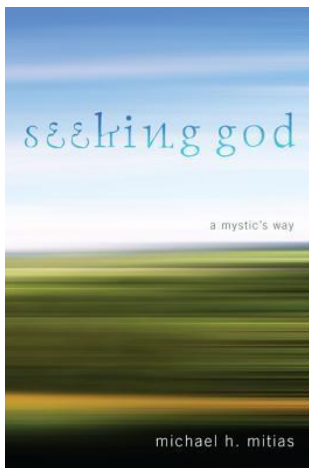


Michael H. Mittias



Review

## Seeking God. A Mystic's Way

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Reviewed by Daniel Munteanu

In his book „Seeking God. A mystic's way“ Michael H. Mitias, Emeritus Professor of Philosophy, invites us to a spiritual journey through the Syrian Desert as place of cosmic encounter with God. This book is full of dynamism not only because of the description of a real adventure in the dessert. It is first



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of all an expression of a vivid experience of God as „mystery of infinite abundance, grace, and power“ (1). The meaning and beauty of this *experience of union with God* is presented in a dialogue between a philosopher, a Sufi, and a Christian monk in the Syrian Desert.

Very impressive is the language of this mystical and cosmic experience, that might be understood as a contribution to a contemporary *mystical ecotheology*: „The Eternal reveals itself (...) in every element of reality“ (4). The author reflects on creation as revelation of God’s power and wisdom: „The coming into being of something that did not exist before is really miraculous, and perhaps the miracle of all miracles“ (46).

In his search of spiritual experience the author explores at the same time the spiritual *culture of attention*, based on experience of beauty and mystery. God is experienced in this journey into desert as „treasure of beauty, mystery, and life“ (8). By reading this book one can feel the meaning of solidarity with God’s entire creations. On the other hand each mystical experience should be understood as a sort of *human enhancement*, because it „expands the horizon of the mind, magnifies the capacities of feeling, and enhances the sense of appreciating beauty, truth and goodness“ (8).

As far as I can see this book contributes to a *mystical understanding of the world*. Our cosmos is full of divine beauty and light. We can make the experience of the divine in our own limited history, by listening carefully the voice of nature as well as that of our neighbours.

As a matter of fact one could read this book also as an *encounter of cultures*, as a contribution to a culture of dialogue with God, and with people of different religions.

Michael H. Mitias describes at the same time the efforts that are necessary in this mystical journey of „catharsis“ or enlightenment (33). The mystical way is full of adventures, of surprises, of insights. God transcends by his presence „any category of intellectual or logical discourse“ (22).

A *mystical worldview* involves always a correction of a technocratic and secularized society. The autor underlines often the meaning of family, of hospitality (24f). This reminds me of the orthodox concept of *phylo xenia* – love of the foreigners – expressed so wonderful in the classic icon of the Holy Trinity. Mitias speaks also about a *spirituality of the heart*. Each human heart should become cultivated by reason and love in order to shine „truth, goodness, beauty, and holiness“ (25).

One can find in this book *treasures of wisdom* expressed with *linguistic accuracy* and in an accessible way. For instance the dialogical understanding of truth or of the human being: „any meaningful experience, be it natural, social, intellectual, emotional, political, aesthetic, or religious, is dialogical nature. It involves an active, interactive, and productive synthesis between what is experienced and the mind of the person who undergoes the experience. I am inclined to think that this kind of synthesis represents an essential dimension of human growth“ (31).

Very impressive are also Mitias' remarks on education: „In every activity of learning a new dimension of humanity is born. This is the essence of human growth“ (140). „The mind grows inasmuch as it grows in its comprehension of the infinite diversity of meanings implicit in our experience of the human and natural worlds: scientific, aesthetic, religious, political, educational, and cultural“ (138).

For Mitias God transcends all human languages and each kind of „linguistic communication“ (33). The human being achieves its true vocation and fulfillment by leaving ecstatic, with a transformed, purified heart, i.e. made transparent by the beauty and infinite light of God.

„Seeking of God. A mystic's way“ is a fascinating book that contributes to a contemporary *spirituality of interreligious dialogue*. Our pluralist and secular society needs such a spirituality in order to overcome violence, arrogance, self-sufficiency. The mystical experience of the divine (in this book described not as eternal Trinity of Fathers, Son and Holy Spirit,

but rather as the Eternal or the Ultimate), i.e. as experience beyond ideologies might build a *bridge of dialogue and solidarity between people of different religions and cultures.*