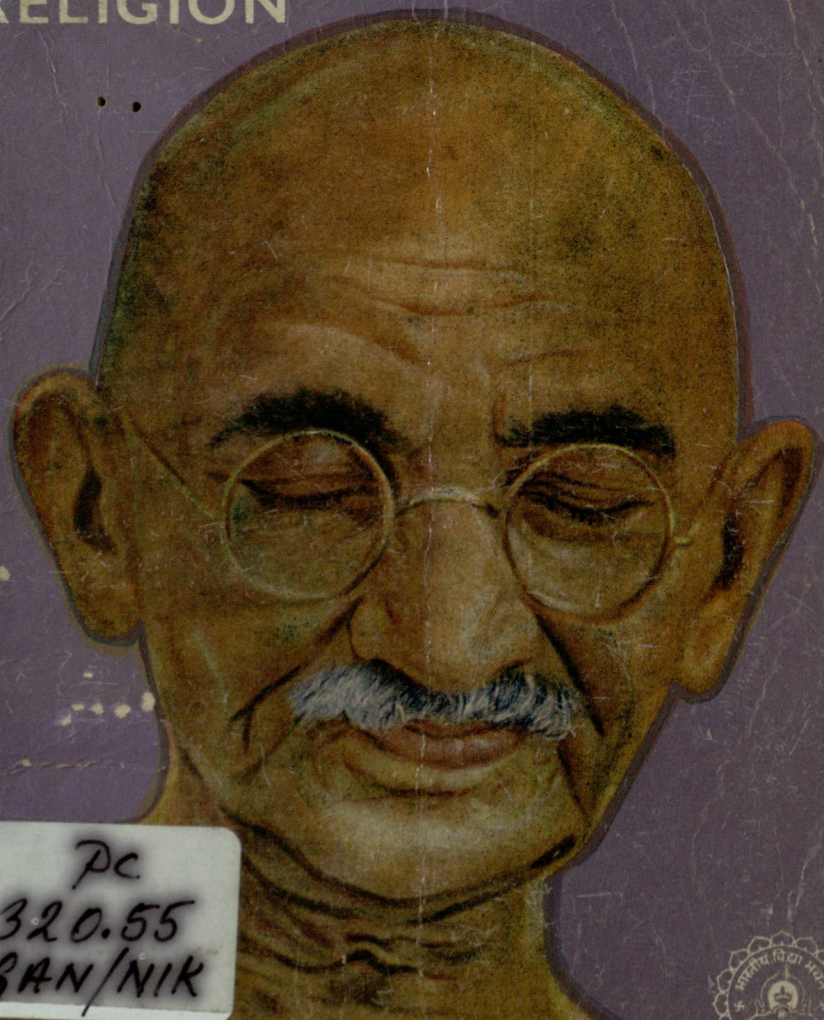


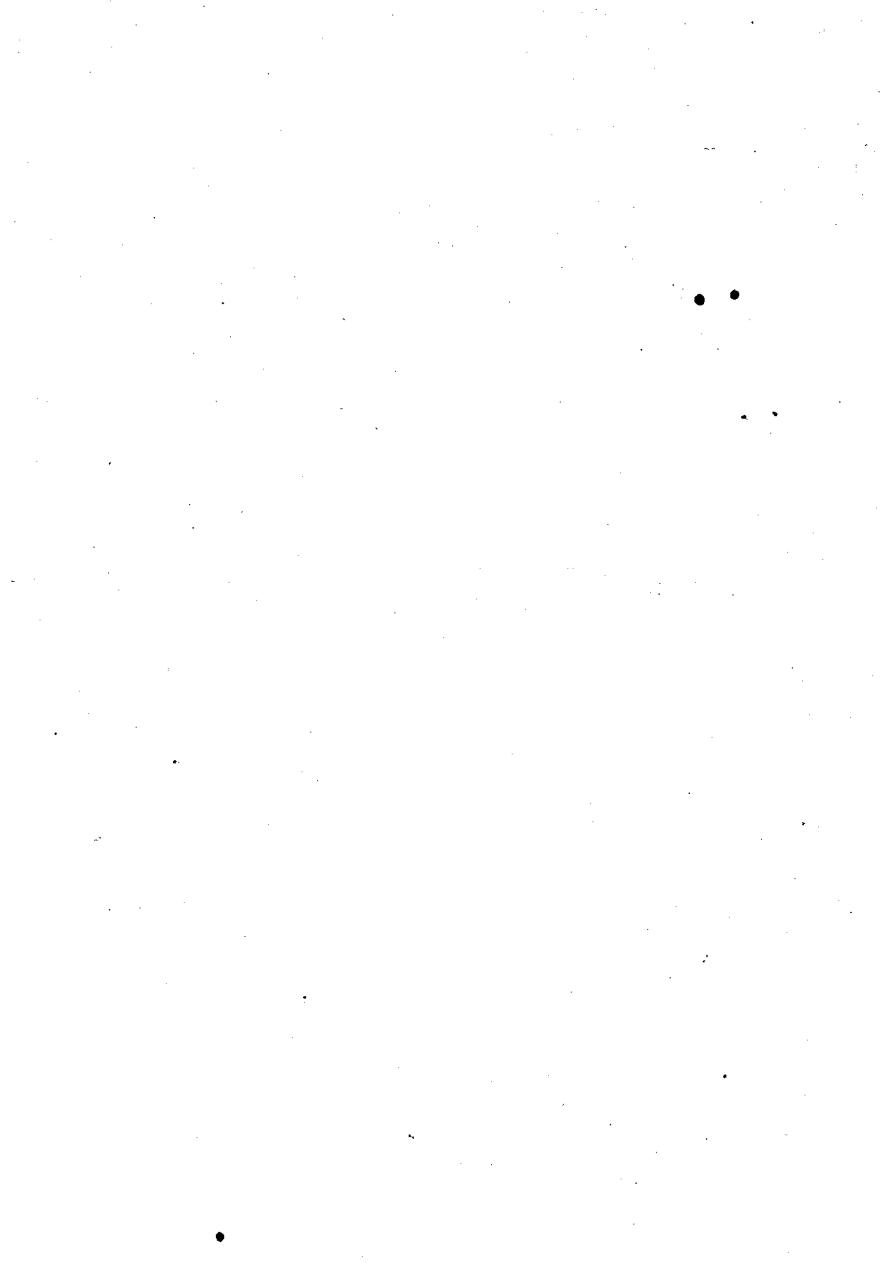
GANDHI'S
DISCOVERY
OF
RELIGION

N.A. Nikam



