

Newsletter

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100 years of Non-Cooperation Movement

A century ago, Gandhiji had given a call for non-violent non-cooperation against the British rulers of India with a view to ending their rule. In the first half of 1920, two events caused simultaneous resentment amongst Hindus and Muslims of India against the British. Consequent to Turkey's defeat in the First World War (1914-1918) and the subsequent Treaty of Sevres in 1920, the Ottoman Empire had been dismembered and the institution of Caliph (Sultan of Turkey), regarded as leader of the world-wide Muslim community was reduced to insignificance making the entire Muslim world angry. A campaign in the defence of the Caliphate was launched. It came to be known as the 'Khilafat' movement in India and was led by Shaukat Ali, Maulana Mohammad Ali, Hakim Ajmal Khan and Abul Kalam Azad.

In May 1920, the report of the Hunter Commission was made public. The Hunter Commission had been appointed to look into the atrocities committed in Punjab in 1919 which culminated in the massacre of hundreds of innocent people gathered at Jallianwala Bagh in April that year. The Hunter Report absolved Michael O'Dwyer, the Governor of Punjab, of all responsibility and let off General Dyer,

perpetrator of the Jallianwala carnage with a mild reproof holding him guilty of 'grave error of judgement'. The House of Lords, as if to add insult to injury, gave Dyer a vote of approval. There was a wave of anger throughout the country over the Hunter Commission report.

In the widespread feeling of hurt amongst Hindus and Muslims, Gandhiji saw a possibility of Hindu-Muslim unity and the end of British rule. He, therefore, supported the Khilafat movement. A Central Khilafat Committee of India's Muslims embraced non-violent non-cooperation and several leading Muslim figures allied themselves to Gandhiji including the Ali brothers, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Mukhtar Ahmad Ansari and Abul Kalam Azad who was a brilliant writer, orator and Islamic scholar.

The Indian National Congress had decided to take a decision on non-cooperation at its Calcutta session scheduled to be held in September. Before that Lokmanya Tilak passed away on 1st August at Bombay. Gandhiji attended the funeral and, on the same evening, sent a letter to the Viceroy enclosing the medals he had received for services in South Africa and saying that after the double letdown over

Khilafat and the Punjab, he retained neither respect nor affection for the Raj. All over India, many returned their medals.

At the Calcutta session of the Indian National Congress, the older leaders viz. Motilal Nehru, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Mrs. Annie Besant, Chittaranjan Das, Bipin Chandra Pal, Madan Mohan Malviya and Lala Lajpat Rai, who presided over the session, were opposed to non-cooperation. But the rank and file were with Gandhiji as was the younger leadership including Vallabhbhai Patel, Chakravarthi Rajagopalachari, Rajendra Prasad, Jawaharlal Nehru and Abul Kalam Azad. Gandhiji's resolution asking for non-cooperation was passed by a large majority of 1855 votes to 873.

The resolution asked for a surrender of all honours and titles conferred by the British Raj, a boycott of its councils and November elections, a boycott of foreign goods and a gradual withdrawal by students and lawyers from the Raj's schools, colleges and courts. In Gandhiji's scheme of things, Indians were to resign from civilian government jobs and also from the police and military and finally there would be non-payment of taxes.

contd. on page 2

When the Indian National Congress met for its annual session in Nagpur in December, the non-cooperation resolution was confirmed. Chittaranjan Das moved the resolution backed by Lala Lajpat Rai and Bipin Chandra Pal. At Nagpur, the Congress changed its aim from 'Swaraj within the Empire' to just 'Swaraj'. Jinnah emphatically opposed the change but his was a lone voice. He left the Indian National Congress for good after the Nagpur session.

With non-cooperation there was indeed some lessening of the authority of the Empire. It diminished as villagers settled cases out of court. Its revenues shrank as liquor sales went down and its prestige shrank when, in city after city, influential persons threw foreign cloth, suits and shawls into a blaze. Poet Rabindranath Tagore, though, did not approve the burning of the cloth as he felt it could have been given to the shivering half-naked millions.

Meanwhile, the Khilafat movement in India suffered a serious setback when Mustafa Kemal, Turkey's man of destiny, showed utter contempt for the Sultan of Turkey for whom India's Muslims were willing to die. Later, on 3rd March 1924, the Caliphate was abolished by a decree of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey.

