



Modernism and Crisis: Seyyed Hossein Nasr's Idea on Spiritual Intelligence and Its Relevance Today

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Abstract: Modern humans are experiencing various acute crises. Scientific and technological advancements have ironically become a boomerang for humanity, dominating nature and creating a materialistic and hedonistic lifestyle. This study aims to discover Seyyed Hossein Nasr's perspective on spiritual intelligence and the importance of social virtue education in dealing with modern human problems. This qualitative study employs productive interpretation to analyse the data extracted from the main works of Seyyed Hossein Nasr. This study revealed that Nasr's insights shape a fundamental understanding that promotes spiritual awareness within the educational context, encouraging the integration of spiritual values into the social domain. Such integration will create a more just, empathetic, and environmentally conscious society. Nasr's ideas also provide a pathway to address the challenges posed by modernity by returning to spiritual values and adopting a balanced approach to religion and culture.

Contribution: The contribution/urgency that the article gives through this exploration is to shed light on the intricate interplay between spirituality, education, and social values, enriching Nasr's timeless contributions.

Keywords: Seyyed Hossein Nasr; spiritual intelligence; social education; modernism; crisis

Introduction

Since the medieval era, the crucial issue regarding the necessity of faith attaining rationality has been an integral part of the intersection between religion and philosophy, persisting to the present day. Religion, originally a shaper of cultural order, has transformed with rational assumptions accompanied by the advent of materialism and secularism in the realm of existence. This shift has also propelled the emergence of ideas about humanism and anthropocentrism. These ideas have subsequently descended into positivistic and relativistic specifications, significantly altering the conception of revelation from the mythical realm, as it fails to present scientific certainty that is measurable.

In the contemporary discourse on spirituality and education, the profound insights of Seyyed Hossein Nasr have significantly shaped discussions across various circles. This is because modern humans are currently experiencing multiple acute crises, which Nasr attributes to the spiritual turmoil afflicting them.¹ The unbalanced development of Western technology, devoid of esoteric values, has left them battered in the storm. Scientific and technological advancements, once revered, have ironically become a "boomerang" for humanity, unleashing the powerful currents of globalization and information. According to Nasr, science has ultimately become the ruler, dominating nature. Modernity, in essence, is the inception of a materialistic and hedonistic lifestyle within the doctrines of humanism.

The logical consequence of this line of thought is that humans are the primary controllers of the reality of life.² According to Nasr, such an attitude has distorted humanity's most profound nature. For him, the human dimension lies in the relationship between humans and the transcendent world far beyond, so the construction of a vital life must begin with this sacred assumption.³

Practically, Nasr advises those who still care about the harmony of life between humans and nature. First, he urges that humans must be aware of their responsibilities given by God. Humans, with all their advantages over other creatures, should rightly fulfil the trust given by God. Second, as humans, we should not sever the connection between humanity and divinity, as seen in the

¹ Muhammad Junaid Mughal, Muhammad Mumtaz Ali, and Muhammad Tahir, "A Critical Study of the Views of Sayyed Hossein Nasr on the Philosophical Foundation of Islamic Science," *Trames* 26, no. 2 (2022): 141–56, <https://doi.org/10.3176/tr.2022.2.02>.

² Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols, or, How to Philosophize with a Hammer*, Translate (New York: Penguin Classics, 1990), 535.

³ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *In Search of the Sacred* (New York: Sunny Press, 1989), 31.

relationship between humans and nature as a spiritual reality, because the human entity is not only on the physical but also on the spiritual side.⁴

This article delves into spiritual intelligence from Seyyed Hossein Nasr's perspective and explores its relevance to social virtue education.⁵ As the world grapples with multi-faceted challenges, from environmental crises to the need for an ethical framework in education, Nasr's views offer a unique and comprehensive approach rooted in ancient philosophy and Sufism.⁶

While Nasr's contributions are extensive, it is essential to acknowledge the limitations, controversies, or gaps in existing studies. Asfa Widiyanto's investigation into the reception of Nasr's ideas in Indonesia raises considerations of regional variations in the acceptance of his philosophy.⁷ Additionally, Behroozipour's evaluation of Nasr's environmental views highlights the need for awareness to emphasize potential gaps in existing approaches to addressing global sustainability challenges.⁸

In this context, this research aims to contribute to understanding Seyyed Hossein Nasr's perspective on spiritual intelligence and its relevance to social virtue education. By (1) describing Nasr's views on spiritual intelligence, (2) explaining his perspective on social virtue, and (3) discovering the relevance of Nasr's spiritual intelligence to social virtue education, this research aims to enrich scholarly conversations and provide practical insights for educators, policymakers, and researchers. Through this exploration, we hope to illuminate the intricate interplay between spirituality, education, and social values, enriching Nasr's timeless contributions. In the following sections, we will detail

⁴ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "The Spiritual and Religious Dimensions of the Environmental Crisis," *The Ecologist* 30, no. 1 (2000): 18–20.

⁵ Amir Rezaei Nabard and Hasan Bolkhari Ghehi, "Adapting and Analyzing Attitude of Seyyed Hossein Nasr on Art with the Mahmoud Farshchian Works: The Theory of "Transcendental Art Research Paper," *Rahpooye Honar-Ha-Ye Tajassomi* 2, no. 4 (2020): 37–48, <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.29252/rahpooyesoore.5.2.37>.

