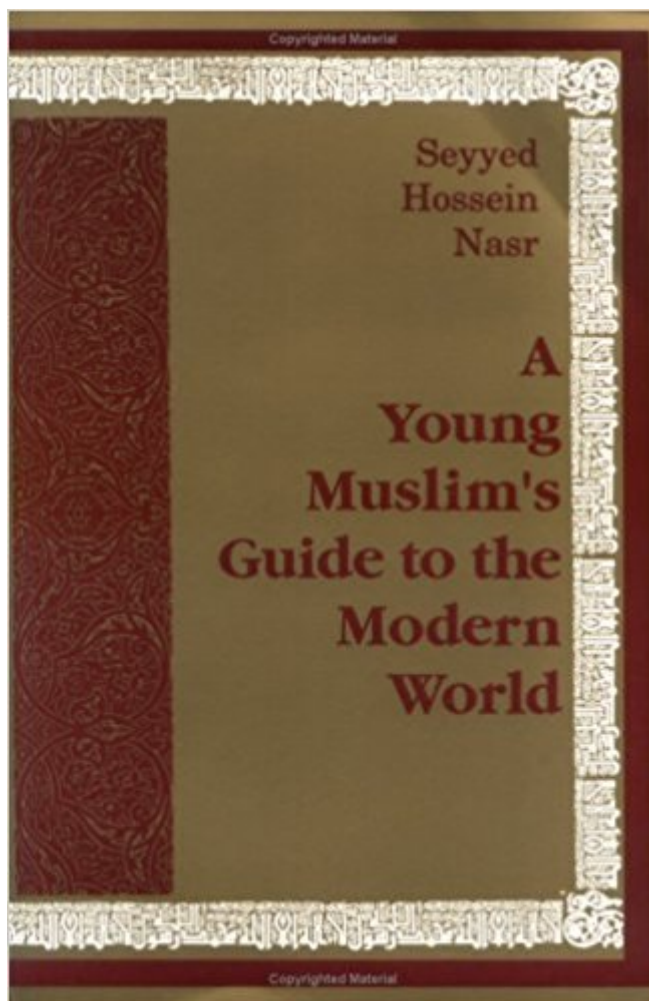


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A Young Muslim's Guide To The Modern World



Synopsis

A Young Muslim's Guide to the Modern World, by one of Islam's greatest contemporary scholars, was written specifically for Muslims, and in particular young Muslims, urging them to become familiar with their religion and to gain an understanding of the modern world from the Islamic point of view in order to respond positively to its challenges. This guide, the first of its kind in any language, presents an exposition of the teachings of Islam as revealed in the Qur'an, explained in the hadith and Sunna of the Prophet and commented upon by Muslim scholars and thinkers, as well as outlining the Western religious and intellectual tradition. --This text refers to the mass market paperback edition of this title

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Reviewed by Robert Siegel of NPR's All Things Considered, the interview with Seyyed Hossein Nasr won the award for the best radio interview of the year. The author says in this brilliant work, The West has produced many orientalist who have studied Islam from their own point of view, but the Islamic world has produced very few occidentalists who can study the various aspects of Western civilization from its science to art, from religion to social behavior, from the Islamic point of view. Through these Muslim maps of the modern intellectual landscape, the author challenges two fronts: young Muslims to become familiar with their religion and cultural roots and to gain an understanding of the modern world from the Islamic point of view. This guide for the Muslim to the modern world the first of its kind in any language presents the eternal truths of Islam as well as Western religious and intellectual tradition as they confront each other in today's world. --Robert Siegel of NPR's All Things Considered

Seyyed Hossein Nasr was born in Tehran in a family of traditional scholars and physicians. After receiving his early education in Iran, he came to America where he studied physics, the history of science and philosophy at MIT and Harvard from which he received his doctorate. Nasr was professor at Tehran University and founder and first president of the Iranian Academy of Philosophy. He is presently University Professor of Islamic Studies at George Washington University.

I know you have heard it before but this book is truly a must read. Especially when there is so much confusion about Islam, this book puts things in context as far as the Islamic view of the West and the West's view of Islam. It is the best book on an introduction to Islam, I always go back to it and reread it.

Good book

Enjoyable reading.

