BAPU

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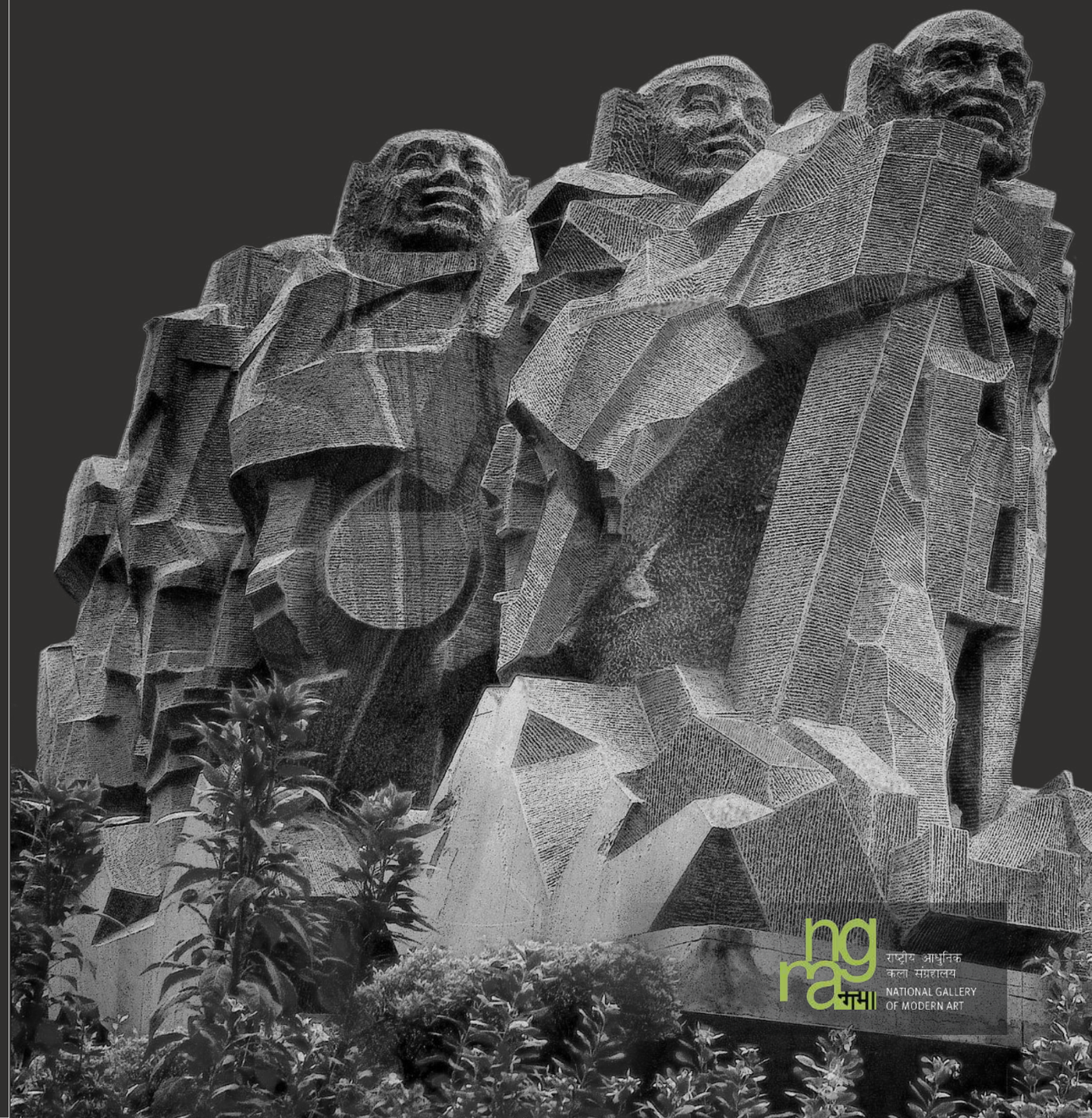

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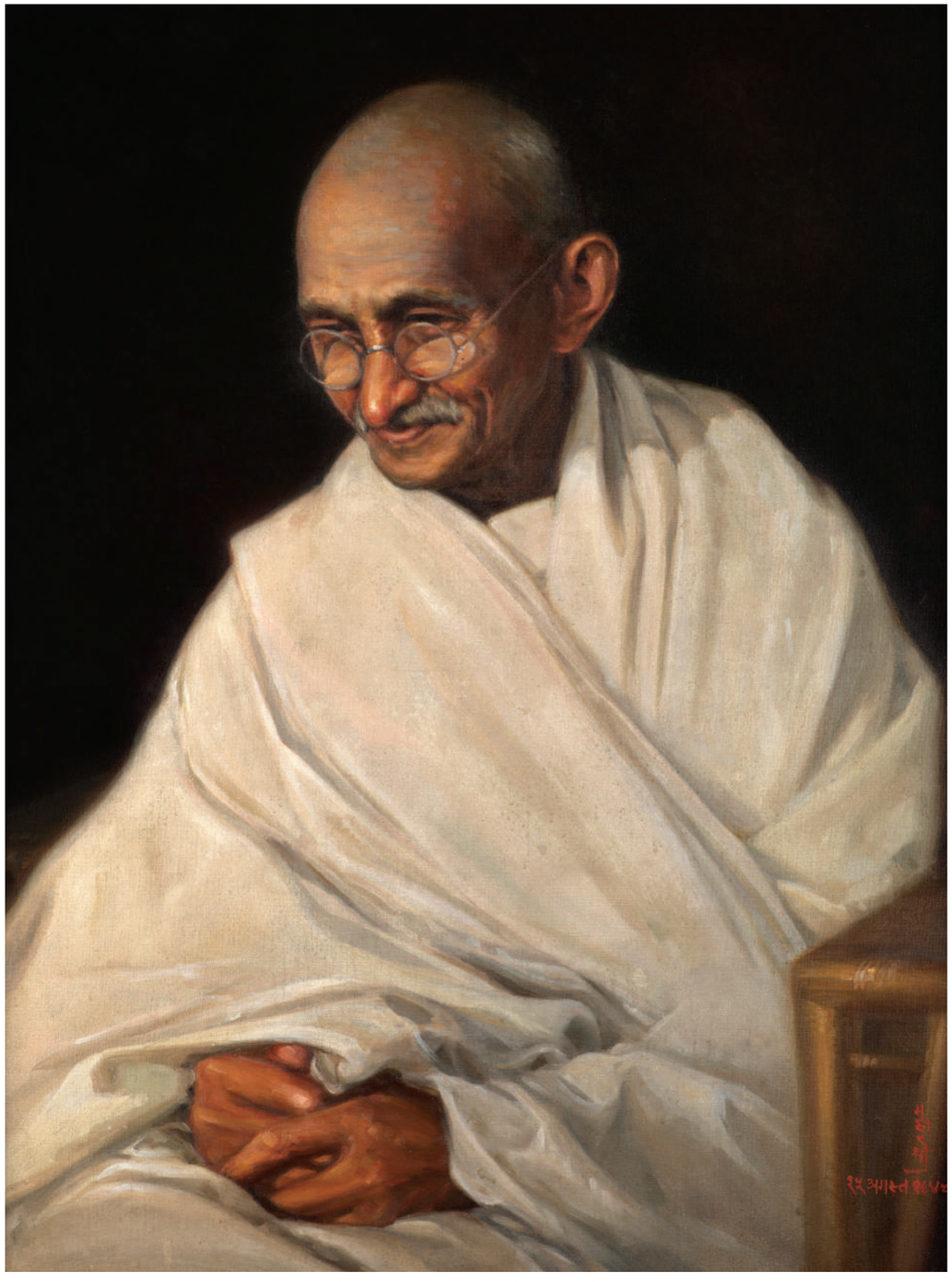
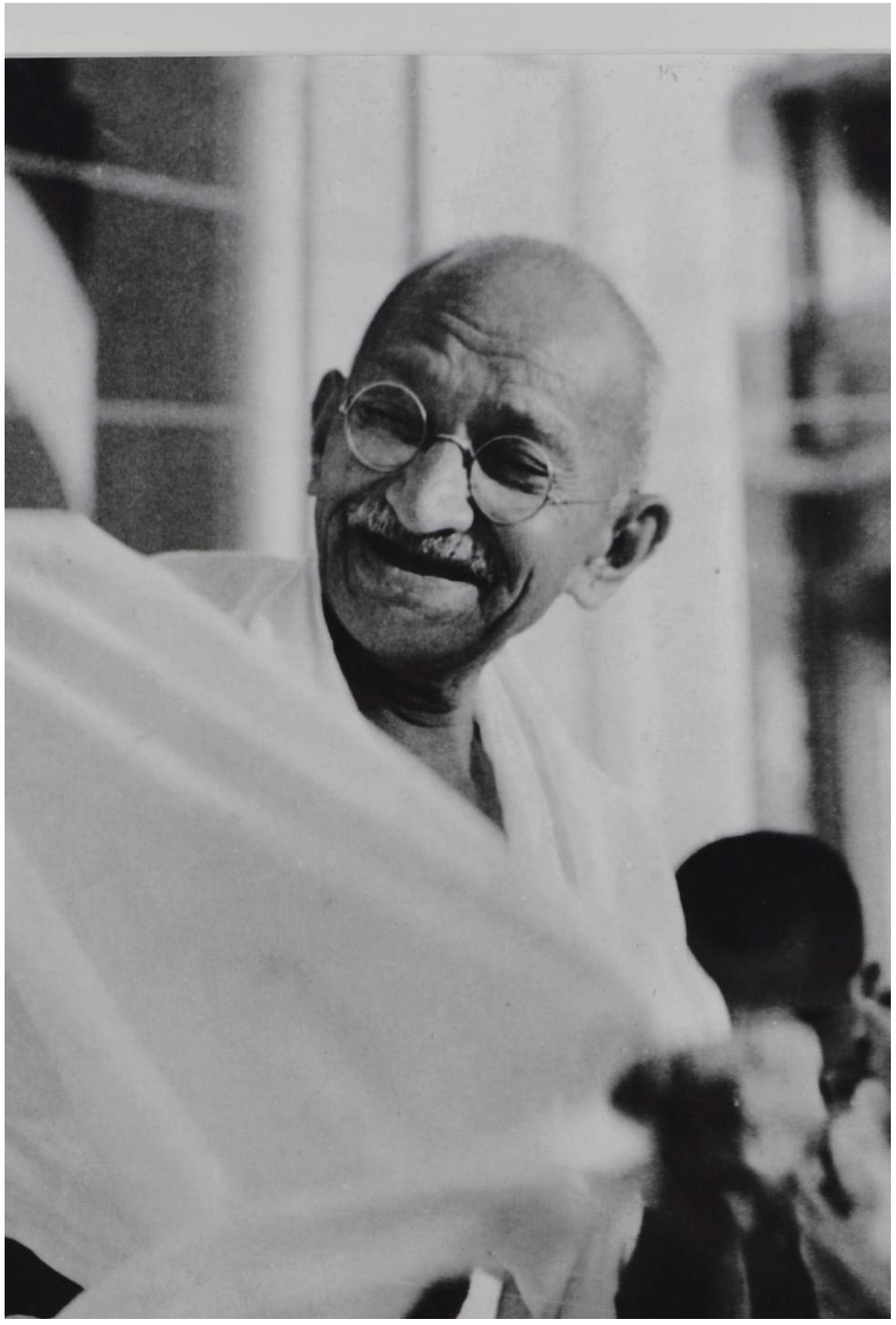
NATIONAL GALLERY OF MODERN ART



MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND GANDHI
(Born October 2, 1869, Porbandar, India—Died January 30, 1948, Delhi)

Upendra Maharathi
'Mahatma Gandhi'
Oil on Canvas, 76.2X101.6cm
Courtesy: Raj Bhawan, Patna



Kulwant Roy, *'Mahatma Gandhi',* Photograph, 44.5 x 33 cm, Acc. No. 16594

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The story of a man, who inspired generations of artists

NATIONAL GALLERY OF MODERN ART
MINISTRY OF CULTURE, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
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Gandhi's illustrations by Upendra Maharathi:
From the collection of Mahashweta Maharathi

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GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
सत्यमेव जयते

आज़ादी का अमृत महोत्सव

राष्ट्रीय आधुनिक कला संग्रहालय
NATIONAL GALLERY OF MODERN ART

150 YEARS OF CELEBRATING THE MAHATMA

FOREWORD

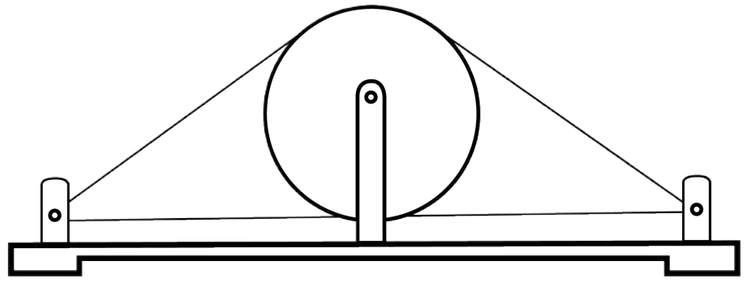
The legacy of Mahatma Gandhi, born over 150 years ago on 2 October 1869, is irrevocably linked to the freedom movement and the history of our nation. Bapu, who roused his fellow countrymen to the causes of Swadeshi and Satyagraha, was also a man with a deep and abiding interest in the arts. Although his love for Indian classical music is well known, his patronage of painting and artists like Nandalal Bose and Upendra Maharathi, less so.

Our advisor Sujata Prasad's compelling and engaging book on Bapu, complements the line drawings and paintings of iconic Gandhian artists Nandalal Bose, Upendra Maharathi, Mukul Dey, Elizabeth Saas Brunner, K.V. Vaidyanath, and Photographer Kulwant Roy.

The NGMA is proud to publish this portrait of the Father of the Nation, who continues to inspire generations of artists around the world.

ADWAITA GADANAYAK
Director General
National Gallery of Modern Art

Nandalal Bose, '*Dandi March (Bapuji)*', 12.4.1930, Linocut, 17.5x29.8 cm, Acc. No. 4893



Nandalal Bose's iconic linocut of Mahatma Gandhi leading the Salt Satyagraha is among the most admired and appropriated images of nonviolent civil disobedience. As is the image of Satyagraha, that mesmeric elixir of truth, ahimsa, and soul force, that has inspired generations of artists like D.P. Roychoudhury, Chaganlal Jadav, Upendra Maharathi, Dhiren Gandhi, Akbar Padamsee, Sarbari Roy Choudhury, M.F. Husain, Syed Haider Raza, Atul Dodiya, A. Ramachandran, K.G. Subramanyan, Jitish Kallat, Adwaita Gadanayak, Krishen Khanna, Jagannath Panda, K.S. Radhakrishnan, Ashim Purkayastha, Manjunath Kamath and many others.

Who was this man and how did his life incarnate in something so profound and compelling?

Beloved, almost a seer, Gandhi was born over 150 years ago, on October 2, 1869 at the old seaport of Porbandar in Kathiawar, Gujarat. His father, Karamchand or Kaba Gandhi, and mother Putlibai were delighted at the birth of their fourth child. Mohandas had a placid childhood: 'I roamed about the villages in a bullock cart. As I was the son of a diwan, people fed me on the way with jowar roti and curds and gave me eight-anna pieces. I had to be either playing or roaming about. I used to be as restless as mercury, not sitting still even for a little while. My sister used to carry me in her arms when she went out, showing me familiar sights of street-cows, buffalos, horses, cats, and dogs'. The family moved to Rajkot, then a princely state, where his father held the high position of diwan in the court. It was five days' journey by bullock-cart to cover the distance to Rajkot from Porbandar.

Far from being a prodigy, Gandhi was an average student, unusually quiet and reserved in school. 'To be at school at the stroke of the hour and to run back home as soon as the school closed – that was my daily habit. I literally ran back, because I could not bear to talk to anybody', is how he describes his school routine. He eschewed the company of other boys and girls, and spent most of his time in quiet pursuits: dabbling in music, taking long walks, looking after his father who was seriously unwell, and helping his mother with her daily chores. Going alone anywhere after nightfall was out of the question: he was in constant fear of creepy crawlies, gnomes and thieves. By contrast his wife Kasturba, to whom he was married at age thirteen, was completely unafraid of the dark. If she wanted to go somewhere she just went right ahead, a fact that bothered him no end.

Despite his mother's deep religiosity, and his own enchantment with the verses of the Ramcharitmanas, Gandhi abhorred religious fundamentalism of any sort, realizing early in life that no religion had a monopoly over God. His innate respect for all faiths came from listening to men of different faiths - Vaishnavites, Saivites, Jains, Muslims, Parsis - who came to meet

Illustration by Upendra Maharathi

his father.

The death of his father when he was still in high school shook him greatly. between his desire to study law or medicine, he finally decided to move to England to study law, leaving behind his mother, wife, and baby son. He was even at this stage extraordinarily shy. At a send-off given by the students of his school he had a panic attack: 'I had written a few words of thanks. But I could scarcely stammer them out. I remember how my head reeled and how my whole frame shook as I stood up to read them'. It is truly remarkable that such a tongue-tied youth would one day leave behind inspiring speeches, letters, editorials, interviews, articles amounting to over 100 volumes of collected works.