⁶ Ahmad Sururi, Arqom Kuswanjono, and Agus Himmawan Utomo, "Ecological Sufism Concepts in the Thought of Seyyed Hossein Nasr," *Research, Society and Development* 9, no. 10 (October 2020): 1–24, <https://doi.org/10.33448/rsd-v9i10.8611>.

⁷ Asfa Widiyanto, "The Reception of Seyyed Hossein Nasr's Ideas within the Indonesian Intellectual Landscape," *Studia Islamika* 23, no. 2 (2016): 193–236, <https://doi.org/10.15408/sdi.v23i2.3002>.

⁸ Hossein Behroozipour, "Form, Expression, and Meaning in Persian Miniature Based on the Religious and Mystical Views of Titus Burekhardt and Seyyed Hossein Nasr TT - صورت، بیان و معنا در نگارگری ایران بر پایه دیدگاه‌های دینی و عرفانی تیتوس بوركهارت و سيدحسين نصر," *Richt-Mbp* 3, no. 10 (February 2020): 127–48, <https://doi.org/10.30699/PJAS.3.10.127>.

the nuances of Nasr's spiritual intelligence, unveil his views on social virtue, and examine intersections that reveal the potentially transformative power of integrating spiritual wisdom into education doctrines.

Literature Review

In recent decades, the intersection of spirituality and rationality in modern life has emerged as a critical concern globally, influencing various aspects of society and academia. The contemporary challenges posed by modernity and their profound impact on individuals' social and spiritual behaviours, particularly within Islamic education, have become pressing issues.⁹ This phenomenon prompts exploring the existing body of knowledge and identifying potential solutions that address the intricate interplay between spiritual and rational dimensions.

Numerous studies have contributed significantly to understanding the relationship between spirituality, education, and societal well-being. For instance, research conducted by Eko Asmanto in Sidoarjo emphasizes integrating spiritual values into educational curricula to address ecological crises and promote sustainability through the lens of Islamic ecology.¹⁰ Additionally, Dodi's work advocates for spiritual-based education, underscoring the worshipful nature of educational activities and the integration of spirituality as a normative source of inspiration, aiming to build individuals with a unified foundation of faith and knowledge.¹¹

Furthermore, Seyyed Hossein Nasr's contributions stand out in addressing the challenges of modernity. Nasr's success in integrating spiritual and rational dimensions offers valuable insights into students' contemporary issues in Islamic religious universities in Indonesia. Nasr's multifaceted approach, including his proposed solutions for reintroducing Islamic art in the modern era, further

⁹ Regita Pramesti Adiningsih, Nafik Muthohirin, and Mohammad Nurul Humaidi, "Analysis of Students' Spiritual Humanism through Seyyed Hossein Nasr's Thoughts and Its Implications for Islamic Learning," *Al-Tadzkiyyah: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 14, no. 2 (2023): 230–54, <https://doi.org/dx.doi.org/10.24042/002023141940900>.

¹⁰ Eko Asmanto, Miftakhurrohmat, and Dwi Asmaraati, "The Dialectics of Eco-Spirituality: The Islamic Eco-Theology Perspective on Traditional Shrimp Farmers in the District of Sidoarjo," *Kontesktualita* 31, no. 1 (2016): 1–20.

¹¹ Limas Dodi, "Nilai Spiritualitas Sayyed Hossein Nasr Dalam Manajemen Pendidikan Islam," *Dirasat: Jurnal Manajemen Dan Pendidikan Islam* 4, no. 1 (July 2018): 71–90, <https://doi.org/10.26594/dirasat.v4i1.1198>.

enriches the discourse on spirituality and its manifestation in various aspects of life.¹²

Despite the wealth of knowledge from previous studies, limitations, controversies, and gaps warrant further exploration. This study addresses these gaps and provides a nuanced understanding of the spiritual intelligence perspective, according to Seyyed Hossein Nasr, particularly in its relevance to social morality education. By conducting a phenomenological hermeneutic analysis, this research seeks to uncover the intricacies of Nasr's perspective on spiritual intelligence and its implications for social morality education.

In light of the above, the primary objective of this research is to analyze the perspective of Seyyed Hossein Nasr on spiritual intelligence and its relevance to social morality education. This study aspires to contribute valuable insights to the ongoing discourse on spirituality, education, and societal well-being by applying a phenomenological hermeneutic approach. The subsequent sections will delve into a comprehensive review of relevant literature, methodological considerations, and the findings derived from the analysis.

Method

This research uses a literature review, especially library research. The data collected in this research consists of two elements. The first is primary data, obtained directly by researchers from the source without intermediaries through direct head observation. The authorities in this research are works written by Seyyed Hossein Nasr. Second, secondary data is collected through understanding and studying theories from various research-related literature. This involves searching for and reconstructing information from sources such as books, journals, and existing research. This method answers and articulates the importance of spiritual intelligence in facing social challenges in the modern era. Next, the author uses the content analysis method to find Seyyed Hossein Nasr's views on spiritual intelligence and social purity. The author also uses a phenomenological hermeneutic approach in this research to interpret Seyyed Hosein Nasr's thoughts regarding spiritual intelligence towards social piety education in this era of modernity.