Hindu-Muslim unity too received a blow by the Moplah uprising in August 1921 in Malabar. Moplahs of Malabar were Muslims with a trace of Arab blood. They were tenants of Hindu

landlords. Alleged insults to their religious leaders brought them into violent rebellion, first against the government and then against their landlords. There was arson and murder and some Hindus were forcibly converted. The rebellion was crushed but stories of violence and forcible conversion spread across the land, seriously hurting Hindu-Muslim trust, to the unfortunate delight of the British.

Non-violence also received a jolt when riots occurred in Bombay during the visit of the Prince of Wales to India. He landed in Bombay on 17th October 1921. Those joining the ceremonies of welcome – mostly Parsis, Anglo Indians and Jews – became targets of Hindu-Muslim mobs. In five days of riots, five constables were murdered and 53 Hindus and Muslims were killed in police firing. Gandhiji who was in Bombay said that Hindu-Muslim unity had become a menace to the handful of Parsis, Christians and Jews. A fast by him ended the rioting but the violence had left him completely shaken.

By the end of December, there was tension in the atmosphere. Almost all leaders except Gandhiji and about 30,000 others were put behind bars. At its year-end session in Ahmedabad, Congress volunteers signed a pledge of non-violence and Gandhiji prepared for a campaign of straight non-violent civil disobedience in which no Indian would in any way assist the British government or public services to carry out their functions. He chose the small

district of Bardoli, in the Bombay presidency for this experiment. On 29th January 1922, 4000 khadi-clad Bardoli residents pledged their willingness to stop paying taxes and to face 'imprisonment and even death without resentment'. He informed Lord Reading, the Viceroy that the non-violent rebellion would start on 12th February. Sadly that was not to be.

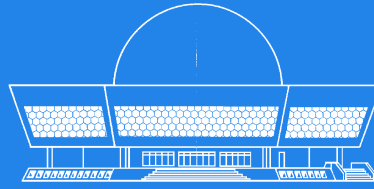
On 5th February, in a place called Chauri Chaura near the town of Gorakhpur, an angry crowd of about 4000 Hindus and Muslims surrounded a police party that had taken shelter in its post after exhausting its supply of ammunition. The police post was burnt and fleeing constables were forced back into the flames. Twenty two policemen lost their lives. The news reached Gandhiji on 8th February. It so depressed the Mahatma that he was compelled to cancel the entire campaign of civil disobedience not only in Bardoli district, but everywhere in India. In the words of Vincent Sheean, "In penitence of the crime committed at Chauri Chaura he fasted for five days while both India and Great Britain looked on in amazement. It seemed hardly possible, at that time, that a man could go so far toward revolution-bloodless and peaceful, but still revolution- and then call it off with a prayer. However it was Gandhiji's way and the masses did as he said, not as any other might tell them."

This article is largely based on the chapter 'The Empire Challenged' in Rajmohan Gandhi's book titled *Mohandas: A true story of a man, his people and an empire*.

What Nehru said....

Gandhiji had pleaded for the adoption of the way of nonviolence, with all the eloquence and persuasive power which he so abundantly possessed. His language had been simple and unadorned, his voice and appearance cool and clear and devoid of all emotion, but behind that outward covering of ice there was the heat of a blazing fire and concentrated passion, and the words he uttered winged their way to the innermost recesses of our minds and hearts...

....From an Autobiography



NEHRU PLANETARIUM

John Goodricke and Astronomy of Variable Stars

This is the story of a young man named John Goodricke who is credited with the introduction of a new branch of astronomy - the astronomy of variable stars. What are variable stars? We see hundreds of stars twinkling in the night sky. But what is not noticed is that some of these stars periodically change either in brightness or magnitude. In 1783, Goodricke observed that the brightness of a star called Algol kept varying. Until this time, astronomers had busied themselves only in the study of the sun, the moon, planets, the moons of the planet Jupiter and the comets. Though a few astronomers had spent time in recording the exact position of stars in the sky, stellar astronomy or the study of the physical nature of stars was still in its infancy.