On 29 September 1888, Gandhi reached Southampton, and by November 6 he was enrolled at the Inner Temple. 'Everything was strange – the people, their ways, and even their dwellings', he reminisced. 'I was a complete novice in the matter of English etiquette and continually had to be on my guard'. He was nonetheless smitten by the razzle-dazzle of London and tried to emulate the well-bred English gentleman. He bought himself a new wardrobe, complete with ties, a chimney hat worth nineteen shillings, and an evening suit made at the trendy Bond Street for ten pounds. This done, he registered for lessons in elocution, Latin and French, the lingua franca of all Europe. A cultured man about town, he felt, must also be able to dance. The ballroom dance classes he enrolled in cost him three pounds, and were a complete fiasco. 'The piano would sing', he wrote self-deprecatingly, 'but I could not follow what it wanted me to follow… I added to the accoutrements of culture. I started to learn to play the violin just so that I could get a sense of notes and beats.' He probably did manage to cultivate an ear for music, but abandoned his classes after three months to focus on his academic commitments.

For the remainder of his stay in London, Gandhi abandoned the 'temporary indulgences' and settled down to a frugal life. He moved to a cheap rented accommodation and would walk eight to ten miles a day to save on fares. His austere dietetic experiments began at this time: bland meals of oatmeal porridge, boiled vegetables, fruits and bread. Even the delicious Gujarati sweets and savouries that his mother had packed no longer tempted him.

London had a transformative effect on Gandhi. He overcame his excessive shyness and became an active member of the Vegetarian Society. He was deeply connected with the city's intellectual and political spaces, meeting theosophists, writers, artists, socialists and freethinkers. His reading grew to include Theosophical, Christian, Buddhist and Islamic works. It was in London that he was drawn towards the Gita, reading a translation by the renowned Orientalist Edwin Arnold, with his Theosophist friends Bertram and Archibald Keightley.

Gandhi's love for the arts endured. Years later in 1931, when he visited Romain Rolland at his villa near Villeneuve, he asked the French writer to play a little Beethoven, and was delighted when Rolland played the andante of the Fifth Symphony. Music remained part of Gandhi's spiritual cosmos: no session of the Congress could end without the soulful singing of 'Raghupati Raghava Raja Ram' led by the eminent musicologist Vishnu Digambar Paluskar, made more inclusive by adding Ishwar Allah Tero Naam. The repertoire during his prayer meetings would include devotional songs by Bhakti poets like Kabir, Meera, Surdas, Tukaram set to music by Narayan Moreshwar Khare, who taught music at Sabarmati Ashram; Christian hymns and verses from the Avesta and Quran rendered by Raihana Tyabji, and Narsinh Mehta's Vaishnava Janato. Pandit Khare led the congregation during the Salt March, carrying his tamboura.

Gandhi also had an ear for Carnatic music. The voice of M.S. Subbulakshmi entranced him, and at his request she recorded his favourite Meera song 'Hari tum Haro' for his birthday in October 1947. He would often remark wistfully, 'We see Hindu and Muslim musicians sitting cheek by jowl in music concerts. When shall we see the same fraternal union in other affairs of our life?' In a letter to Rabindranath Tagore, he asked for the best of Hindustani and Western music to be taught at Santiniketan.

Gandhi's love for the visual arts too is well known. Its genesis can be found in his visit to Santiniketan on 17 February 1915. He invited eminent artist Nandalal Bose, one of the pioneers of modernism and the head of

Bapu viewing the Haripura panels with artist Nandalal Bose

05

Illustration by Upendra Maharathi

The story of a man who inspired generations of artists

06

Upendra Maharathi *decorated the temporary township created for the 1940 Congress session at Ramgarh with locally sourced art-objects and material.*

Santiniketan's art school Kala Bhavan, to decorate the Congress pavilions at Faizpur and Haripura. When Bose looked intimidated, he reassured him that he was not looking for an expert pianist but a warm-hearted fiddler. Nandalal's finished artwork, depicting rural life, painted on handmade paper, and mounted on straw-boards, was in sync with the spirit of Swadeshi and Gandhian aesthetics. The Haripura panels he painted in 1938 for the Congress session held there were displayed at the Venice International Art Biennale in 2019.

In her book The Spirit's Pilgrimage, Madeleine Slade or Mirabehn recalls that on their way back from the Round Table Conference, when they visited the museums of the Vatican in Rome, Gandhi was entranced by a striking life-size crucifix. He later wrote that if he had the chance to spend some months in Rome, he would spend his time studying the paintings and sculptures harboured there.

Many notable artists aligned their praxis with the constructive aspects of Gandhi's non-violent politics. Prominent among them was Upendra Maharathi, who volunteered to decorate the temporary township created for the 1940 Congress session at Ramgarh with locally sourced art-objects and material. The renowned American and British sculptors Jo Davidson and Clare Sheridan sculpted the Mahatma, drawn to him in more ways than one.

In May 1891 Gandhi cleared his law exams with reasonably good marks and was called to the Bar. A few weeks later upon his return to India he was given the painful news of his mother's death. Struggling to establish a legal practice, he received a job offer from a Muslim merchant in Durban on the coast of South Africa. The merchant wanted him to resolve a financial dispute with a merchant in Pretoria, capital of the Boer republic of Transvaal, to the northeast. Gandhi accepted the offer. Leaving his wife and two sons Harilal and Manilal behind, he reached the port of Natal in Durban on 25 May 1893.

There were more than one lakh indentured Indian labourers and traders living in South Africa. The first lot of indentured labourers had come in paddle-steamers from Madras and Calcutta in 1860, facing terrible conditions on board. Many had died enroute. They came to work on contract in the cane fields in and around Durban. They were also used as labour to extend railway lines and mine coal, and were known collectively as coolies.

Gandhi was caught in the maelstrom of racial politics from the moment he arrived in South Africa. Racism was ubiquitous. A day after his arrival in Durban, he went to the Durban Court dressed in an immaculate frock-coat, striped trousers and black turban. He was asked by the European magistrate to take off his turban. He refused, left the courtroom, and in his first political act, wrote a letter to the local newspaper which reported the event. On another occasion, travelling between Durban and Pretoria on a first-class ticket, he was thrown out of the first-class carriage by an irate railway guard and left shivering at Pietermaritzburg station in the middle of the night. Gandhi wrote about the incident in his autobiography: 'It was winter, and the cold was extremely bitter. My overcoat was in my luggage, but I did not dare to ask for it lest I should be insulted again, so I sat and shivered'.

The next day, in a journey from Charlestown to Johannesburg which had to be covered in a stagecoach, he was made to sit outside with the coachman, while the white conductor sat inside with the white passengers. This led to a bitter altercation. On arriving in Johannesburg, he was allowed to stay at a hotel on condition that he would be served dinner in his room. These definitive moments of his life are highlighted in Richard

Upendra Maharathi, *Bapu and Hermann Kallenbach*

The South African experience transformed Gandhi from an ordinary young man to the Mahatma-like stature he would soon acquire.

Attenborough's film Gandhi, Philip Grass's opera Satyagraha, and Shyam Benegal's The Making of The Mahatma. The incidents made him resolve to stay back in South Africa to root out racial prejudice.

Today, a beautiful bronze statue of Gandhi stands in Church Street in the City Centre of Pietermaritzburg. The statue was unveiled in 1993 by Archbishop Desmond Tutu to mark the centenary of Gandhi's terrible train experience.

The position of Indians in Transvaal in the northeastern part of South Africa was particularly pathetic. They had to pay poll tax, were not allowed to own land except in ghetto-like locations, were denied franchise, and could not even walk on the pavement or move out of doors after 9 pm without a special permit. The naked, brutal racism in South Africa strengthened Gandhi's desire to fight against injustice. He was still quite young, not yet 30, when he began to petition to safeguard the rights and dignity of South African Indians. One of his earliest campaigns was

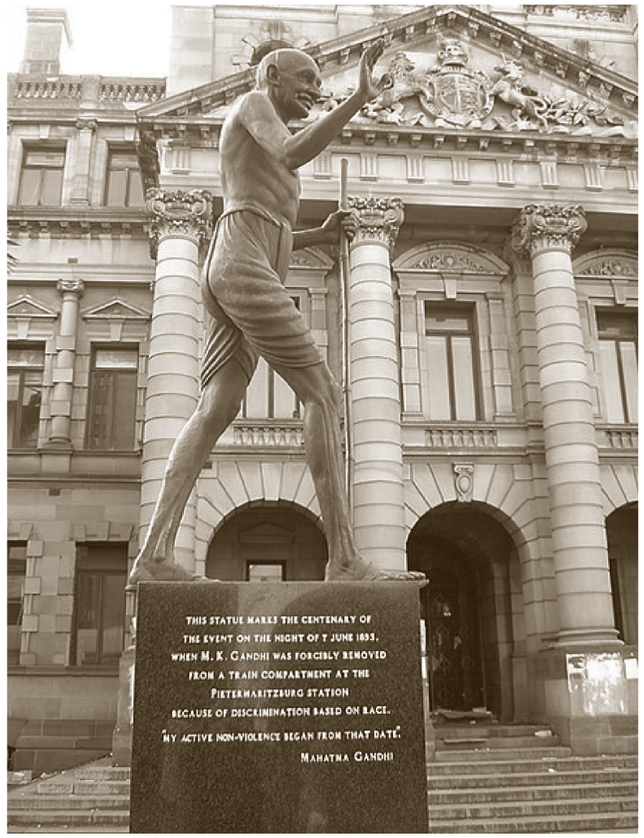
against a bill to disenfranchise Indians. In August 1894 he played a major role in the founding of the Natal Indian Congress and in canvassing for members and funds.