¹² Titin Nurhidayati, "Pemikiran Seyyed Hossein Nasr: Konsep Keindahan Dan Seni Islami Dalam Dunia Pendidikan Islam," *FALASIFA : Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 10, no. 1 (2019): 27–44, <https://doi.org/10.36835/falasifa.v10i1.150>.

Results and Discussion

The Perspective of Spiritual Intelligence by Sayyed Hossein Nasr

Sayyed Hossein Nasr's perspective on spiritual intelligence has given rise to numerous works emanating from his mind's brilliance and prolific output. It would be odd not to classify him among the great thinkers of our time. His thoughts span various disciplines of knowledge and address many issues. To comprehend his ideas fully, an analysis is necessary so that a researcher can unveil the foundations and the structure that shape his thinking. Nasr possesses a paradigm or approach, a theoretical framework, and a specific methodology that collectively forms a structured intellectual framework. This is inseparable from a sense of crisis that renders a thinker restless.¹³

According to Danah Zohar and Ian Marshall, spirituality originates from the Latin word "spiritus," which means the principle that facilitates an organism or from the Latin word "sapientia," signifying wisdom and intelligence.¹⁴ On the other hand, the term "spiritual" is derived from the Latin word "spirit," which comes from "spiritus," meaning breath. Modern terms refer to non-physical inner energy encompassing emotions and character.¹⁵

In the field of education studies, spirituality is viewed more as a process with two phases: firstly, inner growth, and secondly, the manifestation of these internal results in everyday life in the real world.¹⁶ As mentioned by C. Richard Snyder in positive psychology studies, spirituality is defined as the pursuit of the sacred, where the holy is broadly defined as a part of glory. In this context, spirituality is not confined to formal religions like Islam, Christianity, Judaism, etc., but also extends to feminist theology, ecological spirituality, etc. He states:

Spirituality has been studied in positive psychology and defined as the search for "the sacred," where "the sacred" is broadly defined as set apart from the ordinary and worthy of adoration. Spirituality can be sought through traditional organized religions and movements such as feminist theology and ecological spirituality (see Green politics). Spirituality is associated with mental health and managing substance abuse.

¹³ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Pergulatan Sains Dan Spiritual Menuju Paradigma Kosmologi Alternatif* (Yogyakarta: IRCiSoD, 2015), 51.

¹⁴ Danah Zohar and Ian Marshall, *Spiritual Capital: Memberdayakan SC Di Dunia Bisnis*, trans. Helmi Mustofa (Bandung: Mizan, 2005), 115.

¹⁵ Toni Buzan, *Kekuatan ESQ: 10 Langkah Meningkatkan Kecerdasan Emosional Spritual*, trans. Ana Budi Kuswandani (Jakarta: Pustaka Delapratosa, 2005), 7.

¹⁶ Barkathunnisha Abu Bakar et al., "Spirituality and Pedagogy in Tourism Higher Education: Voices of Tourism Educators," *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education* 35, no. 1 (2023): 15–29.

Marital functioning, parenting, and coping. It has been suggested that spirituality also leads to finding purpose and meaning in life.¹⁷

Spirituality has been studied in positive psychology and defined as the pursuit of the "sacred," where the "sacred" is broadly defined as something separated from the ordinary and worthy of respect.¹⁸ Spirituality can be sought through traditional organized religions and movements such as feminist theology and ecological spirituality (see Green Politics). It is associated with mental health, substance abuse management, marital functions, parenting, and coping. It has been suggested that spirituality also leads to finding purpose and meaning in life.

In the context of Islam with its doctrine of *tauḥīd* (Oneness of God), the existence of the highest sacred (the ultimate sacred) is emphasized. God is the unifier of all aspects of individual and group life at the highest level. Therefore, God and His will become the source of a comprehensive experience and, simultaneously, a source of all-encompassing meaning in life. In this field, Nasr's thought focuses on criticizing modern science. His criticism is rooted in concerns about various ecological damages threatening human life on Earth. The issue is linked to science and technology and their applications. According to Nasr, science has deviated from its role and proper applications, resulting in tremendous negative impacts. These consequences stem from separating science and technology from a higher level than their parent and destroying sacred and spiritual values in nature.¹⁹

The meaning of spirituality has evolved in various ways. In educational studies, spirituality is seen more as a process in two phases: first, inner growth, and second, the manifestation of internal change in everyday life in the real world. There are also other dimensions of the meaning of spirituality, as used in Islamic languages. When this term is used, there will always be an understanding of blessings or gifts flowing into the veins of the physical body and into human life when one dedicates oneself to God. Spirituality is also described as a process

¹⁷ Shane J. Lopez, Jennifer Teramoto Pedrotti, and C.R. Snyder, *Positive Psychology*, Third Edit, 2016, 89.

¹⁸ Fadhilah Khunaeni, "Spirituality in the Philosophical Thought of Seyyed Hossein Nasr," *Ulumuna* 20, no. 2 (December 2016): 373–94, <https://doi.org/10.20414/ujis.v20i2.812>.

