. Twinkling stars which are single-point sources of light appear to be moving around a point. Planets also twinkle but since they are much closer to the earth, they seem to have a more angular size and appear as if made up of a large number of point sources, all twinkling randomly. As a result, planets do not appear to twinkle.

Astronomers describe this twinkling as “seeing” and it is measured in angles as arc seconds. One arc second is calculated as an angle which is equivalent to 3600th of one degree. For example, if your friend is standing about 2 kilometers from you holding a 50 paise coin (about 200 mm in diameter), then the angle subtended by the coin is 1 arc second.

What this means in terms of astronomical observations is that if atmospheric conditions are not conducive, then we will not be able to see two stars distinctly if they are separated by only 1 arc second. In astronomical parlance, this means that we will not be able to ‘resolve’ the stars. Even at the best astronomical observatories, normal ‘seeing’ is of the order of 1 arc second only.

To get better images, the best place for astronomical observations is above the earth’s atmosphere where observations are unaffected by the atmosphere. This suggestion was made by Hermann Oberth, an Austro-Hungarian-born German physicist and engineer. He made this suggestion in Die Rakete zu den Planetenräumen (“The Rocket into Planetary Space”) which he wrote in June 1923. His idea, which was then considered somewhat controversial, materialized over a period of time and astronomical telescopes were placed in orbit around the earth. It may be pointed out that Oberth was not the first one to make this suggestion. Earlier, some astronomers had also suggested likewise. At that time, rocket science had also started taking shape. Oberth also actively campaigned for placing astronomical telescopes above the earth’s atmosphere.

Among these the Hubble Space Telescope (HST) is one of the best known telescopes. It was launched on April 24, 1990 on board the space shuttle Discovery. The telescope is named after legendary American astronomer Edwin Hubble. HST is a reflecting telescope with a primary mirror of 2.4 m diameter and it weighs 828 kg. The telescope has phenomenal accuracy in tracking an object which is better than 0.007 arc second. What it means is that this telescope can point to either side of a human hair kept at a distance of 1.5 k.m. from it. This telescope can also be serviced and there have been five missions to carry out maintenance and repair work since its launch.

Over the last 29 years since its launch, HST has sent us vital astronomical data which led to publication of more than 15,000 scientific papers. This is a feat unmatched by any other telescope. A large number of excellent images taken by HST are in the public domain and can be freely downloaded from the HST website. This has made the telescope a boon for astronomical outreach and research. HST images have been downloaded and used for various purposes by amateur astronomers, for public exhibitions and for illustrations in academic books.

HST has been in space for 29 years and is expected to be operational for another decade or so.
42nd Anniversary of Nehru Planetarium

To mark the 42nd anniversary of the Nehru Planetarium which falls on 3 March, various contests were organized. Below are the results of these contests held from 21 February 2019 to 2 March 2019. The concluding function and award distribution was held on Saturday, 2 March 2019.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Winners</th>
<th>Astro-Painting</th>
<th>Astro-Essay</th>
<th>Astro-Elocution</th>
<th>Astro-Poetry</th>
<th>Astronomy Quiz</th>
<th>Science Quiz</th>
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<td>Avanti Walavalkar</td>
<td>Soumil Shetty</td>
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<td>Hansraj Morarji P</td>
<td>Jamnabai Narsee School</td>
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<td>The J. B. Vachha High School Andheri (W) Mumbai</td>
<td>A. H. Wadia High School Andheri (W) Mumbai</td>
<td>Christ Church School, Byculla Mumbai</td>
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<td>ublic School Andheri (W) Mumbai</td>
<td>Juhu Mumbai</td>
<td>Malad (W)</td>
<td>Juhu Mumbai</td>
<td>Mumbai</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Second</td>
<td>Shubham Santra</td>
<td>Nikhilesh Shashikumar</td>
<td>Hosang Shukla</td>
<td>Saarah Shaikh</td>
<td>Mallika Dasgupta</td>
<td>Vedant V. Sakpal</td>
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<td>Third</td>
<td>Batul Kapsi</td>
<td>Pranay Nayak</td>
<td>Nandini Patt</td>
<td>Adrika Mishra</td>
<td>Ayush Gulhane Sawant</td>
<td>Jahnavi Shah</td>
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Nehru Centre’s tribute to sarod maestro Ustad Haafiz Ali Khan

Nehru Centre presented a two-day festival of classical music on 27th & 28th February 2019 as a tribute to Ustad Haafiz Ali Khan of Gwalior.

On the first day, Pt. Kaivalya Kumar Gurav and Shri Mahesh Kale presented their vocal classical repertoire. On the second day Smt. Devaki Pandit presented a vocal recital and Amaan and Ayaan Ali Bangash, a sarod recital.

The programme was well attended and appreciated by lovers of classical music.

Folk arts have always formed an integral part of the culture of Maharashtra. History of Maharashtra reverberates with music, dance and other performing arts, which reached out to the common folk. During the bhakti movement, saints sang musical compositions in simple language easily understood.

Dance forms like powada, lavani, bhondala, phugadi, are typical of Maharashtrian culture.

On the eve of Maharashtra Day, Nehru Centre will present a folk programme on sant parampara, lavani and powada dances and other forms of folk arts.

The programme will be presented by Shri Nandesh Umap and his group.