South Africa became the crucible of his politics. In July 1896, when Gandhi sailed back to India, the condition of Indians in South Africa preoccupied him no end. He spent a month in Rajkot working on the Green Pamphlet, a status report on the condition of Indians in South Africa, and addressed several public meetings in Bombay, Poona and Madras to share stories about the predicament of Indians there.

Gandhi returned to South Africa accompanied by his wife, his sons, and the nine-year-old son of his sister Raliyat. Reports of his speeches in India had reached Durban. He spent three weeks in quarantine following reports of a mild form of bubonic plague in parts of Bombay. But when he disembarked, he was pelted with stones, brickbats, and rotten eggs by an irate white mob that also pushed and kicked him. He survived only due to the timely intervention of the wife of Durban's police superintendent, who shielded him with her parasol.

Paradoxically, although his personal sympathies were with the Boers, Gandhi decided to side with the British in the Second Boer War. He set up the Natal Indian Ambulance Corps for the British, comprising 300 free Indians and 800 indentured labourers. He was also drawn into the 1906 Bambatha Rebellion of the Zulus in Natal. Again he encouraged Indians to side with the British by joining the stretcher-bearer corps. He felt that the support of Indians would help legitimise their claim to full citizenship. But the cruelty unleashed on the Zulus completely unnerved him. It was not a war but a manhunt, he felt, making his belief in non-violence stronger.

Gandhi returned to India in 1901 on condition that he would go back if needed. Just as he seemed to be settling down to a relatively placid personal and professional life in Bombay, a cable arrived from Natal asking him to return. He resumed his legal work for clients in Johannesburg and Durban while campaigning for the rights of



A bronze statue of Gandhi stands in Church Street in the City Centre of Pietermaritzburg. The statue was unveiled in 1993 by Archbishop Desmond Tutu to mark the centenary of Gandhi's terrible train experience.

Indians in Transvaal. The South African experience transformed Gandhi from an ordinary young man to the Mahatma-like stature he would soon acquire. He no longer looked and lived like the clone of an English barrister. He introduced a monastic discipline in his life, doing his laundry, cleaning his and his guests' chamber-pots, grinding flour to prepare unleavened bread, and cutting his own hair at the risk of looking comical. He even midwifed the delivery of his son Devadas.

The deep impression made on him by John Ruskin's essays in Unto This Last led Gandhi to create a rural commune on twenty-eight acres of land at the Phoenix Settlement near Durban in December, 1904. During the brief periods he spent there, Gandhi shared an austere and strictly timetabled communitarian space with close friends and associates, who made sure that he was posted with a variety of books and journals. His multilingual journal, Indian Opinion, began to be published from here. The genesis of Gandhian economics can also be traced to Phoenix: a society based on equality, in which people lived in harmony with one another and with nature.

The book that absorbed him most was Ruskin's brilliant essays

Elizabeth Saas Brunner
'*Prayers at Sunset with Gandhiji*'
Oil on canvas, 77.5x99 cm, Acc. No. 127

On 11 September 1906, three thousand Indian and Asian settlers attended a public meeting at the Empire Theatre in Johannesburg against the new ordinance. By now an outspoken campaigner, Gandhi prevailed upon them to take a pledge with God as their witness to oppose the act.

that formed the core of Unto This Last. He read them on a 24-hour train ride from Johannesburg to Durban. Ruskin's critique of free market economics, and his view that work done by hand was superior to all other ways of living, echoed Gandhi's own thoughts. He was also influenced by the Russian philosopher Timofei Mikhailovich Bondarev, who had established agrarian communities based on bread-labour, the idea that all men regardless of social status were morally obliged to perform a certain amount of manual labour. Gandhi extended the concept of bread-labour to activities like carpentry, shoemaking, gardening, tailoring, cooking, and home-schooling for children. Another essay that played a transformative role in his life was Leo Tolstoy's 'The Kingdom of God is Within You'. Tolstoy's advocacy of the need to overcome basal passions like idleness, gluttony and carnal love pushed Gandhi in the direction of celibacy, a vow he undertook in 1906, at the age of 37.

His pluralist attitude developed through study of the Quran, books on Buddhism, the Ishavasya Upanishad, attending Bible classes, and his deep friendship with individuals of different faiths. A framed picture of Christ adorned the wall in front of his desk in his office in Johannesburg. He admired Christ's understanding of suffering, and believed that all major religions were unique visions of Godtheir imperfections due only to 'human instrumentality'. The Bhagavad Gita was his spiritual dictionary and an essential part of his daily prayers. He found his ideal in the equipoise or sthitpragya of a yogi, who acts without attachment either to the action or the fruits thereof; aparigraha or non-possession; and sambhava or equability. During his incarceration in 1922 he composed a dictionary and concordance of every term in the Gita, titled the Gita Padarthkosha. His Gujarati translation of the Gita was published in 1930.

Gandhi's Satyagraha, the nonviolent, peaceful mass and individual resistance that captured the imagination of the world, was born in South Africa. Gandhi invited suggestions for a Gujarati equivalent to 'passive resistance' – his nephew Maganlal proposed Sadagraha. Satyagraha stemmed from these deliberations. The catalyst was the Asiatic Law Amendment Ordinance which required the compulsory registration and fingerprinting of all Indians in Transvaal, even if they possessed the necessary permits. Gandhi went to London to meet the secretary of state for the colonies, Lord Elgin, to do his best to ensure the ordinance would not be given royal assent. He also met political leaders in the House of Commons. His petition was not considered, but he did make a huge impact on the Indian diaspora and sections of the intelligentsia. The chief of the Victoria and Albert Museum, George Birdwood, was one of many who wrote about the surge of delight they felt after reading Gandhi's petition.

On 11 September 1906, three thousand Indian and Asian settlers attended a public meeting at the Empire Theatre in Johannesburg against the new ordinance. By now

Illustration by Upendra Maharathi

When C.F. Andrews met him on the Durban quay, he looked like an ascetic, dressed in white dhoti and coarse kurta. When Andrews bent down to touch his feet, Gandhi protested in a low voice, 'Pray do not do that, it is humiliation to me'.

an outspoken campaigner, Gandhi prevailed upon them to take a pledge with God as their witness to oppose the act. He explained the possible consequences of dissent: ridicule, jail, insults, hunger, hard labour, flogging, heavy fines, loss of property, deportation, illness and death. He also explained his perspective, which was that he would die rather than submit to injustice.

Known as the 'Black Act', the Bill was passed in the Transvaal Parliament on 22 March 1907. Gandhi told his supporters the act was not designed for enslavement but for the loosening of chains. He organised a nonviolent civil disobedience movement against the act that lasted more than seven years. Several hundred Indians, from diverse communities and different sections of the diaspora including merchants, hawkers, indentured labourers and professionals went to jail and faced flogging and death.

Gandhi encouraged Indians to burn their registration cards, cross the Transvaal-Natal border without papers and court arrest. Soon after, a compromise was worked out between him and the colonial secretary General Smuts, under which most of the permanent residents were to register voluntarily. When this did not happen, the breach of faith on Smuts' part resulted in the renewal of civil disobedience. On 16 August 1908 Gandhi organised the public burning of more than two thousand certificates of registration at the Hamidia mosque in Johannesburg. This act has often been compared to the Boston Tea Party of 1773, when American rebels threw boxes of British tea into the Boston Harbor.

Gandhi was among the first to appear before a magistrate for his refusal to register. He was awarded two months' simple imprisonment on 10 January 1908. He was imprisoned again for entering Transvaal without a permit on 14 October. He used his time in jail to read books. His devoted secretary Sonja Schlesin, a Russian Jew, ferried him books and journals on her bicycle. The writings of American scholar Henry David Thoreau, most notably his essay on civil disobedience, influenced him deeply. He encouraged everyone to read the essay and to become Thoreaus in miniature.