¹⁹ Nasr, "The Spiritual and Religious Dimensions of the Environmental Crisis."

in two phases: the first on inner growth, and the second on the manifestation of this result daily in the world.²⁰

Hence, it can be concluded that from Nasr's perspective, spiritual intelligence is metaphysical. Nasr then distinguishes human understanding into two types of knowledge: rational and intellection. Knowledge is often regarded solely as rational, discursive, and indirect, but this is not true with intellection. According to Nasr, intellection arises from a distinctive noetic knowledge. St. Thomas and the Scholastics referred to as *intellectus*, known as *nous* in Greek, *buddhi* in Vedanta, *prajna* in Buddhism, and *'aql* in Islam.

Intellect is the source of all knowledge that differentiates between reason and intelligence. According to Nasr, intellect is not just an organ of knowing but the foundation of human existence and the presence of God within human beings that bestows existence in life. As Nasr explains, the true identity of a human being exists at a deeper level than human existence itself. This deeper level is intellect, which serves as the microcosmic center of a human being and a unifying cognitive organ related to intelligence. Intellect is also where the Divine reality resides in both men and women.²¹

Nasr's assertion serves as a starting point to illustrate how the appreciation of spiritual and Islamic essence demonstrates the universality of Islam and its connection to intellectual values. This spiritual universe is defined as "True Islam," meaning Islam is understood as a universal submission to God.

Social Piety from the Perspective of Sayyed Hossein Nasr

Individuals who actively engage in righteous deeds are referred to as honest individuals. Etymologically, the word "righteous" is derived from the Arabic word *ṣāliḥ*, which means to be free from harm or evil. Righteous deeds entail actions or behaviors that do not cause damage or involve destructive elements. Therefore, an honest person is free from harm or inherently wrong things. This pertains to one's behavior and personality, encompassing words, attitudes, actions, thoughts, and feelings.²²

²⁰ Bakar et al., "Spirituality and Pedagogy in Tourism Higher Education: Voices of Tourism Educators."

²¹ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *The Garden of Truth: The Vision and Promise of Sufism, Islam's Mystical Tradition* (California: HarperOne, 2007), 8–9.

²² Welhendri Azwar, "The Resistance of Local Wisdom Towards Radicalism: The Study of The Tarekat Community of West Sumatra, Indonesia," *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities* 26, no. 1 (2018): 75–102, <http://www.pertanika.upm.edu.my/pjssh/browse/regular-issue?article=JSSH-1622-2016>.

From a terminological standpoint, righteous deeds encompass all actions performed consciously and deliberately, driven by mindfulness and remembrance (*zikr*). Remembrance, in a broader sense, involves constantly being aware and connected to Allah at all times and places. Memory can occur within the heart through speech and bodily actions. Vocal remembrance includes reciting phrases such as *subhānallāh*, *alḥamdulillāh*, *lā ilāha illallāh*, and *Allāhu akbar*, and it can also involve reading the Quran. Memory within the heart involves silently reciting these phrases or feeling the presence of Allah while uttering them.²³ In terms of bodily actions, this can be achieved through prayer and expressing gratitude for Allah's blessings by utilizing them for their intended functions or purposes as created by Allah. The alignment of thoughts and remembrance is crucial, as ideas give rise to sound reasoning, and memory gives rise to a pure conscience. By harnessing these two potentials synergistically and in balance, an individual can be motivated to engage in positive, beneficial, and meaningful actions for personal gain and the well-being of others. This includes activities that facilitate others in remaining steadfast in righteousness and goodness.

Sayyed Hossein Nasr's perspective on social piety emanates from the values and teachings of Islam, which advocate for moral integrity and ethics in interactions with fellow human beings and the environment. In his perspective, social piety embodies love and compassion for fellow creatures of God, along with efforts to create a just, cultured, and harmonious society.²⁴ Nasr's perspective on social holiness is grounded in his views on religion, morality, and the purpose of human life within the context of Islam. He emphasizes integrating spiritual values with social actions in daily life. The following are some critical aspects of social piety according to Nasr's perspective:²⁵

- a. **The Balance of Material and Spiritual Worlds: Nasr's Teachings:** Nasr emphasizes the importance of balancing the world's material needs and spiritual aspirations. According to him, social righteousness involves treating the world as a temporary test that must be approached with wisdom and responsibility while consistently prioritizing spiritual values and ethics in all actions.

²³ Suteja, M. Sugeng Sholehuddin, and Irfan Hania, "The Value of Social Care Character Education through Zikir Tarekat Qadiriyyah Wa Naqsyabandiyah," *Edukasia Islamika* 7, no. 1 (July 2, 2022): 78–91, <https://doi.org/10.28918/jei.v7i1.5097>.

²⁴ Sururi, Kuswanjono, and Utomo, "Ecological Sufism Concepts in the Thought of Seyyed Hossein Nasr."

²⁵ Nasr, "The Spiritual and Religious Dimensions of the Environmental Crisis."