John Goodricke was born on September 17, 1764, in Groningen in the Netherlands. His father Henry, was a diplomat and his mother was the daughter of a wealthy Belgian merchant. When he was only five years old, John suffered from scarlet fever and lost his hearing ability. This was the time in England when deaf and dumb people were derided by society. But the Goodricks were an intellectual and educated family. Some of them were well-placed in the Court of the King. Hence, John was sent to a renowned school for the deaf and dumb in Edinburgh. Here John learnt the three 'r's of education - reading, writing and arithmetic. He also overcame his disability and learnt to speak and lip-read. Having conquered his handicap, he joined the Warrington Academy in 1778 which was a prominent educational institution known for its emphasis on the study of 'natural philosophy' or today's science and mathematics. Here John's interest in astronomy developed and he started night sky observation at the age of fifteen.



John Goodricke

Young John's neighbour Nathaniel Pigott was an astronomer and had built a private observatory. It was one of the finest observatories of those times. Nathaniel's son, Edward, too had a keen interest in astronomy and even though he was eleven years older than John, both became good friends.

In 1778, as he studied the stars, Edward noticed that their positions and their brightness varied from one star catalogue to the other. He attributed the change in the position to an error in calculations but the difference in the brightness of these stars was to his mind an observation that required further study. Four years later, John and

Edward decided to do collaborative research on the observations of stars which are variable or are perceived to be so.

The first star on their list was the second brightest star in the Perseus constellation Beta Persei, also known as Algol. Their studies revealed that Italian astronomer Geminiano Montanari, in 1672, had recorded that the star had changed its brightness. The name Algol is derived from its original Arabic name *ra's al-ghul* or head (ra's) of the ogre (al-ghul) and it is believed that ancient Arabic astronomers attributed the changing brightness of this star to the act of a demon.

On 12 November 1782, John Goodricke recorded in his journal, "This night I looked at Beta Persei (Algol), and was much amazed to find its brightness altered ... I observed diligently for about an hour – I hardly believed that it changed its brightness because I never heard of any star varying so quickly in its brightness." As a true scientist, he first thought that this could be due to any of the three reasons - an optical illusion, a defect in his own eyes or even bad weather conditions.

He continued observing the star on every clear night and by April 1783, he could determine that the star's brightness changed periodically in two days and twenty one hours. He reported his observations to Anthony Shepherd, professor of astronomy at Cambridge. His friend Edward, in turn, notified it to Nevil Maskelyne, the Astronomer Royal and to William Herschel. The observations were quickly confirmed by Herschel.

John Goodricke also made a theoretical interpretation of the periodic variations of the star, Algol. He suggested that a 'larger body' possibly a planet revolved around Algol. It was observed that every time this body came between the earth and the star, it diminished the brightness of the star. Another interpretation could also be that the star had a region with cooler temperatures on its surface and every time this region faced the earth, the brightness was reduced.

This was a sensational scientific discovery of the time for which John was awarded the coveted Copley Medal of the Royal Society of London in August 1783. It was also proposed to elect him as a member of the Royal Society. Unfortunately, John was only nineteen years old at that time and could not be made member of the Society, for, as per the rule of the society he had to be twenty one years of age. He was eventually elected member on 6 April 1786. But sadly, before the news could reach him at York, he had died of pneumonia.

Edward Pigott remained John's friend till the end and even though he never received any recognition for the work he carried out with John, he had no resentment. It is known from the journals of both Edward and John that they held each other in high esteem. After the star Algol, the duo together discovered a few more variable stars.

Modern observations have confirmed that Algol is actually a two-star system. When the cooler and less brighter star comes between the earth and the brighter star, we observe a drop in its brightness. Algol is favorably placed for observations during November every year.

Today, the study and observation of variable stars and the interpretation of the cause of these variations in their brightness is the most popular branch of astronomy among professional and amateur astronomers.

INDIAN CLASSICAL DANCE: KATHAKALI

Vibrant yet refined, dramatic yet lyrical, exuberant yet sublime, Kathakali is one of the well-known classical dance forms of India. Few art forms are as powerfully primordial and at the same time poetic as Kathakali. It is often called dance drama since it is neither a drama nor a dance, but a combination of both. Kathakali evolved as an independent dance form over the last four centuries.

Kathakali's growth was intertwined with the development of Malayalam as a distinct literary tradition and the increased popularity of the Bhakti movement in Kerala. The eleventh century composition, *Geeta Govinda* by Jayadeva, the poems that told the story of Lord Krishna's life, heralded a new era for Indian classical arts.