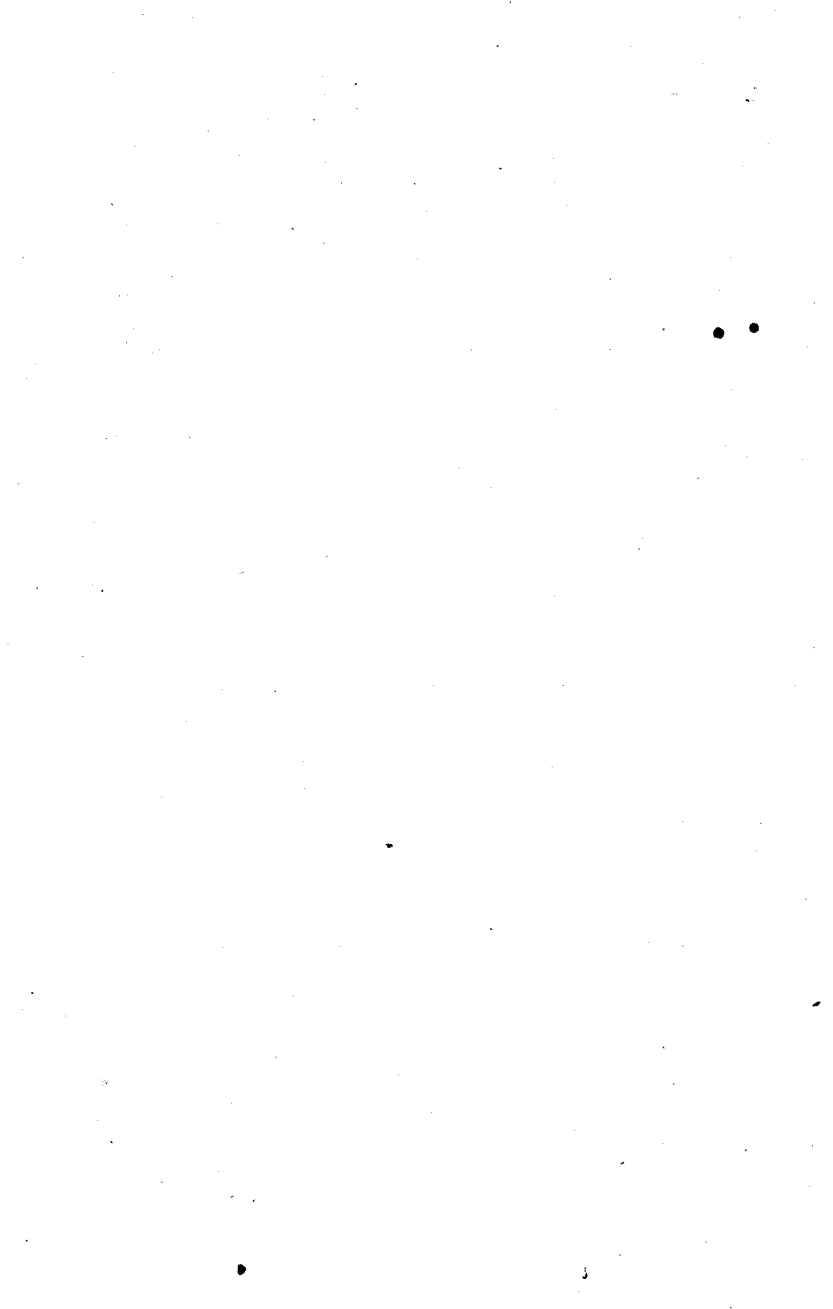
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**GANDHI'S
DISCOVERY OF RELIGION**