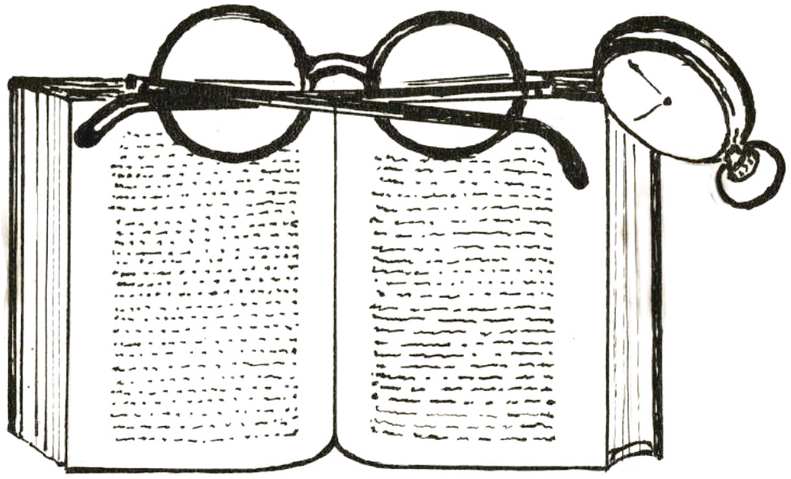
In 1909 Gandhi went again to London to garner support for Indians in South Africa. He held meetings, drafted numerous letters and petitions, closely examined the politics of the suffragettes, and addressed students at Cambridge University. Between November 13-22, aboard the ship bringing him back from London, he wrote the most important book on his political thought. This small book titled Hind Swaraj or The Indian Home-Rule was published in the columns of Indian Opinion. In a style reminiscent of Plato's dialogues, the book presents an antithesis of East and West and shows that Gandhi was deeply suspicious of the industrial-capitalist mode of development. He mocked Western civilization, calling it a nine-day wonder. The book remained banned in India for several years because it contained matter declared seditious by the colonial government.

In 1910 Hermann Kallenbach, a German architect practising in Johannesburg helped him found the Tolstoy Farm on an 1100 acre plot close to the city. Patterned on the Kibbutz movement in Palestine, this farm provided a home to satyagrahis and their families. Gandhi lived here between 1910 and 1913 with satyagrahis of different faiths, in structures made of wood and corrugated iron, surrounded with orange, almond and plum trees. Children living on the farm were exposed to vocational training for their all-round development. This included physical labour, carpentry, leatherwork, fetching water, cooking and cleaning their waste. Nature-cure therapies were used during illness. The food was simple: home-baked wholemeal bread, peanut butter, orange marmalade and fruits and vegetables grown on the farm. The residents were encouraged to celebrate each other's festivals. They fasted collectively during Ramzan. Everyone was encouraged to walk. When Gandhi had work in Johannesburg, he would rise at two o'clock in the morning and walk the entire distance of 21 miles.

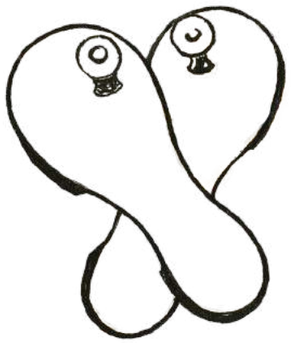
Gandhi's peaceful struggle against injustice continued. The government had gone back on its promise to repeal the Black Act. To add to the oppression of Indians, in 1913 Hindu, Muslim and Zoroastrian marriages were invalidated. Only monogamous marriages performed by judges or Christian clerics were recognized. Gandhi exhorted the striking indentured labourers to fill the jails. Their movement was joined by the indignant Indian women, including Kasturba. They carried their protest to the coal mines in Newcastle, where mine workers were striking against the poll tax imposed on Indians.

The movement was a huge success. Fifty thousand indentured labourers walked off the plantations, railroads and mines, crippling the economy. Many activists were jailed. Kasturba was awarded three months' rigorous imprisonment. Joining them in jail were European sympathisers like Henry Polak. General Smuts had to call out the army to suppress the strike. The struggle finally bore fruit. The Indian Relief Act of 1914, which recognised Indian marriages and repealed the poll tax, may have fallen short of expectations as Indians still had no political rights, but Gandhi's method of protest left a deep impact.

On Gopalkrishna Gokhale's advice, Gandhi decided to return to India. He left Cape Town for London in July 1914, but by the time he crossed the English Channel the Great War had broken out. Gandhi was stranded in London for many months, finally reaching India on 9 January 1915. He was then 46 years old but had already acquired the persona of a Mahatma. In January 1914, when C.F. Andrews



Illustrations by Upendra Maharathi



Gandhi's walking stick, his glasses, his footwear, continue to fascinate artists. The 1995 Post-cards for Gandhi and Haku Shah's Gandhi and His Things, are amongst the many paintings and sketches devoted to his extreme frugality. Replicas of the handful of objects he possessed can be found in Gandhi museums and memorials.

Mukul Dey, '*Mahatma Ji Spinning the Charkha at Sabarmati*-1928, Dry point on paper, 23.6x20.3 cm, Acc. No. 1479

met him on the Durban quay, he looked like an ascetic, dressed in white dhoti and coarse kurta. When Andrews bent down to touch his feet, Gandhi protested in a low voice, 'Pray do not do that, it is humiliation to me'.

As Gandhi came of age politically, stories of his South African struggle, extensively covered in the vernacular press, turned him into a national hero. He spent two years travelling round the country in third-class railway coaches with hard wooden benches. Asked why he did this, he said with a wide grin, 'because there is no fourth class'. He moved from village to village. His travels gave him a clear understanding of the social and economic impact of colonial rule in India.

In order to identify with the poorest of the poor, Gandhi began wearing handspun loin-cloths and ordinary sandals. This would be his attire for the rest of his life. Even when he attended the Round Table Conference in London in 1931, he wore his homespun khadi loincloth, covering his shoulders with a shawl. He was photographed and trailed by journalists wherever he went. After the conference he went to see the cotton mills of Darwen and Springvale in Lancashire, playing a game of tennis with the factory workers in the same clothes. Journalists documented the tumultuous welcome from the mill-workers, particularly women, who in the words of American reporter William Shirer instinctively saw in him a man who had devoted his entire life to helping the poor.

Winston Churchill may have winced at the thought of a 'half naked fakir' striding up the steps of 10 Downing Street in this dress – but not Gandhi! He even met the British monarch in the same attire. When a reporter commented on the inadequacy of his clothes Gandhi grinned and said, 'The king had enough on for both of us'. He won several influential British MPs to the Indian cause.

On his return journey, landing in Marseilles on a short visit to France, he was asked by customs officials if he had any goods to declare. Surrounded by hundreds of reporters, Gandhi replied that he was a poor mendicant whose earthly possessions were confined to spinning wheels, prison dishes, a can of goat-milk, six homespun loincloths, a towel, and his

Illustration by Upendra Maharathi

reputation, which he said would not amount to much.

Gandhi's walking stick, his glasses, his footwear, continue to fascinate artists. The 1995 Postcards for Gandhi and Haku Shah's Gandhi and His Things, are amongst the many paintings and sketches devoted to his extreme frugality. Replicas of the handful of objects he possessed can be found in Gandhi museums and memorials.

Gandhi charmed the entire world. He was mobbed by adulating crowds wherever he went. Satyagraha, put into practice right away, could be seen in his handling of the suffering and grievances of the indigo cultivators of Champaran in northern Bihar in April 1917. When the sub-divisional officer of Motihari served him notice under Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code, directing him to leave the district, Gandhi refused to leave without completing his mission. Arrest and trial followed. During the trial Gandhi calmly read out a statement accepting full responsibility for his act of disobedience: 'I have disregarded the order served upon me not for want of respect for lawful authority, but in obedience to the higher law of our being – the voice of conscience'. Scores of outraged plantation-workers surrounded the court in silent protest. Sensing that the situation could go out of control the administration withdrew the case. Gandhi and his team of lawyers, who included Rajendra Prasad, travelled to several villages to record the testimonies of some eight thousand indigo plantation-workers, eventually creating pressure on the planters to refund 25 per cent of the money illegally extorted from the workers.

Satyagraha was put into motion once again to end the deadlock between mill-owners and the overworked, underpaid mill-workers of Ahmedabad. Gandhi encouraged them to strike work. The strike that began on 22 February 1918 was peaceful and disciplined. To increase pressure on the management, he decided to go on a fast. Gujarat's first textile labour union was formed in this phase, and mill-workers' wages were increased by 35 per cent.

Gandhi's next Satyagraha

destination was Kheda, where peasants were in acute distress due to crop failure. Their appeals for remission of land revenue had been ignored by the colonial administration. Based on a survey of the 600 worst affected villages, Gandhi initiated a no-tax campaign. The struggle which went on for three months ended when the government agreed to collect revenue only from those cultivators who could afford to pay.

Champaran, Ahmedabad, and Kheda demonstrated the use of the nonviolent method of protest pioneered by Gandhi. Thus far the Indian National Congress was a party of mainly upper-class Indians. Through a new constitution adopted in 1920, Gandhi made the Congress a mass organisation, bringing millions of peasants and workers, and conducting its business in Indian languages. By 1921 the Congress was an unstoppable political force, with more than 200 chapters spread in every part of the subcontinent and lakhs of members.