- b. **Compassion and Social Justice:** Nasr emphasizes the importance of compassion and justice in social interactions. Social righteousness encompasses paying attention to the weak, advocating for the rights of others, and striving to create a fair and harmonious society.
- c. **Giving and Generosity:** Nasr teaches that social righteousness involves giving and generosity to those in need. This encompasses sharing one's blessings with others and providing assistance to those who are less fortunate.
- d. **Education and Empowerment:** Nasr believes education is the key to developing social righteousness. Providing quality education helps individuals become more aware of their social responsibilities and prepares them to contribute positively to society.
- e. **Ethics in Business and Economics:** Nasr emphasizes the importance of integrity and ethics in business and economics. Social responsibility encompasses fair business practices, avoiding exploitation, and considering the social impact of economic actions.
- f. **Environmental Concern:** Nasr also teaches the importance of preserving the natural environment. Social righteousness encompasses our responsibility to nurture and protect the environment, avoid exploiting natural resources, and respect the creation of God.
- g. **Prayer and Contemplation:** Social righteousness also involves a commitment to spiritual activities such as prayer, meditation, and contemplation. These practices assist individuals in maintaining a solid connection with God and guide their actions with spiritual wisdom. Ibn Fâris analyzed why the Qur'an uses the term '*amal*' to denote an activity. According to him, two words are frequently found in the Arabic language. The first is *i'tamal al-rajul*, meaning someone works for themselves. The second term is *âmil al-rajul*, indicating that someone works for the benefit of others and their interests. Thus, the use of the word '*amal*' in the Qur'an suggests that performing or working is not only directed towards oneself but also for others. This implies that engaging in good deeds is not solely for personal gain but is also done for the benefit of others.

According to Nasr, the function of human righteousness can never be separated from reality and from where humans genuinely originate. This is why

traditional teachings always depict human happiness within awareness and their life according to his pontifical nature, like a bridge between heaven and earth. In the book "The Heart of Islam: Enduring Values for Humanity," Nasr invites us to understand better the essential values in Islam and how these values can bring peace, harmony, and compassion to all of humanity. Nasr demonstrates that Islam is a religion that promotes eternal and relevant values to guide humankind in achieving nobler goals in their lives.²⁶

The Relevance of Sayyed Hossein Nasr's Spiritual Intelligence to Social Virtue Education

Intelligence is one of Allah SWT's great gifts to humanity, setting it apart from other creatures. With intelligence, humans can continuously sustain and enhance their increasingly complex quality of life through continuous thinking and learning. Nasr distinguishes human understanding into two types of knowledge: rational and intellective. Knowledge is often considered rational, discursive, and indirect, but this is not true with intellective knowledge. According to Seyyed Hossein Nasr, intellective knowledge originates from a distinct noetic knowledge known as *'aql*.

For Seyyed Hossein Nasr, intellect is the source of all knowledge that differentiates between reason and intelligence. Intellect is not just an organ for knowing; it is the foundation of human existence and the presence of God within humans that gives them reality in life. Unavoidable philosophical questions about who humans are, where they come from, what humans should do in this world, and where humans will go are fundamental questions that arise in human thinking.

Many dismiss these questions as unimportant, content with answers provided by family, society, or religion. Few individuals genuinely contemplate the question, "Who am I?" Nasr is one of the few who delves deeply into the esoteric meaning of religious wisdom. Nasr states, "How we choose to live in this world, how we act and think, and how we develop various latent possibilities within ourselves entirely depend on the answers we provide for ourselves to the fundamental questions about who we are, as humans live and act for the most part according to the image they have of themselves."²⁷

²⁶ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *The Heart of Islam: Enduring Values for Humanity* (San Francisco: Harper Collins College Publishers, 2004), 27.

²⁷ Nasr, *The Garden of Truth: The Vision and Promise of Sufism, Islam's Mystical Tradition*, 4.

Nasr utilizes Sufism to address the question, "Who am I?" In the Islamic tradition, the Sufi path provides a means to determine the fundamental answer to this question and discover the true identity of humanity. This path takes an individual from the external to the internal, from forgetfulness to remembrance, from selfishness to selflessness, and from falsehood to the garden of truth, where one's true identity can be realized and experienced.

For Nasr, the genuine human identity exists at a deeper level than human existence itself. "This deeper level is intellect; intellect is the center of the human microcosm and the unifying cognitive organ associated with intelligence. The intellect is also where the Divine Reality resides in both men and women."²⁸ According to Nasr, spiritual intelligence can be achieved as follows:

1. Spiritual Intelligence through Understanding of God

Religious traditions place God at the forefront of religious issues. It begins with the affirmation "there is no God but Allah," which is the fundamental foundation. This affirmation encompasses how humans perceive their reality, establishing God in a central position in every action and thought of every individual. The presence of God fills human consciousness at all times.²⁹

As the supreme being, God obliges humanity to act by His provisions. As Nasr opines, "God is the highest, and thus, humans are obligated to determine how they should act based on God's directives." This underscores the significance of aligning one's actions with the divine guidance provided by God. Nasr said:

"It is possible for man to gain knowledge of God and then come to know Him as Reality because of the very nature of human intelligence, which was made to know the Absolute as such. But to gain this knowledge, it is necessary to have access to those twin sources of metaphysical knowledge and certainty, namely revelation and intellection. Moreover, the second is accessible to man in his present state only by the first, while the fruit of wisdom which it bears lies at the heart of revelation, and it also resides at the center of man's being"³⁰

The meaning of Nasr's statement above suggests that humans can acquire knowledge about God and recognize Him as the ultimate reality due to the inherent nature of human intelligence created to comprehend such absolutes. However, to attain this knowledge, it is necessary to have a source of knowledge

²⁸ Nasr, 29–30.

