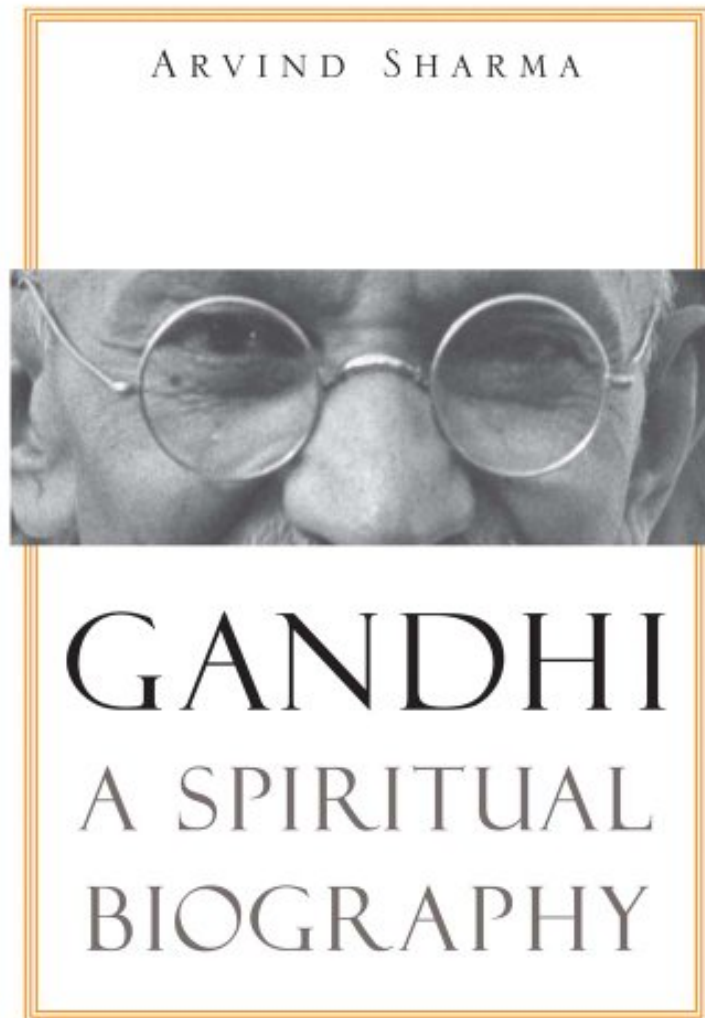


## Gandhi: A Spiritual Biography

Arvind Sharma

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#627492 in Books Yale University Press 2013-07-30 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.25 x .94 x 5.50l, .95 #File Name: 0300185960264 pages | File size: 45.Mb

**Arvind Sharma : Gandhi: A Spiritual Biography** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Gandhi: A Spiritual Biography:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. ESSENTIAL FOR UNDERSTANDING SPIRITUAL-POLITICAL LEADERSHIP By Yehezkel Dror Avant-Garde Politician: Leaders for a New Epoch This book is a good introduction to one of the great unknowns of leadership, namely what makes a spiritual-political leader and how do she or he function and, in some cases, become a major maker of future history, for better or worse. Leaving aside mythical models, however significant, such as Moses, examples from recent history include Martin Luther King and Ayatollah Ruhollah

Khomeini. Gandhi is a most significant positive example, thanks to his highly moral beliefs, in part based on Indian traditions, such as Satyagraha (insistence on truth), love also for one's enemy and efforts to change them for the better, Ahimsa (compassion and not to injure), and especially Satyagraha ("the need to oppose injustice but to oppose it nonviolently" [p. 203], simplified in the widely used term "passive resistance"). These made him an Indian and in some respects even more so a global spiritual leader. Gandhi was also a top political leader of India, formally or by force of his personality, who exerted much influence on the way in which it achieved independence (including the partition between India and Pakistan, which may have been a serious mistake resulting, paradoxically, in a nuclear confrontation which contradicts all that Gandhi believed in). Thus, Gandhi is a prime case of spiritual-political leadership characterized by regarding itself and being widely accepted by followers as having a transcendental basis. This type of leadership is quite different from ideological this-worldly leadership, a distinction underrated by the author who partly compares Gandhi with Churchill, Mao and Stalin (pp. 190-193). Nearly all the study of leadership neglects spiritual-political leaders as a distinct type of the highest importance. Hence the importance of the book and the insights it provides into the spiritual aspects of Gandhi and their development. In addition to its monographic significance, it can also serve as a good starting line for developing a theory of spiritual-political leadership throughout history. This is all the more urgent because the emerging metamorphosis of humanity, as discussed in my recent book, requires spiritual-political leaders of the highest quality. Accordingly I strongly recommend this book to all interested in public leadership, in addition to students of India and its history and of Gandhi. Professor Yehezkel Dror, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, found the following review helpful. Arvind Sharma's book is wonderful and I cannot recommend it enough. By Steve Arvind Sharma's book is wonderful and I cannot recommend it enough. I was nearly moved to tears reading through the first section of the book, because the writing communicated a sense of immediacy that revealed the life of a man whose heart and self-development was so large that he was willing to give his life for others. We've heard of this concept, yet it's greatly touching to be made aware of this. The biographical part of this book was compelling and I learned new facts I had never read before. The sections on Gandhi's relationship to Rajchandra and the Salt March particularly captured my attention. This book sifted out those ideas and ideals from Gandhi's life that inspired him the most and in doing so it took the Mahatma out of the realm of history and made him a man whose thoughts and example can benefit each of us today. Gandhi is presented from a standpoint that his example is not beyond our reach; He had a message to deliver that is very personal and direct. Gandhi was a man who awakened to the call of the spirit, and in so doing he left down markers along the way for all of us.

In his Autobiography, Gandhi wrote, What I want to achieve what I have been striving and pining to achieve these thirty years is self-realization, to see God face to face. . . . All that I do by way of speaking and writing, and all my ventures in the political field, are directed to this same end. While hundreds of biographies and histories have been written about Gandhi (1869-1948), nearly all of them have focused on the national, political, social, economic, educational, ecological, or familial dimensions of his life. Very few, in recounting how Gandhi led his country to political freedom, have viewed his struggle primarily as a search for spiritual liberation. Shifting the focus to the understudied subject of Gandhi's spiritual life, Arvind Sharma retells the story of Gandhi's life through this lens. Illuminating unsuspected dimensions of Gandhi's inner world and uncovering their surprising connections with his outward actions, Sharma explores the eclectic religious atmosphere in which Gandhi was raised, his belief in karma and rebirth, his conviction that morality and religion are synonymous, his attitudes toward tyranny and freedom, and, perhaps most important, the mysterious source of his power to establish new norms of human conduct. This book enlarges our understanding of one of history's most profoundly influential figures, a man whose trust in the power of the spirit helped liberate millions.

Clear and carefully researched, this is not just a book for scholars, but for anyone with a serious interest in the history of our era. Harvey Cox, author of *The Future of Faith*