Gandhi led three nationwide movements in 1919-1922, 1930-1934, and in 1942. In 1919 he organised Satyagraha against the repressive Rowlatt bills that sought to suspend civil liberties in the name of curbing terrorist violence. As soon as the two bills were introduced in the Imperial Legislative Council on 6 February 1919, Gandhi declared that they were unjust, subversive of the principles of liberty and destructive of the elementary rights of the individual. The nationwide struggle launched after they were enacted could not survive the brutal repression of the government, and reached its zenith on the day of Baisakhi on 13 April, when four hundred unarmed civilians were massacred in Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar. Elsewhere in the city, people were made to crawl on their bellies like worms. These gut-wrenching events radicalised Indians into strong anti-British sentiments.

Gandhi withdrew the movement on April 18. It was revived a year later when the Non-cooperation Movement was clubbed with the Khilafat Movement, giving birth to an unseen magma of emotions that worked across social, economic and religious differences. In 1921, 400 labour strikes were held involving 5,00,000 workers. Women came forward to join the movement in unprecedented numbers, organising picket lines and making huge bonfires of foreign clothes. Liquor shops were also picketed on street corners and in mohallas. Government schools and colleges were boycotted. There were student strikes in Calcutta, Lahore and elsewhere. A number of national schools and colleges were founded at this time, prominent among them the Jamia Millia Islamia, Kashi Vidyapith, and the Gujarat Vidyapith.

Gandhi in a sense feminised these political spaces. 'To call woman the weaker sex is a libel, it is man's injustice to woman', he said,

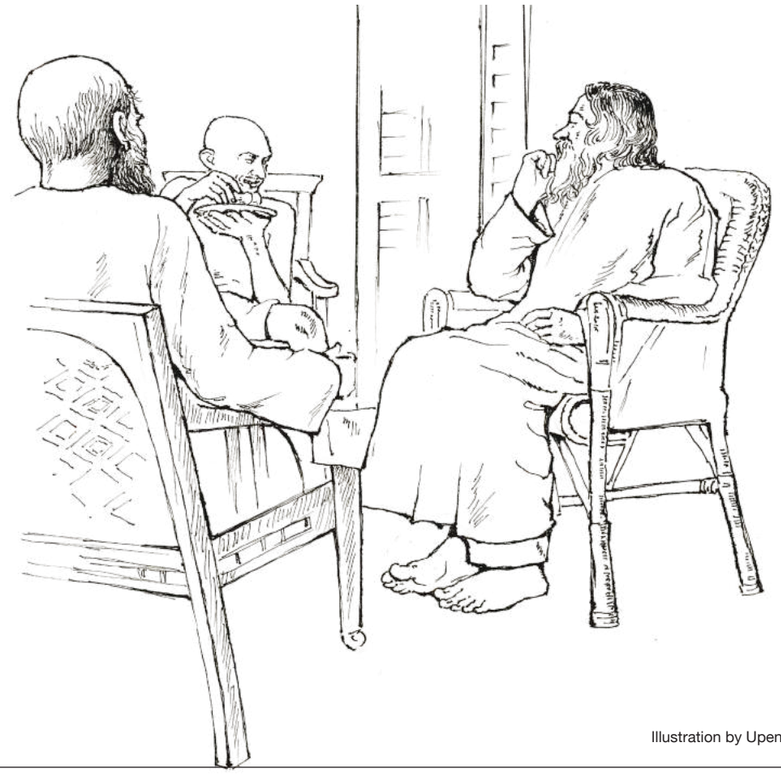
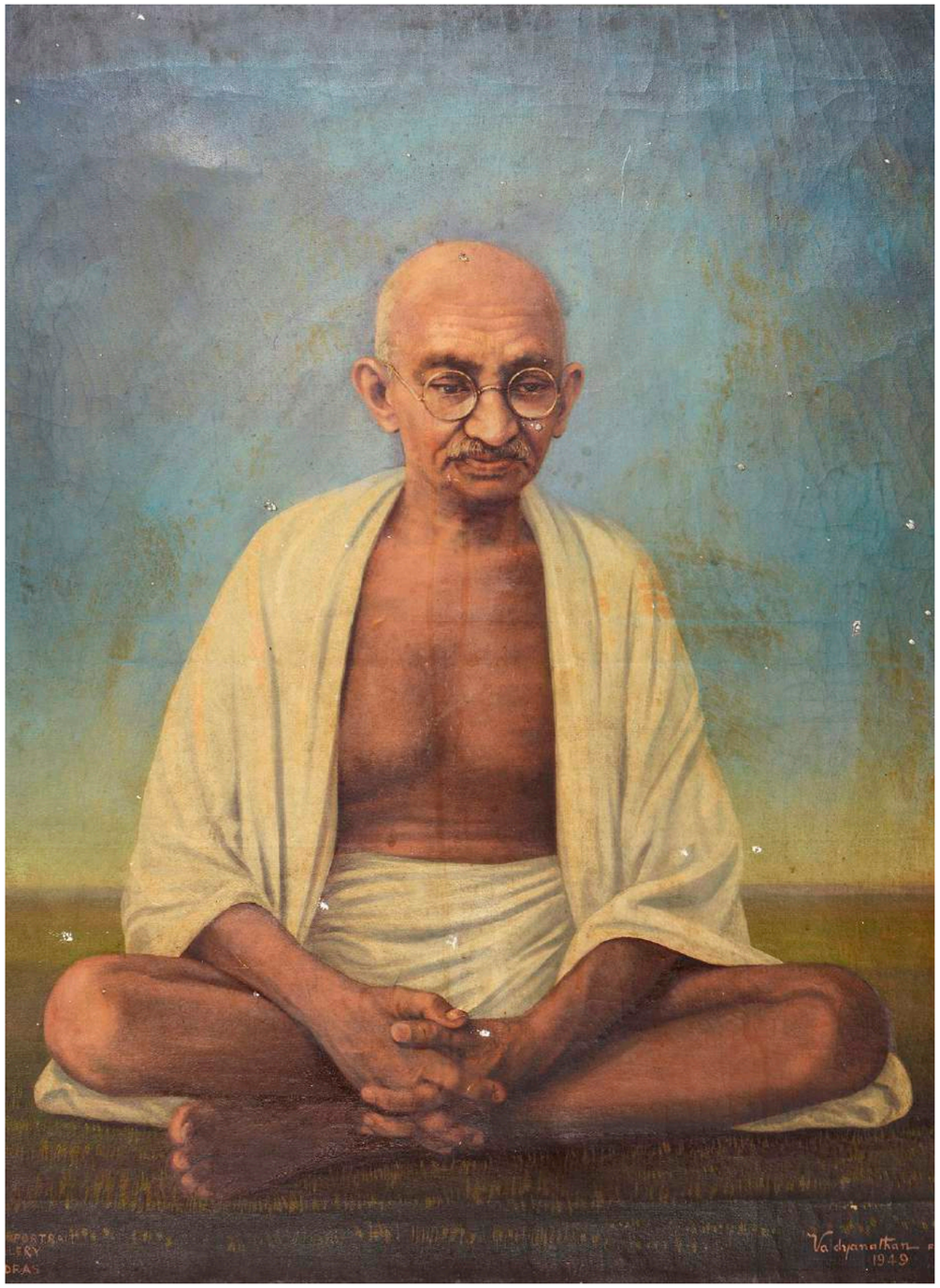


Illustration by Upendra Maharathi



K.V. Vaidyanath, Mahatma Gandhi, Oil on canvas, 99x114.5 cm, AccNo. 145

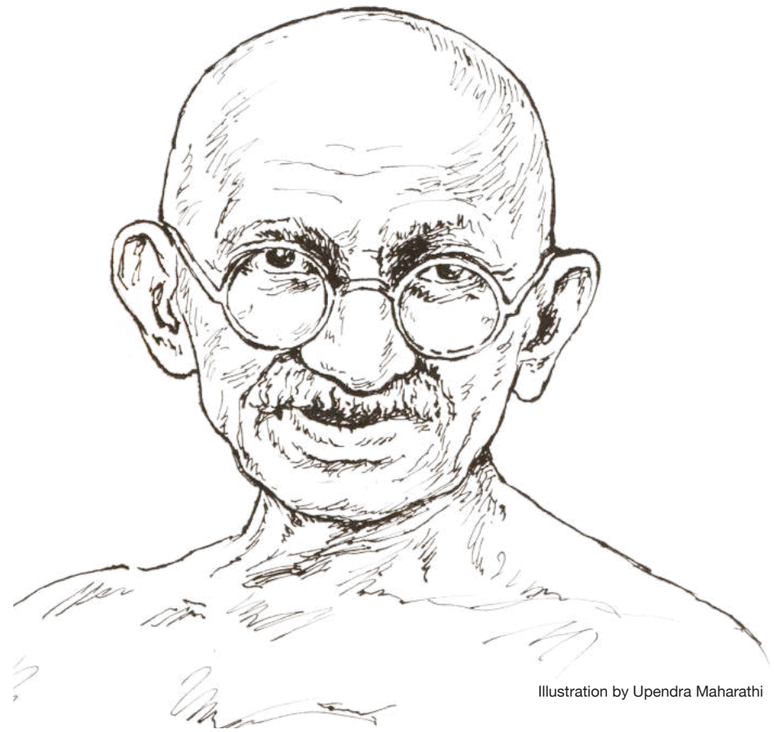


Illustration by Upendra Maharathi

bringing women to the forefront of the struggle. In 1925, Sarojini Naidu was elected president of the Congress, the first Indian woman to hold the position. The non-cooperation movement ended abruptly on 12 February 1922, following the mayhem at Chauri Chaura village in the United Provinces where an agitated mob burnt down a police station.