Kathakali's stylized performance combines five forms of fine arts: painting, literature, music, acting and dance. Kathakali performers wear elaborate and intricate make-up and colourful costumes. It takes three to four hours for Kathakali dancers to transform into a character. They lie on their backs and relax while make-up artists paint the colours and apply rice paste and paper border (*chutti*) framing the face. *Chutti* draws the attention of the audience to the performer's facial expressions. Green and red are predominant colours in the Kathakali make-up. Male characters wear green make-up (*pachcha*). Women have glossy, yellowish make-up (*minukku*).

Costumes consist of long sleeved top, yards of heavily starched underclothes wrapped around the waist to give bulk, a mid-calf length outer skirt above the underclothes, and several decorative accessories. Most male characters wear long wigs that hang behind their intricately carved large head dresses. They attach long silver fingernails on their left hands, and apply a small amount of a herb in the lower eyelid to make them red. Female costumes are less abstract and bulbous.



The facial expressions of the artists are based on the *Natyashastra* and are classified into *navarasas* or nine expressions. The actor-dancer conveys a range of emotions through his facial expressions and eye-movements. There are 24 basic gestures, and their various combinations form the sign language used to narrate the story.

Adapting to circumstances, absorbing and assimilating changes, and evolving through innovations, Kathakali flourishes as a premier classical dance form and continues to captivate audiences worldwide.

Nehru Centre had organized a Kathakali Festival in 1995 in which *Nalacharitham* or the story of King Nala was presented by eminent artistes of the Kalakshetram Dance Academy.

Savlaram Laxman Haldankar & Gajanan Savlaram Haldankar



Self Portrait by S. L. Haldankar

Savlaram Laxman Haldankar was born in Sawantwadi on 25th November 1882, in a middle-class respectable family. His art teacher Shri N. S. Malankar who later became his father-in-law saw in him the promise of being an outstanding artist and encouraged him to explore possibilities in the world of art. Under his able guidance, Shri Haldankar passed the two grade examinations with credit in 1901. Subsequently, he came to Bombay and joined the Sir J. J. School of Art in 1903 for further studies. He had a brilliant career which listed him at the top of all the examinations and won him almost all the prizes. He started exhibiting his works when he was a student and secured prizes and medals from exhibitions held in Madras, Bombay and Simla at the young age of 25 years.

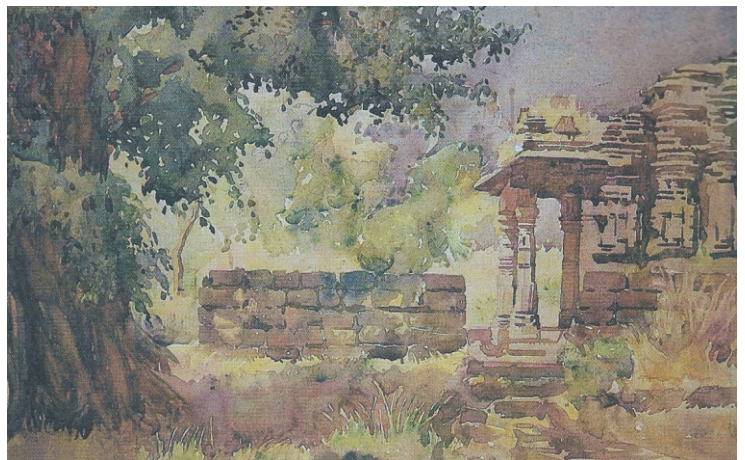


Lady with the lamp

In 1908, he founded the Haldankar's Fine Art Institute in Bombay. With the co-operation of other artist friends, he established the Art Society of India in 1918. He was its president for many years and continued to take active interest in its affairs. In 1915 he exhibited at the Royal British Society of Arts, London, winning two commendation certificates out of the total four awarded by that Society.

Haldankar's life sketch would be incomplete without the mention of his dear wife Laxmibai who was a source of quiet strength and assurance in the face of numerous difficulties that he had to face. Their son, Gajanan Haldankar was born in 1912. He had no formal art education and studied under the able guidance of his father. He won many gold and silver medals and cash prizes in prestigious exhibitions in India, from the young age of seventeen onwards.

