

Online Events Calendar - Oct 2020

12

Monday
6.00 pm

Kathak Recital

by M.L.Ruwani Ravindya, B.A.Hons (Bachelor of Art in Dance) at Indira Kala Sangeet University, India



LIVE

Sitar & Tabla Recital

by Mahesh Pathmakumara. PhD
Research scholar, Department of Instrumental Music,
Faculty of performing arts, Banaras Hindu University,
India and Shasthrapathi Peshala Manoj



LIVE

17

Saturday
7.00 pm

24

Saturday
5.00 pm

Lecture - Yoga for Weight Management

by Vyasah Kalyanasundaram, Yoga Instructor of SVCC and
Founder, Astanka Yoga Mandir, Sri Lanka



LIVE

Tribute - Padma Bhushan S.P. Balasubramanyam

An evening of instrumental and voice interludes by
Soundari David Rodrigo and ensemble



LIVE

25

Sunday

29

Thursday

Vap Full Moon Poya Day Celebrations



LIVE

For details in regard to classes on Bharatha Natyam, Kathak,
Sitar, Violin, Tabla, Carnatic vocal, Yoga and Hindi
please call on tell no.011 2684698 or email to iccrcolombo2@gmail.com.
For upcoming facebook live events, visit www.facebook.com/ICCRSriLanka

Free Events. All are cordially invited

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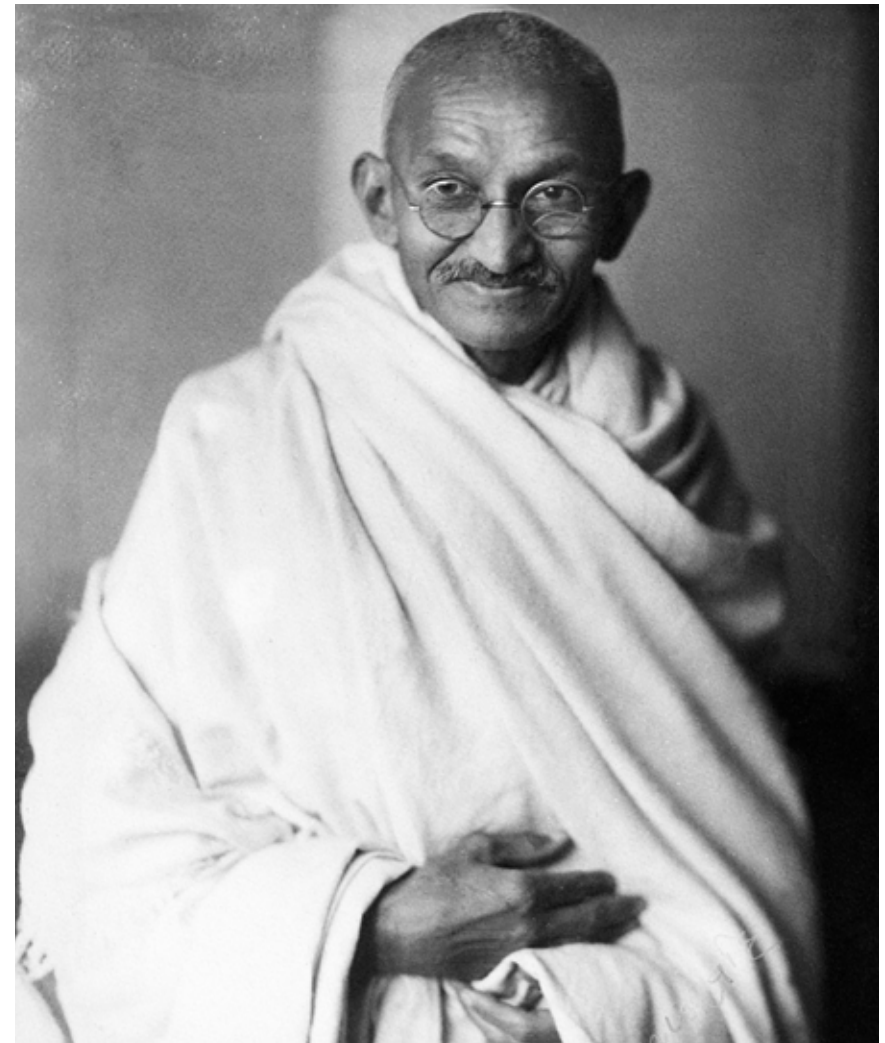
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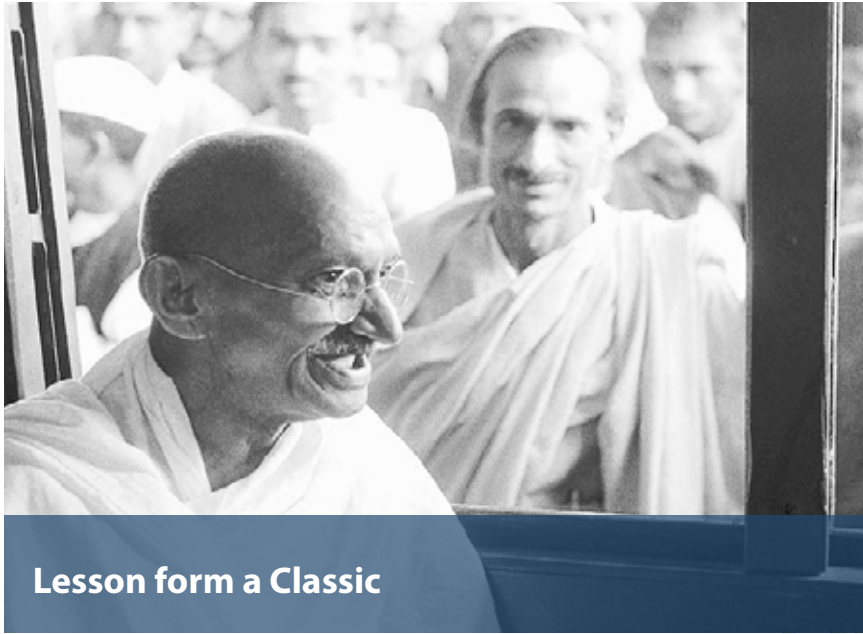
Sanskarika

