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PHILOSOPHY, CIVILIZATION  
AND DIALOGUE

N. A. NIKAM

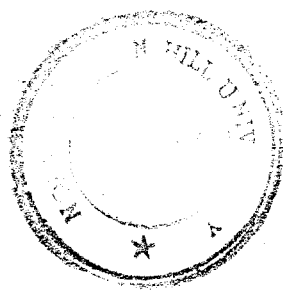
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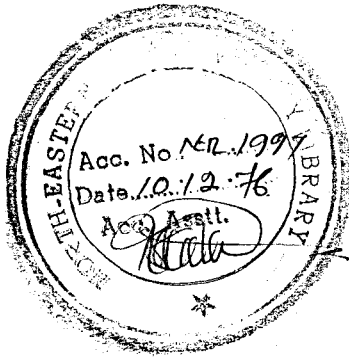
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DEDICATED  
TO MY TEACHER  
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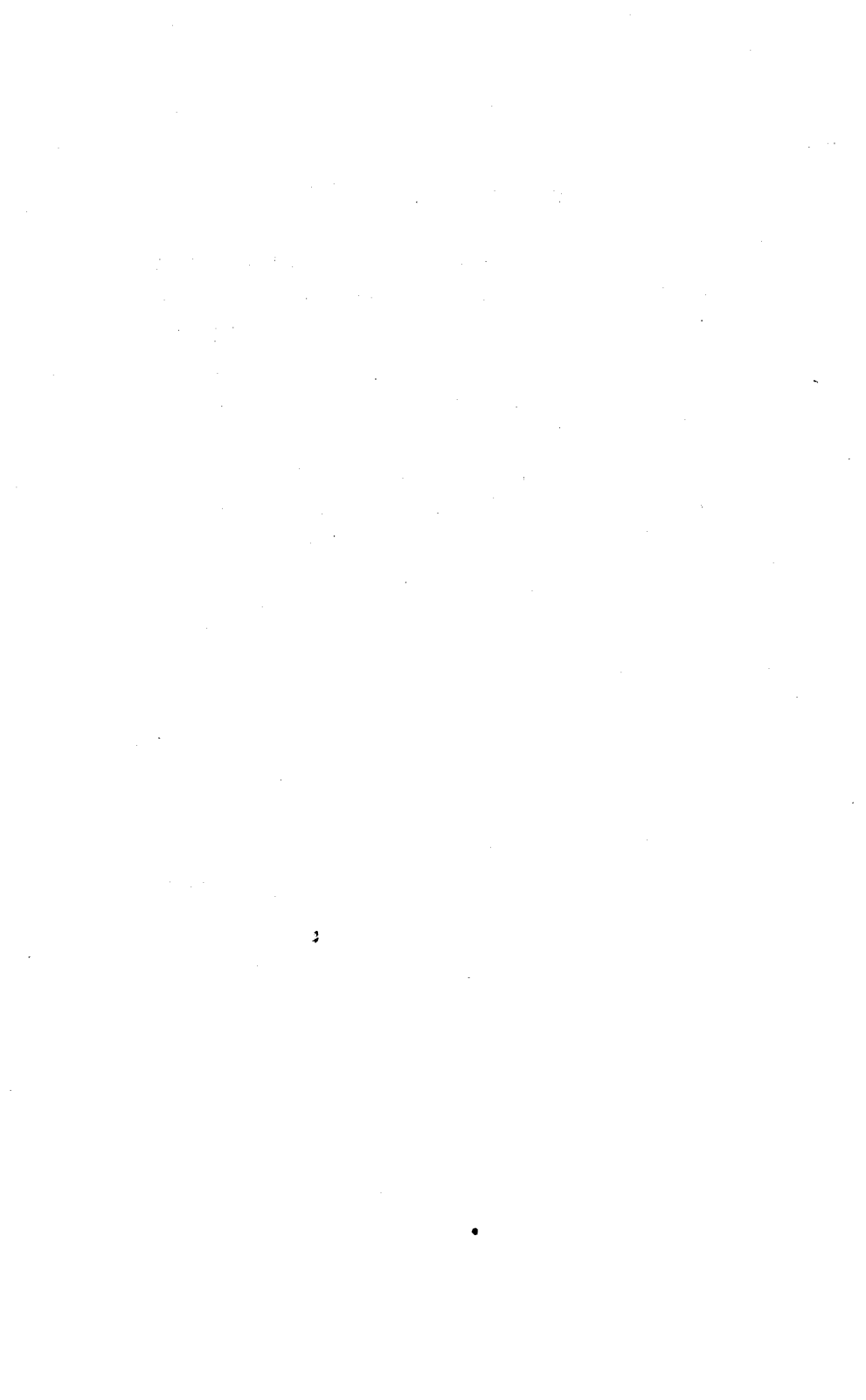


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# PHILOSOPHY, CIVILIZATION AND DIALOGUE

## I

### *The Conquest of Time:*

Plato said that the philosopher is a "spectator" of all time and existence. Although this definition contains the Kantian contradiction of a "completed infinite" yet it is only the philosopher who comprehends time and eternity. The philosopher sees time as the "moving wheel" *pravartitam chkrām* of eternity, has a vision of the Idea of the Good, and knows that the highest is the most inward. The philosopher belongs to an Order, the "Order of Nobodies" as Ananda Coomarswamy says. In this "Order of Nobodies" no one will ask as Ananda Coomarswamy observes "who or what were you in the world"? (*Hinduism and Buddhism* Philosophical Library, New York, p. 30). The philosopher has, in all cultures, a super-social and anonymous status and renounces all rights and obligations. Yet the presence of the philosopher makes a difference to the society to which he no longer belongs. Although the philosopher is a "spectator" and does not "do" anything yet he acts by his "presence." The presence of the philosopher makes an impact upon social order because the philosopher affirms ultimate values and transforms all values. This is true of Socrates; this is true of Gandhi.

Yet the philosopher does not comprehend the eternal truth in its unmanifested eternity but makes the unmanifest truth become manifest. He is not content to say, "God, is in His Heaven and all is right with the world" but "All that moves in this moving world is enveloped by His living presence." The philosopher brings the truth that is beyond Time to descend and dwell in the age and times he lives. It is in this process that cultures arise, ideals become realities, history is meaningful, and philosophy