He taught drawing and painting in his father's art institute for over sixty years. He was a visiting lecturer in the Government College of Art and was also nominated as member on the panel of judging committees for various exhibitions. The son was an equally talented artist like his father.



Landscape by G. S. Haldankar

Nehru Centre Art Gallery was honoured to exhibit the original works of the father and son as part of its Indian Masters' Retrospective in 1998.

UNESCO World Heritage Sites in India

14. Qutub Minar Complex

Qutub Minar is the second tallest stone tower in India. Its construction was begun in 1199 by Qutub-ud-din Aibak, and completed in 1220 by his successor Iltutmish. This magnificent tower stands in the Mehrauli area of New Delhi. It has a diameter of 14.32 m at the base and about 2.75 m on the top with a height of 72.5 m. It is an architectural marvel of ancient India. The complex has a number of other important monuments such as the Alai Darwaza, Quwwat-ul-Islam Mosque, the tombs of Iltutmish, Ala-ud-din Khilji and Imam Zamin, the Alai Minar and a 7 m high iron pillar.

Alai- Darwaza, the southern gateway of the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque was constructed by Alauddin Khilji in 1311 as recorded in the inscriptions engraved on it. James Ferguson, the Scottish architectural historian wrote about the Alai Darwaza, "Nothing so complete had been done before, nothing so ornate was attempted by them (the Delhi Emperors) afterwards."

Quwwat-ul-Islam Mosque, to the north-east of Qutub Minar was built by Qutub-ud-Din Aibak in 1198. It is the earliest surviving mosque built by the Delhi Sultans. It consists of a rectangular courtyard enclosed by cloisters, erected with carved columns and architectural members of 27 Hindu and Jain temples, which were demolished by Qutub-ud-Din Aibak as recorded in his inscription on the main eastern entrance.

The tomb of Iltutmish (1211-36) was built in 1235. It is a plain square chamber of red sandstone, profusely carved with inscriptions, geometrical and arabesque patterns in Saracenic tradition on the entrances and the interior walls. Some of the motifs viz., the wheel, tassel, etc., are reminiscent of Hindu designs.

The construction of Alai Minar, which stands to the north of Qutub Minar, was begun by Alauddin Khilji, with the intention of making it twice the size of the earlier Minar. He could complete only the first storey, which now stands at a height of 25 m. The other remains in the Qutub complex comprise the madrassa, graves, tombs and a mosque of exquisite architectural beauty.

The Iron Pillar at the Qutub complex was believed to have been erected by Emperor Chandragupta II of the Gupta dynasty in the 4th century. It consists of 99% iron but is still in a non-rusted state. An emblem of the Garuda, the symbol of the Guptas, is now missing from the top of the pillar.

UNESCO has declared the Qutub Minar complex as a world heritage site in 1993.



Qutub Minar



Quwwat-ul-Islam Mosque



The tomb of Iltutmish

Further reading at Nehru Centre Library:

Delhi: it's monuments and history by Thomas George Percival Spear; Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1994.
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Dear Librarian,

Trust all is well at your end. I wanted to know whether Nehru Centre Library is open for the public, so that I can bring my daughter for her research work.

For the last few years, Nehru Centre Library has been a place of significance for me, both personally and professionally. My professional association with Nehru Centre Library, with our Children's Day contest collaboration, has given MomSays a wonderful opportunity to encourage children across schools to write. Children across age groups have also enjoyed and participated in many fun and educative events at your state-of-the-art facility.

Personally, I have brought my daughter to the library on numerous occasions to read and learn in an exceptionally beautiful environment. There was always so much to look forward to, given the range of books you have at the library. The library is a haven for older children too and those pursuing higher studies. The peace and quiet, the spacious infrastructure, and the range of academic books make it a very rare public place in a space-starved city like Mumbai.

As I have personally visited the library on numerous occasions, I know that it maintains a very high standard of hygiene as well. If there is any place in Mumbai that can incorporate COVID-19 guidelines, it is the Nehru Centre Library.

It will also be of great psychological benefit to young children and students to venture out and go to a well-equipped and safe place, given that there are only very few options available in the current scenario.

It is a place I know I can trust to bring in my daughter.

Hence, please let me know soon as the library opens, as I would like to visit it soon. I am also confident that it is one of the safest public premises.

Warm regards,
Ambika Tiku Hathiari
(Publisher and mother)



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