As Nasr openly declares in the foreword, this book is not written in a scholarly fashion. It is mainly for giving a general perspective and show potential directions to the young Muslim in the west. Book consists of three major parts: first talking about what Islam is and the history/culture of Muslim civilization. The second part talks about the western philosophy, art, and social life. Book ends with a short section by giving directions to young Muslim in the west. Coming from a Muslim background, first half of the book was quite boring for me, which is the reason for one missing star. First of all, he was talking about the main points of Islamic sharia and aqidah, on a very superficial manner. Considering the target audience which is quite understandable. Then the book starts talking about the golden era of Islamic science, philosophy, and art. It is good to know all these for looking forward to do the better. However, my impression about mentioning of the golden age by Muslims in general is that, it is being used for boosting the ego of Muslims, or at least make them feel less bad about the Muslim identity that they carry in this day and age. Nasr's narration of these "old good days" was not much different as far as I can say. Given that the book is written for encouraging the young Muslims, this might be tolerable. However, I personally do not like this nationalistic teachings which makes people feel privileged about what their ancestors did in the past. Just a personal point of view though. Also, it is not hard to realize Nasr's pride in the Persian heritage within Islamic

history in his sentences, just a side note. Second half of the book was giving a nice summary of western thought, social/economic/political life and art. Since I am not that much into western philosophy in terms of reading from the original sources, I enjoyed this second part of the book. Finally, Nasr closes the book with some suggestions for the young Muslim that he is addressing. This part was quite short though. This book is ideal for people who want to compare the two worlds, i.e., Islam and the west, on a historical basis, and don't have much of reading in philosophy. However, if you are already familiar with Islamic history and have read a bit of western philosophy, book might be boring at some points.

Seyyed Hossein Nasr "A Young Muslim's Guide to the Modern World" (Kazi, 1994) Picking up a new book (in the sense of not having read before) by Professor Nasr is an experience to be relished, but at the same time one for which you need to brace yourself. Nasr tackles God, Philosophy, Civilization and the crisis of modern man... not exactly holiday reading. His books invariably present the reader with a 'tour de force' of traditional Islamic knowledge as well as an almost frightening breadth of learning spanning the fields of Philosophy, Science, History, the Arts, Education, Politics, Economics and of course Religion. Above all else, perhaps, Professor Nasr's genius lies in his ability to weave together relevant information from seemingly disparate fields to create an organic synthesis simultaneously in accordance with the teachings of Islam and scholastically rigorous enough to present a formidable challenge to the most critical mind. One must also take into consideration his intellectual pedigree, second to none in both the traditional world of Islam, and modern Western learning, presented through his eloquent command of the English language which renders his writing such a joy to read. The book in question is perhaps the ideal entrance for a Muslim reader into the thought of Nasr. Its aim is to at once reaffirm the many aspects of the Islamic 'message' (the first seven chapters) before venturing into a fairly deep, although understandably brief considering the amount of ground covered, analysis of the modern Western world (the next seven chapters) in chapters dealing with Modern Philosophy, Science and Technology and so forth. The fifteenth and final chapter takes the form of an epilogue restating the need for young Muslims to both learn their own tradition deeply and also to learn about the Modern World seriously in order to be able to respond Islamically to the multitude of challenges it poses a follower of tradition. Indeed, Nasr asserts that while the West has produced numerous scholars who study Islam and the Islamic World from their point of view, the Islamic world has produced very few scholars able to study the various aspects of the West (in any depth at least) from the Islamic perspective. So there we have the basic outline of the work, one which is both ambitious and greatly needed at this critical juncture

in history. Professor Nasr is by no means the first Islamic scholar to address the topic of the spiritual welfare of the youth as it is confronted with modernity, however he is certainly the one author whose masterful treatment this issue has needed the most. As he notes, most Islamic critiques of the Modern West are shallow, ill-informed and reactionary, unable to stand up to much serious examination. Nasr characteristically avoids such emotional, simplistic generalisations and presents the reader with the learned, scholarly treatment we have come to expect. The volume touches on so many themes that it is difficult to summarise, leaving one to conclude with a strong recommendation in favour of tracking it down and partaking in its blessings (barakah) for yourself. You may also find yourself turning the final page with a sense of faith and belonging, having rediscovered your prestigious tradition, a sense of sobriety having learnt something of the nature of the problems of modernity but above all a sense of illumination and purpose based upon the Eternal Reality of Divinity. Nasr concludes aptly with a well-known quote from the Noble Quran: "When the Truth comes, falsehood shall fade away." Note: The copy in question is published by Kazi (1994) and while it is adequate, the reader is advised to seek out the edition published by the ITS - The Islamic Texts Society, whose books are always of the highest quality, the Kazi edition lacking especially with regard to the typeface used for the chapter headings.

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