On 18 March 1922, Gandhi was tried for sedition on account of three politically sensitive articles written for his weekly journal Young India. Pleading guilty in a trial that involved the fundamental issue of obedience to law as against obedience to moral duty, and inviting the judge to inflict on him the severest penalty, he was sentenced to a prison term of six years.

Gandhi saw Swaraj not only as a short-term political goal but a movement for social renewal. He was absent from national politics for several years. During this period he was immersed in the constructive side of nonviolent politics, an essential component of his revolutionary struggle for independence that involved a relentless crusade for the eradication of untouchability, fostering communal harmony, and the promotion of khadi and self-sustaining village industries, national education, gender equity and education in health, hygiene and sanitation. A constructive work program such as this was in many senses the acid test of satyagrahis.

The ashrams founded in Kochrab in 1915 and Sabarmati in 1917 worked as incubation spaces for Gandhi's ideas and experiments, sharply alive to constructive cadences. Some of the most divisive issues were addressed in their serene setting, such as Hindu-Muslim alienation, and the persistence of untouchability. Writing in Young India, he described the practice of untouchability as a blot on Hinduism. He invited an untouchable family to live in the Kochrab ashram. The volatility that followed within and outside did not deter him from adopting their daughter Lakshmi. He spoke and wrote on untouchability more than any other issue, and led a protest against the temple of Vaikom in Travancore which barred untouchables from even walking on the roads leading to it. Several of his young followers were encouraged to live and work in Harijan settlements.

The dietetic experiments begun in his student days in London where he discovered Henry Stephen Salt's book, A Plea for Vegetarianism, continued. He lived on goat's milk, some fruits and raisins, only rarely allowing himself a little self-indulgence. During the Round Table Conference, when he was in London, he stuck to eating a frugal meal of dates, a bowl of sliced tomatoes, celery, grapes, and honey.

While dwelling in the ashram, Gandhi began reflecting on his own engagement with truth. The first chapter of Gandhi's experiments with truth, written as atmakatha at the prompting of a small, still voice speaking from within, was written at the ashram and published in 1925 in Navajivan. The story that

Illustration by Upendra Maharathi

For Gandhi, khadi was the essence of Swadeshi. Margaret Bourke White's 1946 portrait of Gandhi with his cherished charkha in the foreground is evocative of this quintessential Gandhian moment. Explaining the significance of the spinning wheel Gandhi said, 'Each time you draw a thread, say to yourselves – we are drawing the thread of Swaraj. Multiply this picture millionfold and you have freedom knocking at your door'.

unspooled over 166 instalments was evocative and full of reminiscence, the pages illuminated by intimate, warm anecdotes. Written in Gujarati, the English translation followed in Young India.

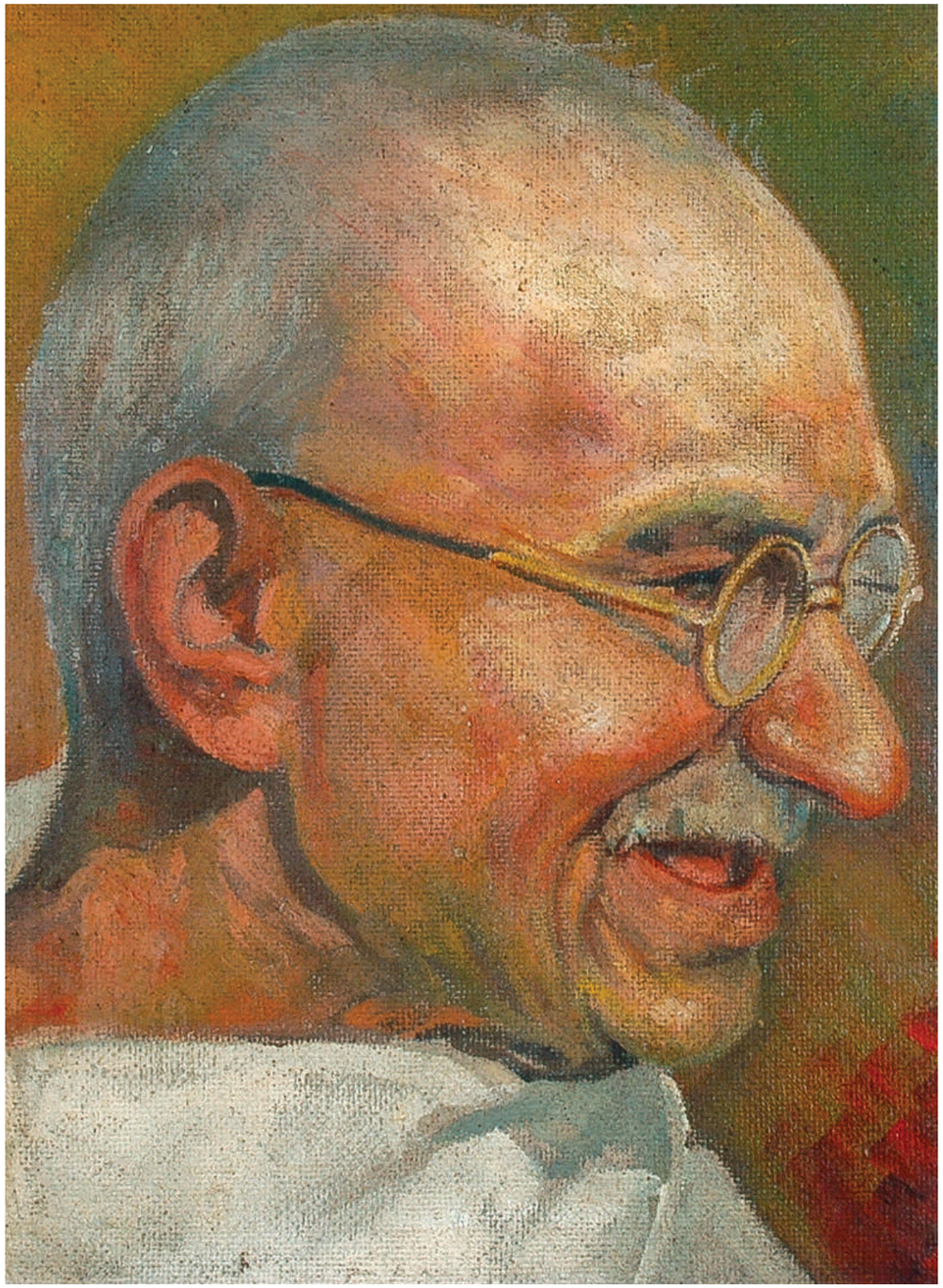
Gandhi's tirade against dehumanising, unfettered industrialisation continued. When asked if he was opposed to all machinery, he said he was not: 'What I object to, is the craze for machinery... I want the concentration of wealth, not in the hands of a few, but in the hands of all. Today machinery only helps a few to ride on the backs of millions. The impetus behind it is not the philanthropy to save labour, but greed.' On the environmental cost of unbridled mechanisation he said, 'If an entire nation of 300 millions took to similar economic exploitation, it would strip the world bare like locusts'.

Gandhi's constructive alternative to colonial education came in the form of Nai Taleem. The revolutionary vision was reflected in his essays on education in Young India: 'I would develop in the child his hands, his brain and his soul. The hands have almost atrophied. The soul has been altogether ignored.' Reflecting upon this further he wrote, 'Our education has to be revolutionised. The brain must be educated through the hand. If I were a poet, I could write poetry on the possibilities of the five fingers… Those who do not train their hands, who go through the ordinary rut of education, lack music in their life.'

In 1937 at a conference in Wardha, he spoke of the need to liberate India from Macaulayian-Brahmanical education, and establish in its place a basic education scheme called Buniyadi Shiksha, with productive manual work at the centre of the school curriculum. Citing the example of a takli or spindle he said, 'The lesson of the takli will be the first lesson of our students through which they will be able to learn a substantial part of the history of cotton, Lancashire and the British empire… When he is asked to count the number of cotton threads on takli and he is asked to report how many did he spin, it becomes possible to acquaint him step by step with a good deal of mathematical knowledge.'