Tuesday, 30th April 2019, 6.30 p.m.
Nehru Centre Auditorium

Entry: Passes will be available on 25th April 2019 from 10.30 a.m. onwards until availability from the ticket counter of Nehru Centre Auditorium and also on bookmyshow.com
Programmes for April 2019

TUSHAR DESAI
APARNA KUDTARKAR

Tushar has a diploma in Fine Arts from L. S. Raheja School of Arts, Mumbai. His paintings are figurative compositions in acrylic on canvas.

Aparna graduated in Fine Arts from L. S. Raheja School of Arts, Mumbai. She has participated in many competitions. Her paintings are subjective compositions in acrylic on canvas.

Tuesday 2nd April 2019 to Monday 8th April 2019
(AC Gallery)

AZMAT A. SYED
K. L. SYED
A. L. SYED
A. K. SYED
ASAD K. SYED
SABBIR K. SYED

Azmat hails from Palanpur, Gujarat. He began photography from a very young age and has won many awards for his black and white photography on nature.

K. L. Syed was also a photographer from Palanpur. His black and white photographs are on the life of royal families and on scenic places of Rajasthan, Kashmir and many other states. He passed away in 1942.

A. L. Syed was a pioneer of Indian photography. He worked as a still photographer for many old Indian movies and won many awards. He passed away in 1991 at Palanpur.

A. K. Syed belonged to Palanpur. He was a sportsman and the recipient of many awards. He captured portraits and scenic places through his lenses. He passed away in 1996.

Asad K. Syed learnt photography under the guidance of his uncle A. L. Syed. He had a keen eye for the innocence of children and photographed them. He passed away in 1995 in Palanpur.

Sabbir K. Syed started photography under the guidance of his father. He won many awards for his subjective black and white photography. He lives in Palanpur.

Tuesday 2nd April 2019 to Monday 8th April 2019
(Circular Gallery)

POONAM ANAND
VISHAKHA THAKKAR
NIMISHA BHANSALI
KANCHAN MAHANTE
SWATI RAKHONDE

Poonam is a self-taught artist. Her paintings are in various mediums and she has participated in many shows. Her abstract works are in acrylic on canvas.

Vishakha is from the medical profession and a self-taught artist. She has exhibited her works in Mumbai and her paintings are figurative in oil on canvas.

Nimisha is a self-taught artist. She is a fashion and interior designer and a writer by profession. She has participated in many shows. Her compositions are in acrylic and oil on canvas.

Kanchan, a self-taught artist. She has been exhibiting her abstract works in Mumbai for many years. Her paintings on Buddha are in mix media on canvas.

Swati is a self-taught artist. She has had many shows in India and abroad. Her paintings are in mix media on canvas.

Tuesday 9th April 2019 to Monday 15th April 2019
(AC Gallery)
SUNIL GURAV

Sunil has received Govt. Diploma in Architecture from Mumbai. Though he practices Architecture, he is keen on paintings, sculptures and murals. His thematic paintings are in oil on canvas.

Tuesday 9th April 2019 to Monday 15th April 2019
(Circular Gallery)

JEET GALA

Jeet has secured Bachelor's degree in Mass Media. He has been trained under Alex D’silva, who taught him different techniques. His landscapes are in acrylic and oils on canvas.

Tuesday 16th April 2019 to Monday 22nd April 2019
(AC Gallery)

RUPALI THOMBARE

Rupali is an emerging calligrapher. She is an engineer by profession and learnt calligraphy under well-known calligrapher Shri Achyut Palav. She writes short stories for kids. Through her paintings, she wants to prove journey of a dot or zero to a complete world. Her paintings are in mix media on paper.

Tuesday 16th April 2019 to Monday 22nd April 2019
(Circular Gallery)

ABHISHEK SUDRIK
KIRAN GHANEKAR
PREETI SUTAR
PRASHANT MER

Abhishek completed B.F.A. in Sculpture from Sir J. J. School of Art. Presently teaching art in School. His sculptures are stone, metal scraps and wood.

Tuesday 30th April 2019 to Monday 6th May 2019
(Circular Gallery)

HASMUKH RAVAL
HARISH MAKWANA
DURLABHJI MAKWANA

Hasmukh is a self-taught artist from Ahmedabad. He has had many shows in India. His figurative compositions are in acrylic on canvas.

Harish completed diploma in textile designing from Mumbai. His paintings are in different mediums. He also does photography.

Durlabhji secured an art master in painting. He does mud painting and batik painting. He was teaching art in Kutch.

Tuesday 30th April 2019 to Monday 6th May 2019
(Circular Gallery)
New Arrivals: Books

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<td>Syeda Hameed</td>
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<td>अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी</td>
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<td>धूम हुई कविताएँ</td>
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<td>मंगे कृप्ली किताव</td>
<td>विनोब मोमानी</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>प्रकाशतां वंद</td>
<td>अनुग्रह गंगे</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Creative Writing Workshop - Words For Your Wellness

Conducted by Sakshi Singh, writer and poet

Date: Saturday, 27th April 2019
Venue: Nehru Centre Library
Time: 10.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.
Age Group: 18 years and above
Limited seats: Only 10 persons

Please register, only if you plan to attend: aratidesai@nehru-centre.org

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