A Philosophical Study

BY
N. A. NIKAM



1963

BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN

CHOWPATTY : BOMBAY 7

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FOREWORD

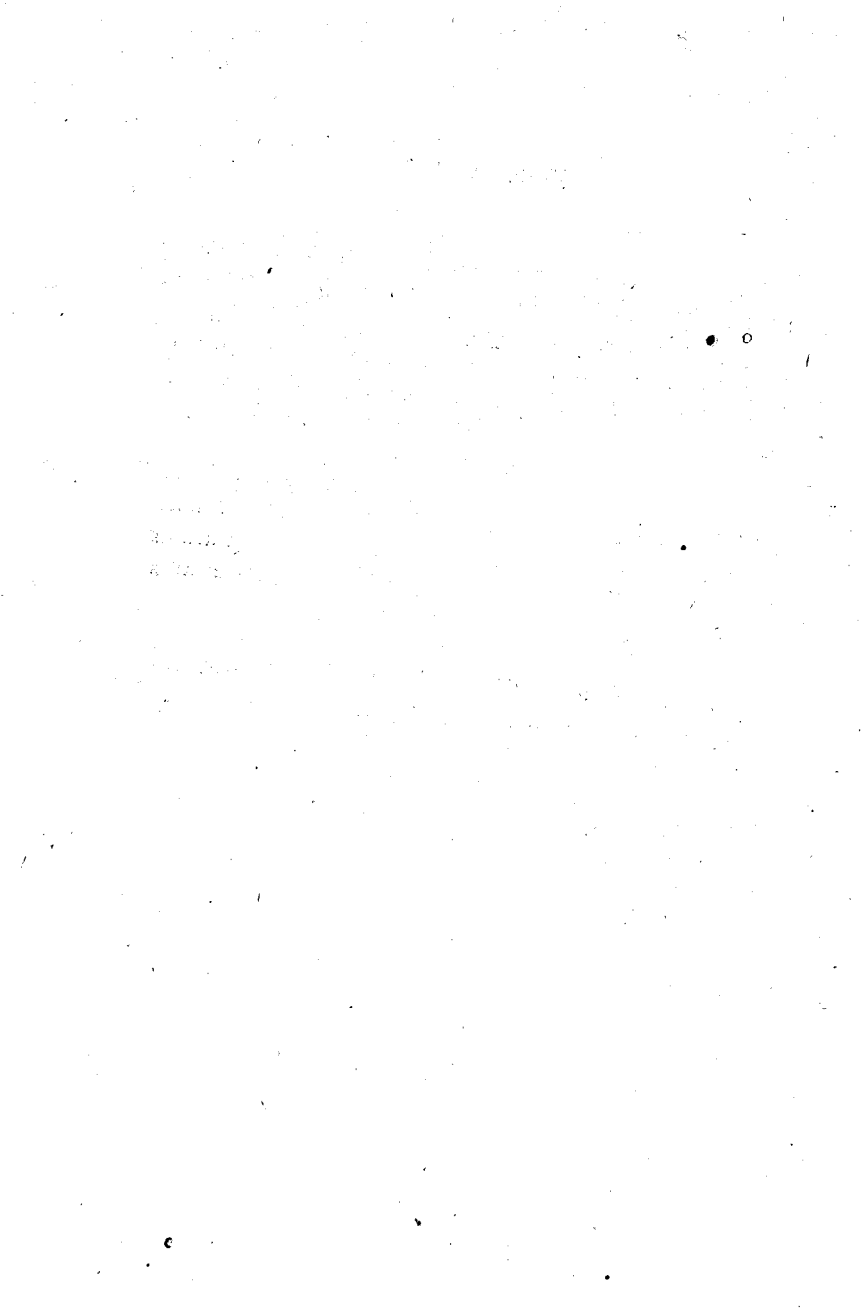
I welcome these three lectures by Professor Nikam, as in the hurried life we lead to-day, Mahatma Gandhi and his philosophy seem to recede further into the distance. A whole generation is growing up who have no knowledge of what Gandhiji meant to this country or how timely his message was.