²⁹ Shofiyullah Muzammil, "Mempertimbangkan Kembali Konsep Tentang Tuhan, Manusia, Dan Aql Dalam Filsafat Al-Kindi Dan Seyyed Hossein Nasr," *TAJIDID: Jurnal Ilmu Ushuluddin* 17, no. 1 (2018): 1–26, <https://doi.org/doi.org/10.30631/tjd.v17i1.44>.

³⁰ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *The Need For a Sacred Science* (Paris: Curzon Press, 1993), 5.

and metaphysical certainty, namely revelation and intellect. Furthermore, acquiring this intellect is solely based on revelation. The wisdom it carries is found in that revelation and at the center of human existence.

Monotheistic religious traditions always place divinity in the highest position among other spiritual matters. The initial introduction of Islam to its followers begins with the affirmation, "There is no god but Allah," which is the most fundamental foundation of religion (*taḥīd*). This affirmation formulation encompasses the realm of human perspectives on reality. Thus, the name of God, Allāh, occupies a central position in every action and thought of every Muslim. The presence of God fills the awareness of Muslims at all times.³¹ Therefore, if Nurcholish argues that "True religion or religious attitude (accepted by God) is the attitude of surrender to God (QS.3:19)," the word *al-Islām* can be interpreted as the religion of Islam, that is, the religion brought by Prophet Muhammad SAW. However, it can also be understood more generally, according to its original or generic meaning, as "surrender to God," a spirit of teaching that is a fundamental characteristic of all true religions.³²

Therefore, Nasr explains that every original religion has attempted to provide knowledge about the Unity of God and various aspects of His Infinite Reality. In contrast to other faiths that emphasize specific elements of that Reality, Islam projects and describes to humanity the entire nature of God's teachings, enabling humans to understand it. Nasr tries to explain this in the following sentence:

"Allah SWT, the Supreme Reality, God and Divinity, transcendent and immanent, distant and very close to humans, majestic and merciful. He is Absolute, limitless, and the source of all mercy. He is the origin and end of everything. He is the universe's creator, sustainer, and destroyer, meaning He determines life and death. Everything returns to Him. All the positive qualities we find in the universe, such as beauty, goodness, and power, come from Him, and He is not only the source of the universe but also the source of His qualities".³³

Nasr places all dimensions of the reality of Divinity in a bipolar relationship pattern, where each pole is equal and encompasses the other. Thus,

³¹ Raha Bistara, "Tariqah Dimensi Esoteris Dalam Islam (Studi Pemikiran Sayyed Hossein Nasr)," *Journal of Islamic Civilization* 2, no. 2 (2020): 72–79, <https://doi.org/doi.org/10.33086/jic.v2i2.1704>.

³² Nurcholis Majid, *Islam Doktrin Dan Peradaban: Sebuah Telaah Krisis Tentang Masalah Keimanan, Kemanusiaan, Dan Kemodernan* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1992), 2.

³³ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Knowledge and The Secret* (Edinburgh: Edinburg University Press, 1981), 151–52.

the existential concept of God in Islam overcomes conflicts that appear to be in opposition. In other words, they complement each other in the perfection of His Essence, making the principle of *al-jam' bayn al-adad* (coincidentia oppositorum) the foundation of Nasr's philosophical understanding of the reality of God. According to Nasr, God cannot be understood except by combining two opposing attributes in Him. Nasr explains that *tauḥīd*, which is the core of Islamic revelation, is not only a presupposition of the Divine Reality but also dominates in every expression of it.³⁴

2. Spiritual Intelligence through Understanding the Essence of Humanity

Discourse on the nature of humanity, from the time of ancient Greek civilization to the present, remains continually intriguing. Various approaches have been employed to examine the essence of humanity, ranging from philosophical to multidisciplinary perspectives. However, such discussions are inconclusive due to humans' interconnected roles and functions as subjects and objects. As subjects, humans are the focal point of every life activity, ultimately leading to the realization of their happiness.

Driyakara, in his book "Philosophy of Man," states that humans are beings confronting themselves. Simultaneously, humans are creatures existing and facing the natural order. They are unified with nature but also maintain a distance from it. Humans can observe, have opinions about, and transform and cultivate character. Unlike animals, humans coexist with nature but do not confront it, lacking the ability to improve or attack nature with techniques.³⁵ Driyakara further asserts that humans live and transform themselves within the flow of concrete situations. They not only change but are also changed by these situations, yet remain true to themselves amidst these changes.³⁶

Philosophy has attempted to answer fundamental questions about humanity, resulting in numerous formulations and definitions, including homo sapiens, homo faber, homo economicus, and homo religious. Humans are also defined as rational, symbolic, and educable animals in different expressions. According to Nasr, within nature, one can find sublime works of sacred art

³⁴ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *A Young Muslim's Guide To The Modern World*, Third Edit (Chicago: KAZI Publications, Inc, 2003), 306.

³⁵ Albert Snijders, *Antropologi Filsafat: Manusia Paradoksial Dan Seruan* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2006), 17–18.

