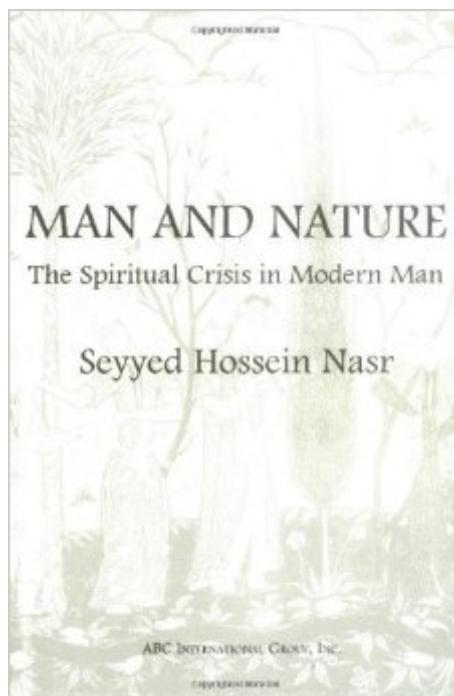


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Man And Nature: The Spiritual Crisis In Modern Man



Synopsis

This work from one of the world's leading Islamic thinkers is a spiritual tour de force which explores the relationship between the human being and nature as found in many religious traditions, particularly its Sufi dimension. The author stresses the importance of a greater awareness of the origins of both the human being and nature as a means of righting the imbalance that exists in our deepest selves and in our environment.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In this short book, Seyyed Hossein Nasr takes a look at the relationship between man and nature and the spiritual crisis that inflicts modern man in his "war against nature". In examining ecological crisis, war, and industrial failure, Nasr argues that modern science has lost touch with the sacred in its applications. Rather than being rooted in the unified outlook of traditional man along with his religious traditions, modern man sees the world through the eyes of a crass materialism, scientism, and positivism. It is this lack of worldview which Nasr believes is the spiritual crisis behind the troubled relationship between man and nature. Nasr begins by examining this problem and explaining how a base scientism has attempted to uproot the understanding of traditional man. In making this comparison, Nasr looks at the alternative philosophies of science, beginning with the positivists and comparing them to the viewpoints of various religious philosophers on the question of science. Here it is necessary to understand the limitations of science, particularly as they apply to its application, which is at the root of the ecological crisis in modern man. Next, Nasr turns to the historical roots of science in Greek and Christian philosophy and theology. Nasr argues that much of

the problem can be found in the neglect to emphasize these historical roots rather than simply glorify modern science. By placing science within its historical framework, it is possible to see exactly how the crisis has come about. Nasr argues that in particular, the breakdown of the Christian tradition and the secularization of science is at fault. Next, Nasr turns to the metaphysical principles that underlie man's understanding of nature.

Seyyed Nasr, takes the reader through history and causes of the desecralization of nature in the west and the resultant ecological crisis we face today. He shows how the west via the divorce of science from spirit has wrecked havoc on our planet. And also how the Christian faith helped accelerate this process when it removed elements of its metaphysical doctrines that kept nature as a part of the divine. In addition he elucidates how some of the philosophical schools of thought help widen the schism between man, nature and the divine. He closes with a chapter what can be done to correct the problem via the resacralization of nature as a reflection of the Creator. Seyyed Nasr main thrust in correcting Christianity's loss of sapiential wisdom or gnosis is to turn to the eastern traditions like Tantra or Taoist alchemy. However considering the animosity that mainstream churches have towards the other spiritual traditions this is not likely to occur for a number of reasons. 1) The Christians who've adopted other methods are considered marginal at best, heretics at worst. Just try promoting yoga at your local highschool and see what happens. A current example would be Thomas Merton. He came closest to what Seyyed Nasr is asking. Still to many Christians he is considered an apostate. 2) Christianity in many instances has been reduced to down to after life fire insurance policy and God being a banker and greengrocer to the elect. Just get 'saved' and that's it. 3) Christian intellectual tradition is so bad nowadays as to be non-existent. So bad it took a devout Moslem to write about what should have been obvious to any Christian leader with a functioning brain.

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