Newsletter of Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre
High Commission of India, Colombo

Oct 2020



Cultural Tapestry



Lesson form a Classic

At a time when we are celebrating 150 years of Mahatma Gandhi, it is fair to say that Gandhism has stood the test of time. Through the years, be it Nelson Mandela or Martin Luther King, Jr. Gandhiji was always a template to understand and tackle their respective challenges. Today, we analyse how the Mahatma's values have remained relevant in a contemporary world

In the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi one finds ready roadmaps to meet several challenges. Gandhi saw politics as a vocation that sought to serve humanity through principles and practices that were rooted in truth. Today, violence appears to be the greatest of all the perils that threaten our existence. In every

part of the globe, governments and international agencies are busy devising strategies to tackle violence, religious extremism, widespread anarchy and terrorism. And for truth to be the guiding leitmotif in every policy that societies and governments promulgate to uplift the downtrodden, empower the deprived and guarantee universal justice, violence should find no part in those schemes: neither as a mean, nor as a temporary strategy. For Gandhiji, truth and violence are fundamentally antithetical to one another. Therefore, taking resort to violence, even for a fleeting moment, may amount to embracing untruth. This, in turn, implies losing sight of the larger objective of serving humanity.

"MY LIFE IS MY MESSAGE"

1888

After enrolling at the Inner Temple, Inns of Court, to study law, he was first called to the Bar in 1891. During his time in England, MKG faced a tough time adapting to the ethos of western society but stuck to his beliefs of vegetarianism. He finally decided to move back to India in 1891.

1869

Mohandas (Karamchand) Gandhi or MKG was born to Putlibai and Karamchand Gandhi in Porbandar. He married Kasturbai in 1882, aged 13, while he was preparing to pursue law in England.

1893

MKG faced a hard time when he tried to establish himself as a barrister in erstwhile Bombay. After moving to Rajkot to write petitions for a modest income, he promptly took up the offer to move to Natal, South Africa, to assist with a civil litigation.

When one looks at one man's journey through oppression, perseverance and rigorous imprisonment, it is hard to imagine how it led to millions being empowered. A simple man, who believed in the idea of justice and equality, this is his journey from Mohan to how we know him today, the Mahatma

1920-1947

Over a span of just two years, MKG had become a dominant figure present at the Indian political arena. He reorganised the Indian National Congress into an instrument of nationalism and started his regimen of non-cooperation and civil disobedience. Although a self-imposed restraint and values of non-violence kept him from fanaticism, he underwent several fasts until the Quit India movement in 1942 with the slogan 'Do or Die'. Even after independence he was able to stop communal violence in Calcutta (1947) and Delhi (1948) before his assassination on January 30, 1948.