³⁶ T. M. Soerjanto Poespowa Rdojo and Alexander Seran, *Filsafat Ilmu Pengetahuan: Hakikat Ilmu Pengetahuan, Kritik Terhadap Postivisme Logis, Serta Implikasinya* (Jakarta: Kompas Media Nusantara, 2016), 9.

created by the Divine, making no human creation comparable to the destruction of nature. Humans should contemplate the spiritual meaning of nature by listening to the Divine call and the celestial music within the tranquillity of nature, a call originating from its origin. At the highest level, the natural world is contemplated as a divine manifestation with metaphysical and spiritual messages. Nature reveals the Creator and various aspects of His nature. Nature warns about the true essence of existence for humans. Thus, preserving nature from the damage caused by humans is a spiritual duty.³⁷

In his essay "Islam, the Contemporary Islamic World and the Environmental Crisis," published in "Islam and Ecology: A Bestowed Trust," Nasr contends that no problem is currently more critical to address than the environmental crisis. Nasr disagrees with Lynn White's perspective on environmental damage, as stated in the article "Historical Roots of our Ecological Crisis," where White attributes the ecological crisis to Christian theology asserting human dominion over nature. Nasr argues that environmental damage did not occur before the Industrial Revolution, and not Christian theology caused it. Religion has doctrines concerning God, humans, and the natural world. In this regard, doctrines are essential knowledge. Nasr also rejects Arnold Toynbee's claim that the responsibility for the environmental crisis lies not with Western civilization starting in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance but with monotheistic traditions.³⁸

Nasr argues that the environmental crisis results from losing the metaphysical dimension in understanding nature. In metaphysics, God has four essential qualities based on the verse Al-Hadid (57:3): "He is the First and the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden, and He knows of all things." This verse can also mean that God encompasses the hidden and the manifest, the center and the circumference of a circle. A religious person sees God as both hidden and manifest, while a non-religious or profane person can only see the outward world. Nasr contends that one characteristic of modern thought is the loss of a sense and awareness of the sacred due to modern humanism, inseparable from secularism.

³⁷ Nasr, *The Need For a Sacred Science*, 30.

³⁸ Nasr, *The Garden of Truth: The Vision and Promise of Sufism, Islam's Mystical Tradition*, 4.

This contradicts the Islamic perspective, where there is no concept of the profane or secular.³⁹

Nasr argues that to address the environmental crisis, a metaphysical understanding of the heavens and the earth regarding the sanctity of the illuminated earth by the heavenly light originating from the Sacred Principle is required. Ethical actions towards the natural world are needed based on knowledge of the natural order and sacred science. It is also necessary to rediscover the laws and principles that govern human ethics towards nature by revealing the relationship between humans and nature, which has now been forgotten. In addition to ethics, religions need to convey the teachings of sacred science that provide an understanding of why other creatures should be treated ethically and how they are related to humans physically, biologically, psychologically, and spiritually. Sacred science reveals how other creatures of God's creation influence the ultimate spiritual goals of humans by how humans interact with them through the task assigned by God to humans as *Khalīfat Allāh*, representatives of God on earth.⁴⁰

The relevance of spiritual intelligence to social virtue education is that spiritual intelligence plays a crucial role in shaping individuals with moral awareness, empathy, and social responsibility. In the context of social virtue education, spiritual intelligence provides a more profound dimension in understanding moral and ethical values, motivating individuals to act to create broader social well-being. Spiritual intelligence enriches social virtue education by providing a solid foundation for moral, ethical, and social growth. Integrating spiritual intelligence helps develop individuals with a deeper understanding of life goals, social responsibility, and the importance of creating a just, empathetic, and sustainable society.

Strategic Implementation of Moral Education for Spiritual Values in Modern Human Life

This subsection discusses strategies to implement moral education to instill spiritual values in contemporary human life. It must be acknowledged that spiritual values play a crucial role in holistically shaping individuals. The discussion revolves around four key points: motivation, habituation,

³⁹ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Traditional Islam in the Modern World* (London: Kegan Paul International Ltd., 1987), 108.

⁴⁰ Sayyed Hossein Nasr, *Religion and the Order of Nature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 223.

exemplification, and internalization. These four strategic elements are essential in establishing a moral foundation that aligns with the complexities of modern life.

First motivation serves as the foundation for effective moral education. This process begins by instilling a deep desire in individuals to embrace ethical principles and spiritual values. Educators can inspire genuine interest in moral development by incorporating relatable real-world scenarios and highlighting the positive impact of moral behavior on personal and social well-being. Motivation is a catalyst, propelling individuals toward conscious and intentional efforts to lead a dignified life. *Second habituation*, the second crucial element, involves cultivating ethical habits through consistent practices. Integrating moral lessons into daily routines and educational curricula helps reinforce positive behaviour patterns. Repetition plays a vital role in embedding moral values into one's character, making virtuous behavior a natural and intuitive part of everyday life. Habituation transforms ethical principles from abstract concepts into ingrained behavior, sustaining the individual's moral compass.

The third strategic point revolves around the power of **exemplification**, where educators and influential figures become living embodiments of moral values. By exemplifying the principles they advocate, leaders and mentors (especially spiritual guides) can inspire each individual under their guidance to emulate dignified behavior. Real-life examples of individuals successfully navigating moral dilemmas significantly contribute to the honest education process. This strategy bridges the gap between theory and practice, making moral values tangible and achievable for everyone striving for excellence and ethical nobility. *Fourth internalization* marks the pinnacle of the strategic process, where individuals absorb and integrate moral values into their core belief system. This profound internal transformation occurs when ethical principles become deeply ingrained, influencing decision-making processes and shaping character. Individuals strengthen their commitment to spiritual values through reflective practices such as meditation, contemplation, and self-assessment. Internalization ensures that moral education goes beyond mere compliance, fostering genuine understanding and personal commitment to a dignified and wholesome life.