As I watch the passage of events—political and social—I am struck anew by the universal character of Gandhiji's teachings which apply to situations to-day with the same force they did a quarter of a century ago.

I trust that this little book will find its way into many hands and that people will find time to read and reflect upon its message.

RAJ BHAVAN,
BOMBAY:
11th May 1963.

VIJAYALAKSHMI PANDIT



PREFACE

These three lectures were delivered by me before the All-India P.E.N. Organisation, Bombay, at the gracious invitation of Madame Sophia Wadia, its Founder-Organiser. And they were later repeated before The Indian Institute of World Culture, Bangalore. These lectures are an attempt at a philosophical study and exposition of Mahatma Gandhi's writings.

I am grateful to Her Excellency Madame Vijayalakshmi Pandit, Governor of Maharashtra, for the Foreword. Madame Pandit was pleased to be present to listen to one of the lectures.

I thank Dr. Albert Schweitzer and his Publishers, Messrs. A. & C. Black Ltd., London, for permission to quote from his book, *Indian Thought and its Development*. The Navajivan Trust, Ahmedabad, Publishers of Gandhiji's writings, have been generous enough in giving me permission to quote, so profusely as I have done, from Gandhiji's writings published by the Trust.

It is appropriate that a book on Gandhi should be published by the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, and I acknowledge the help I have received from the Bhavan and its able and efficient Officers.

BANGALORE,
June 14, 1963.

N. A. NIKAM

MEMORANDUM

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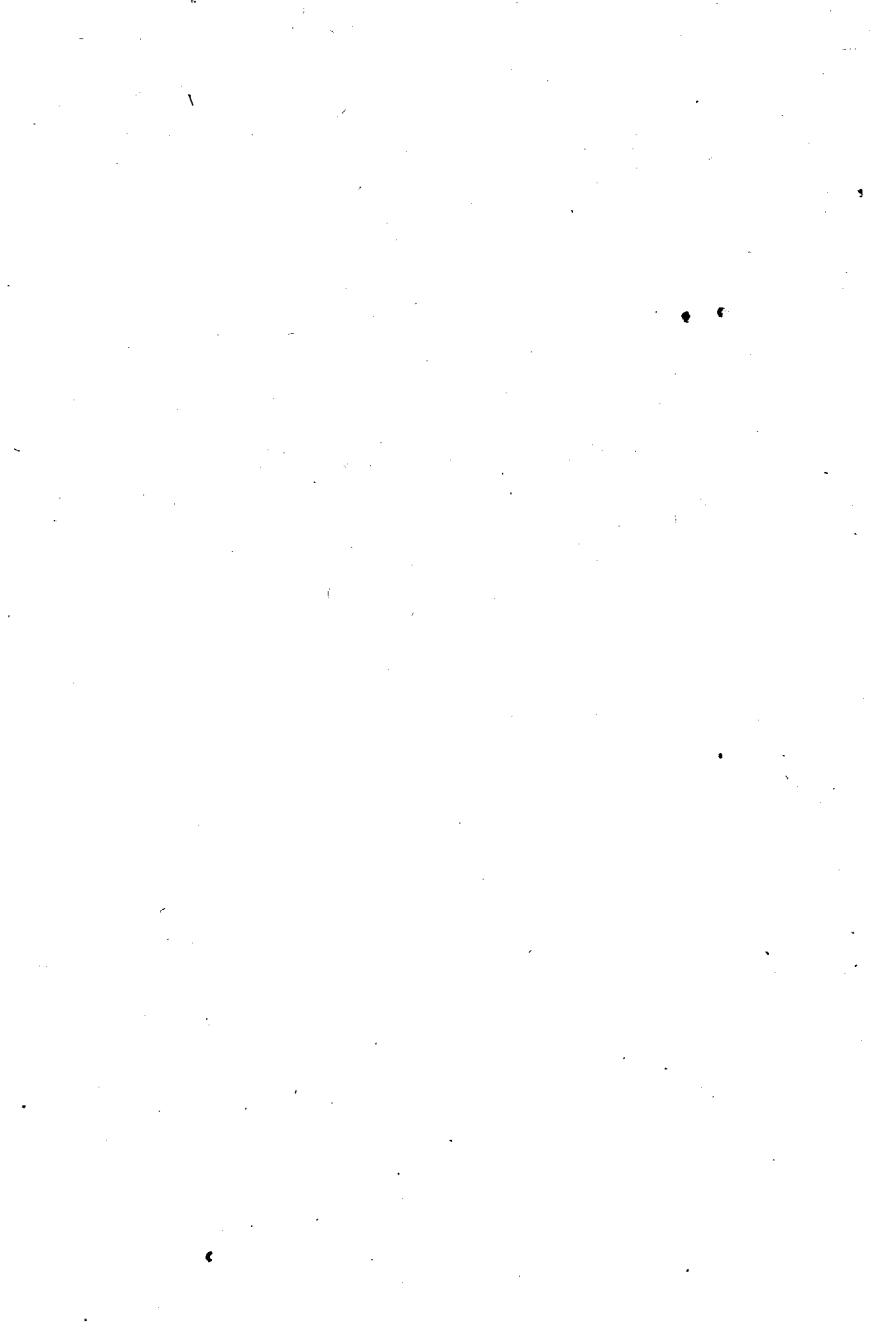
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To