1914-1919

Gandhiji moved to India in 1914 but remained on the periphery of Indian politics, not aligning himself with any political agitation. Even when he took the long-standing grievances of the peasantry from Bihar and Gujarat, MKG only launched his satyagraha struggle in 1919 with the passing of the Rowlatt Acts that empowered authorities to imprison without trial, anyone suspected of sedition. However, the massacre at Jallianwala Bagh and the enactment of Martial law stayed his hand.

1893-1914

During his time in South Africa, Gandhiji was quickly exposed to racial discrimination and it was there, when he was unceremoniously thrown out of a first-class railway compartment on account of his race, that MKG's struggle against social justice began to take shape. In the years that followed, Gandhiji blossomed as a proficient political campaigner and settled down in Natal to practice law. He then organised Indians into an ambulance corps. He was also imprisoned multiple times during his time in South Africa for resisting the oppressive regime in the country.

Gandhiji was as an idealist crusader who found no reason to isolate the methods from the goals; he believed that noble objectives can only be accomplished through noble means. At the same time, we must realise that Gandhiji's commitment to truth and nonviolence was more than a philosophical commitment to a set of abstract ideas. He belonged to a family of administrators from the princely state of Rajkot and on account of that affiliation, from an early age, he was well-versed in the necessities of statecraft. Not even once during his illustrious political career did he underrate the centrality of state to the well being of its citizens. The practices and methods of Gandhian politics, specially those aimed at curbing the various forms of violence that we see in the world, create a regime of peace which is truly lasting and sustainable. Reflecting on the question of violent political confrontations of his own times, Gandhiji argued that getting rid of a man who obstructs him will only produce a sense of security that is both false and short-lived. On the other hand, engaging with one's detractors and studying grounds of disagreement will produce a lasting truce. Gandhiji's policy of debate and dialogue, when invoked in situations of global terrorism and trade conflicts, will eventually produce international cooperation, and a sustainable and conflict-free world order.

Undoubtedly, environmental crisis is one of the gravest of all problems

that our generation faces. It is a commonplace wisdom that the present crisis is a result of reckless exploitation of nature. It originates in a mercantile philosophy which misled people into believing that our success at deciphering a few of its laws was a sufficient enough proof of man's dominance over nature. According to E F Schumacher, modern economies and developmental models have treated nature as an expendable income and that "modern man does not experience himself as a part of nature but as an outside force destined to dominate and conquer it".

Gandhi never subscribed to the idea of men waging war against nature. He held a quasi-religious attitude, which was premised on the theory of both empirical and transcendental continuity between human societies and environment. This quasi-religious worldview is informed by environmental ethics found in texts from ancient India. It is rooted in texts like the Athrvaveda which proclaim that earth is our mother and we are her sons.

In Vedic philosophy, our interaction with nature is guided by considerations of balance and man's inextricable bond with his environment. The tales of Panchatantra repeatedly remind us that "if one hopes to reach heaven by cutting trees and by slaughtering animals, what is the way to hell?" In ancient Indian literature, we find



Gandhiji during his days in South Africa

an attitude of empathy for each element in man's environment – man, animals, plants, rivers, mountains, soil and such. This attitude led to a culture wherein cutting a tree got compared to betraying a friend. This belief system, in which nature is projected as an intimate member of an extended family, precipitated an ethic of consumption which was not exploitative, but recuperative and regenerative. In January 1910, when residents of Paris were stunned by what is described as 'the flood of the century,' Gandhiji wrote a piece for Indian Opinion (a newspaper he established) decrying reckless tinkering with nature and its laws. He

argued that even though the people of Paris harboured the illusion that they had built the city to last for ever, nature has "given a warning that even whole of Paris may be destroyed." For Gandhiji, the word prakriti implied the original character of an idea or a thing. When men tinker with prakriti, they corrupt both environment and themselves.

If we return to Gandhiji's idea of prakriti, and through him to the ancient Indian environmental ethics, we are sure to find strategies and moral courage to tackle the environmental crisis.



Gautam Choubey is an academican, columnist and translator. He teaches English at Delhi University and writes on Gandhi, cultural politics and Indian literature.