For Gandhi, khadi was the essence of Swadeshi. Margaret Bourke White's 1946 portrait of Gandhi with his cherished charkha in the foreground is evocative of this quintessential Gandhian moment. Explaining the significance of the spinning wheel Gandhi said, 'Each time you draw a thread, say to yourselves – we are drawing the thread of Swaraj. Multiply this picture millionfold and you have freedom knocking at your door'. He was convinced that a commitment to spinning would dissolve the barbed-wire fence

Kulwant Roy, Peshawar NWFP in 1938 , Photograph, 34.5x24 cm, Acc. No. 16591



Upendra Maharathi, *Gandhi,* Oil on board, 33.5 x 40.5 cm, Acc No: 14055

'I am painfully conscious of the fact that a far greater and a far more solid awakening has to take place before we can confidently say that Swaraj is ours for the asking… Any extraneous event may put power into our hands. I would not call that Swaraj of the people'.

separating the elites from the masses and bring dignity to manual labour as a symbol of Swaraj. Freedom fighters began spinning in prisons, homes, trains, public meetings, political rallies and other spaces private and public.

The Khadi fabric, which Jawaharlal Nehru described as the 'livery of freedom', was placed at the centre of the non-cooperation and the civil disobedience movements, resulting in a mass boycott of foreign cloth and the staging of public bonfires to burn these fabrics. The passing of a resolution to promote khadi by the Nagpur session of the Congress in 1920 established, in Gandhi's words, 'a living bond of relationship with the skeleton of India'. The Congress adopted Khadi as its official uniform and placed the image of the spinning wheel at the centre of the first national flag, made from Khadi cloth.

Women played a major role in Gandhi's constructive programme. Saying that the entire khadi movement depended on women, he ensured that women would, independently of men, earn a basic income for survival. The charkha became a symbol of their quest for Swaraj.

Going further, Gandhi always included animals In his commitment to non-violence. In the eyes of every animal he saw the depths of human capacity for emotion. A quote attributed to Gandhi reflects the depth of his compassion: 'The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated. I hold that the more helpless a creature, the more entitled it is to protection by man from the cruelty of man'. His cow protection program included cattle breeding, improvement of the stock, humane treatment of bullocks, and efficient dairies and tanneries.

Satyagraha played out again in 1930 when Gandhi led a march of more than 240 miles from his ashram in Sabarmati to Dandi on the coast of the Arabian Sea. The march followed the passing of the epochal Purna Swaraj Resolution drafted by Jawaharlal Nehru at the Lahore session of the Congress on 19 December 1929. It began on 12 March 1930 with the aim of breaking the salt monopoly law of 1822 that forbade Indians from making their own salt. It was a historic moment of mass civil disobedience. On the morning of April 6, surrounded by several volunteers, Gandhi scooped up natural, unprocessed salt from the sea-shore.

Salt, the most ubiquitous ingredient in food, metamorphosed into the salt of freedom for thousands of women who poured out of their homes to participate in protest marches. Leaders like Sarojini Naidu, Matangini Hazra, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, Mithuben Petit, and Dadabhai Naoroji's granddaughter Perin Captain faced lathi blows while openly defying the law. Salt was manufactured illegally en masse. Gandhi was arrested and sent to Yerawada Prison. After his arrest, on 5 May Sarojini Naidu led the march and raid on the salt works at Dharsana, and in the months that followed women in all three presidencies organised marches to the nearest sea-coast to break the law.

Gandhi did not share the popular conviction that political independence would remove the obstacles in the path of nation-building. He withdrew from the Congress in 1934 to focus on the constructive work programme: 'I am painfully conscious of the fact that a far greater and a far more solid awakening has to take place before we can confidently say that Swaraj is ours for the asking… Any extraneous event may put power into our hands. I would not call that Swaraj of the people'.

After the closure of the Satyagraha Ashram at Sabarmati in 1933, Gandhi and his followers lived at Vinoba Bhave's ashram in Wardha before moving to Sevagram. With generous support from Jamnalal Bajaj, a Bapu kutir was created, surrounded by kutirs for Kasturba, for his secretaries Mahadev Desai and Pyarelal, and others. A small hut was also built for the Sanskrit scholar Parachure Shastri who was suffering from leprosy. Gandhi himself massaged his wounds lovingly with oil. With tender care, his condition improved

Upendra Maharathi, *Fate of three great Men, Gandhi, Buddha, Christ*, Water colour, 16x12 cm, Acc. No. 14028

and he was able to teach Sanskrit to a number of ashram inmates.

Gandhi tried to maximise the potential of khadi at Sevagram, hoping the village would become a model for khadi and village industries. A khadi vidyalaya was created in 1941. His army of trained volunteers promoted khadi products and encouraged the use of earthen pots and pans, handmade paper and local village-grown organic products. He set up tanneries at the ashrams to fabricate ahimsak ashrampatti chappals, which used only the hide of animals that had died a natural death. People from different walks of life came to visit the ashram, walking through knee-deep mud, or using ox-drawn carts.

Following the onset of the Second World War in 1939, Gandhi returned briefly to active politics. His memorable Quit India address was delivered at the Gowalia Tank Maidan in Bombay on 8 August, 1942. Speaking passionately, he looked at the huge crowd that had assembled in the maidan, and said: 'Every one of you who desires freedom and strives for it must be his own guide… I am not going to be satisfied with anything short of freedom. We shall do or die.' He and other prominent leaders were arrested soon after the fiery speech. In the absence of senior leaders, the young activist Aruna Asaf Ali unfurled the Indian flag at the maidan next day.

There was a mass upsurge all over the country. Do or Die was the unifying rallying cry for the civil disobedience movement that lasted from August 1942 to September 1944. Police and railway stations were attacked, telegraph lines were destroyed, the mill workers of Ahmedabad struck work, and parallel governments were set up in places. A strong underground movement was organised by Socialists like Jayaprakash Narayan, Ram Manohar Lohia, Achyut Patwardhan, Sucheta Kripalani and others. Women once again came centre stage. In Assam, Kanaklata Barua, a girl in her teens, and in Bengal 73-year-old Matangini Hazra were shot dead while leading processions. By the time that tumultuous year ended, close to 1,00,000 protesters had been arrested. Incarcerated at the Aga Khan Palace, Gandhi faced two irreparable losses: the death of Mahadev Desai, his secretary for thirty-five years, and of his beloved wife Kasturba, who died just before he was released in May 1944.

Gandhi's final fast against the Raj was initiated in 1943, during his incarceration, and lasted 21 days. He was completely emaciated by the fast, a condition depicted in the artist Dhiren Gandhi's six woodcuts produced at the time. A great-nephew of the Mahatma's, Dhiren had been mentored by Nandalal Bose. The palace has been converted into a memorial, where the work of artists like M.R. Acharekar and S.M. Pandit depicting Gandhi's life and deep engagement with constructive projects can be viewed.

By 1946 the stage was set for political dialogue for the transfer of power. Gandhi, who had worked untiringly for communal harmony, faced the harsh reality of an India divided along religious lines. Village after village was being ravaged by brutal sectarian violence.

He did as much as he could to smother the fire of hatred that had engulfed the nation. He walked barefoot with a small group of followers to the affected villages of Noakhali and Tipperah in Bengal. In rural Bihar too his padyatras covered hundreds of miles. He felt that had set back the clock of independence. When India's hard-won freedom was being celebrated on 15 August 1947, he spent the day praying and fasting in Calcutta, a city ripped apart by violence. His presence seemed to heal the city, in what was nothing less than a miracle. As reported in the London Times, it did what several divisions of troops could not have done.

Mahatma Gandhi's last public fast for the restoration of peace, directed to 'the conscience of all', was initiated in Delhi on 13 January 1948. The method of social protest that he pioneered, and the talisman that powered his life continue to resonate as potent, living, contemporary forces. To all who needed a sense of direction, he proposed the following expedient: 'Recall the face of the poorest and most helpless man [woman] whom you may have seen, and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him [her]. Will he [she] gain anything by it? Will it restore him [her] to a control over his [her] own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to swaraj for the hungry and spiritually starving millions?'

Gandhi lived fearlessly in the shadow of death. On 20 January, when a bomb exploded during his prayer meeting, he pleaded for mercy for the person who had thrown it. Ten days later he was assassinated.

The visual chronicle of a death foretold came in the form of a remarkably prescient painting made by the Polish-British expressionist painter, Feliks Topolski, which shows a blood smeared Gandhi leaning on two young women. An early 1946 iteration of the painting was used as the frontispiece of a book titled Sketches of Gandhi compiled by his son Devadas.

Tributes poured in from all over the world. Musical homage to Gandhi followed in the form of new ragas composed by the maestros Kumar Gandharva, Ravi Shankar and Amjad Ali Khan. Henri Cartier-Bresson's photo-documentation of a nation in mourning brought to light one of the saddest moments in India's history.

No cameras were present at the time of his assassination, but visual artists like Atul Dodiya, S.H. Raza, Krishen Khanna and others addressed the people's collective anguish and sorrow, turning their obituaries into artworks, that were as poignant as words written and spoken.