MADAME SOPHIA WADIA



I

GANDHI'S DISCOVERY OF RELIGION

THE Autobiography of Mahatma Gandhi is not a biography among biographies but an epic; it is the open history of the inner struggles of an ethical man. *The Story of My Experiments with Truth* affirms, in all its sufferings, the dignity of the human spirit. Mahatma Gandhi encountered the challenging situations of his life through an inward change, which he brought about within him. He says, he went to South Africa for travel, for finding an escape from the intrigues of Kathiawar and for gaining his livelihood, but found himself in search of God and striving after self-realisation. He refers to a year's stay in Pretoria as a most valuable experience in his life; he discovered, he says, the religious spirit within him become a living force. Gandhi's inward awakening is his religion and his religion is an awakened living. It is the religious spirit awakened within him that was utterly sceptical of the mode of worship in the Kali temple at Calcutta and its animal sacrifice; it was the same awakened religious spirit that was sadly disappointed at the lack of cleanliness in Hindu Temples; and the awakened spirit in him rebelled against untouchability in Hinduism and disapproved giving charity to beggars. To serve religion Gandhi did not abandon the world. His religious spirit had

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TRUTH AND ACTION

Satyagraha is the force of truth, kept alive through action: the truth that man is *spirit*. Truth changes man; it is in the pursuit of truth that Gandhi changed. Lenin said that philosophers only 'interpreted' the world but did not 'change' it. Lenin was wrong because Dialectical Materialism *is* also a philosophy which interprets the world in order to change it. The change which satyagraha brings about in man is through an interpretation of his nature. What is Man? Is he Spirit or Matter? Is he only the Body? How is the world to be changed except by a change in man, who it is that changes the world? New discoveries in the use of new sources of energy, steam, electricity, atomic power, and new tools of production have changed the world, no doubt, but the world is not changed enough, to bring us freedom and security. These values appear to be receding with the progressive, material change of the world. Man is the outcome of natural evolution; natural evolution is the outward change of man in his shape and form; his psycho-physical inheritance is the outcome of long, unknown processes in nature but the competition for 'the struggle for existence', which is the cause and effect of natural evolution, ought to be changed into 'the competition for mutual service', as

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SOCIAL ORDER AND THE TRAINING OF THE SPIRIT

Gandhi had the spirit of a soldier and a revolutionary; he made a new revolution but he was not an anarchist. Gandhi was a teacher; the soldier and the teacher in him had the same goal, to make *new* history. As a soldier, Gandhi was ever ready to fight the battles he never sought, and he stood alone, if necessary. When he was asked whether he was happy, he instantly replied that he was.

“Q: Are you happy? A: Ah! I can answer the question. I am perfectly happy”. Warriors there are many but ‘happy warriors’ are few and Gandhi was a ‘happy warrior.’ He said: “For a fighter, the fight itself is victory for he takes delight in it alone”. (P. 245 *Selections*). Gandhi was a teacher: he taught others by his own example. Gandhi was not like a modern teacher, a teacher of books, but a teacher of men’s minds. The educated mind lives in its own cave and appears to have lost its sense of communication with other minds except through specialised channels and appears to make no impact upon the minds of those whom it educates. Gandhi had a flexible mind and never ceased to learn. He appeared to learn from every body, and probably, therefore, he had the extraordinary knack of having men of opposing

