

FEATURED TITLE

THE PERFECTIBILITY OF HUMAN NATURE IN EASTERN AND WESTERN THOUGHT

HAROLD COWARD

Explores the issue of the perfectibility of nature in philosophy, psychology, and a variety of world religions.

How perfectible is human nature as understood in Eastern and Western philosophy, psychology, and religion? Harold Coward examines some of the very different answers to this question. He poses that in Western thought, including philosophy, psychology, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, human nature is often understood as finite, flawed, and not perfectible—in religion requiring God's grace and the afterlife to reach the goal. By contrast, Eastern thought arising in India frequently sees human nature to be perfectible and presumes that we will be reborn until we realize the goal—the various yoga psychologies, philosophies, and religions of Hinduism and Buddhism being the paths by which one may perfect oneself and realize release from rebirth. Coward uses the striking differences in the assessment of how perfectible human nature is as the comparative focus for this book.

“Coward has found the most useful question to ask in order to enhance the reader's understanding of the clear differences between Eastern and Western philosophies and religions. In pursuing the notion of ‘perfectibility’ through Western philosophy, psychology, and religions, and Eastern philosophies and religions—a task he is eminently qualified to do—he brings a vast body of material into a manageable frame. By his choice of focus and his brilliant examination of this question through many traditions, he brings forth a new distinct point of view.”
— Robert M. Garvin, University at Albany, State University of New York

HAROLD COWARD is Professor Emeritus of History and Founding Director of the Centre for Studies in Religion and Society at the University of Victoria. He is the author and editor of many books, including *Religion and Peacebuilding* (with Gordon S. Smith) and *Yoga and Psychology: Language, Memory, and Mysticism*, both also published by SUNY Press.

A volume in the SUNY series in Religious Studies
Harold Coward, editor

FEBRUARY • 224 pp.
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CONTEMPORARY ISLAMIC CONVERSATIONS

M. Fethullah Gülen on Turkey, Islam, and the West

NEVAL SEVINDI

EDITED AND WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

IBRAHIM M. ABU-RABI^c

TRANSLATED BY

ABDULLAH T. ANTEPLI

Discusses the ideas of the most important living Muslim thinker and leader in contemporary Turkey.

Contemporary Islamic Conversations discusses the ideas of Turkey's most significant Muslim figure, M. Fethullah Gülen. Originally published in Turkish by Neval Sevindi, one of Turkey's top journalists, this edited translation makes Gülen's work and ideas accessible to the English-speaking world for the first time. It includes interviews conducted by the author with Gülen, who has been living in self-imposed exile in the United States since 1999. The book explores his ideas regarding Islam and the West, Islam and violence, and religion and the future of the nation-state in Turkey and the Muslim world.

Gülen has worked hard to revive the religious tradition of the Turkish theologian Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (1877–1960), and while his debt to Nursi's ideas is clear, he has a passionate interest in Islamic theology and Arabic and Turkish literature, and is also deeply interested in poetry, philosophy, sociology, and the classics in general. Gülen offers a moderate perspective on Islam, is open to interfaith and intercivilizational dialogue, and defends a notion of Islam in which Muslims are able to fully engage the world without any fear or prejudice. His community of followers has opened 500 high schools around the world, including the United States, and also owns seven universities in Central Asia and Turkey.

NEVAL SEVINDI writes for the daily *Zaman* and is based in Istanbul, Turkey. At the Hartford Seminary in Connecticut, **IBRAHIM M. ABU-RABI^c** is Professor of Islamic Studies and Christian-Muslim Relations, and **ABDULLAH T. ANTEPLI** is the Coordinator of Islamic Chaplaincy and Interfaith Relations. Abu-Rabi^c is the editor of several books, including *Islam at the Crossroads: On the Life and Thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* and *Islam in Modern Turkey: An Intellectual Biography of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, both also published by SUNY Press.

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SINGING KRISHNA

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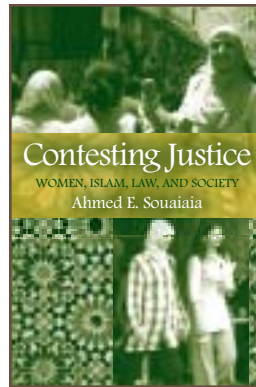
saints, whose poetry has been sung from the sixteenth century to the present in ritual service to the Hindu deity Krishna.

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A. WHITNEY SANFORD is Assistant Professor of Religion at the University of Florida.

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AHMED E. SOUAIAIA is Assistant Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Iowa and the author of *The Function of Orality in Islamic Law and Practices: Verbalizing Meaning*.

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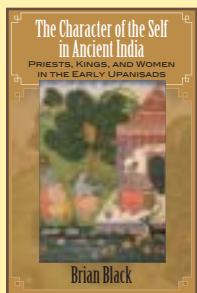
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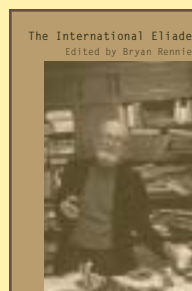
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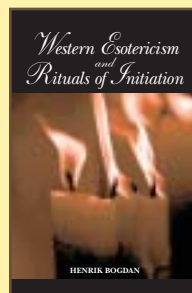
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