By comparing this narrative with previous research, a connection arises with a broader discussion on spirituality, especially in Sufism and Islamic education. The findings related to the strategic implementation of moral education for spiritual values in modern human life align with Dejan's (2021)

exploration of Sufism, which develops the theological doctrine of *tauḥīd*, indicating the complex unity of all existence.⁴¹ Similarly, the concept of religioscape, as elucidated by Seise (2021), reflects the need for a multi-aspect approach in implementing moral education strategies.⁴² This comparison emphasizes the consistency and relevance of the techniques discussed in our research within the broader academic landscape.

The identified strategies—motivation, habituation, exemplification, and internalization—are integral to constructing a solid moral foundation to face contemporary life challenges. Inspiration acts as a catalyst, fostering genuine interest in ethical principles and spiritual values, in line with findings in Sufism studies.⁴³ As an essential element, habituation aligns with integrating counselling principles into Islamic education, emphasising consistent ethical practices.⁴⁴ Exemplary behavior, supported by illustrative individual studies,⁴⁵ becomes a bridge between theory and practice, making moral values tangible and achievable. Internalization is akin to spiritual practice; a profound commitment to spiritual values influences decision-making processes and shapes one's character. These findings collectively contribute to the understanding and strategic application of moral education in cultivating spiritual values in modern life.

The implications related to the strategic implementation of moral education for spiritual values in modern human life extend beyond individual well-being to the ethical framework of society. The holistic approach to moral education outlined in this research not only enhances personal well-being but also contributes to the overall ethical fabric of society. The proposed strategy offers

⁴¹ Dejan Aždajić, “The Doctrine of Tawḥīd and Its Practical Manifestation by a Living Sufi Practitioner,” *Teosofia: Indonesian Journal of Islamic Mysticism* 10, no. 1 (2021): 1–20, <https://doi.org/10.21580/tos.v10i1.7971>.

⁴² Claudia Seise, “Islamic Authority Figures and Their Religioscapes in Indonesia,” *Teosofia: Indonesian Journal of Islamic Mysticism* 10, no. 1 (2021): 37–58, <https://doi.org/10.21580/tos.v10i1.8441>.

⁴³ Aždajić, “The Doctrine of Tawḥīd and Its Practical Manifestation by a Living Sufi Practitioner.”

⁴⁴ Moh Khoerul Anwar, Nur Musyafak, and Zaen Musyrifin, “Chinese Pesantren And China’s Acceptance to Islam a Study on Counseling Spirit in Chinese Pesantren Hu Dengzhou Jingtang Jiaoyu,” *Teosofia: Indonesian Journal of Islamic Mysticism; Vol 8, No 2 (2019)*, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.21580/tos.v8i2.5303>.

⁴⁵ Fabian Gander et al., “Paragons of Character—Character Strengths and Well-being of Moral, Creative, and Religious Exemplars,” *Journal of Personality* n/a, no. n/a (November 21, 2023): 1–14, <https://doi.org/10.1111/jopy.12907>.

a nuanced and customizable framework in the context of diverse discourses in contemporary Sufism and Muhammadiyah reinterpretation of Sufistic values (Muttaqin, 2023). This research advocates for educators, especially mentors, to integrate these strategies to form a moral foundation capable of addressing the challenges faced by the contemporary world, shaping individuals who embody spiritual values in their personal and social interactions.

The strategic implementation of moral education for spiritual values in modern human life requires a multi-aspect approach. Motivation sparks initial interest, habituation instils ethical habits, exemplarity provides real-life models, and internalization ensures deep commitment. By combining these strategic elements, educators (especially mentors) can shape a moral foundation capable of addressing the challenges of the contemporary world, moulding individuals who embody spiritual values in their personal and social interactions. This holistic approach not only enhances individual well-being but also contributes to the overall ethical framework of society.

Conclusion

The implications of Nasr's spiritual intelligence on social morality education are significant. Nasr's insights shape a fundamental understanding that facilitates spiritual awareness within the educational context, encouraging the integration of spiritual values into the social structure. This integration can create a more just, empathetic, and environmentally conscious society. Nasr's ideas also provide a pathway to address the challenges posed by modernity by returning to spiritual values and adopting a balanced approach to religion and culture, as demonstrated in previous research. Acknowledging the limitations of this study, it is essential to recognize that the exploration of Seyyed Hossein Nasr's perspectives is not exhaustive. Further research could delve deeper into specific aspects or broaden the scope to include diverse cultural and religious contexts, enriching the understanding of spiritual intelligence and its implications for educating social truths. Based on these findings, recommendations for future research include exploring the practical application of Nasr's spiritual intelligence in educational environments, developing a curriculum framework that integrates spiritual values, and assessing the long-term impact of such integration on individuals and society. This research direction can provide valuable insights into promoting holistic development in education and culture.

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S. reviews the article, provides analysis, and formulates the methodology. S.B.H. writes the initial draft, edits, and curates the data. I.H. performs validation and identifies resources. Q.M. manages the collected data.

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