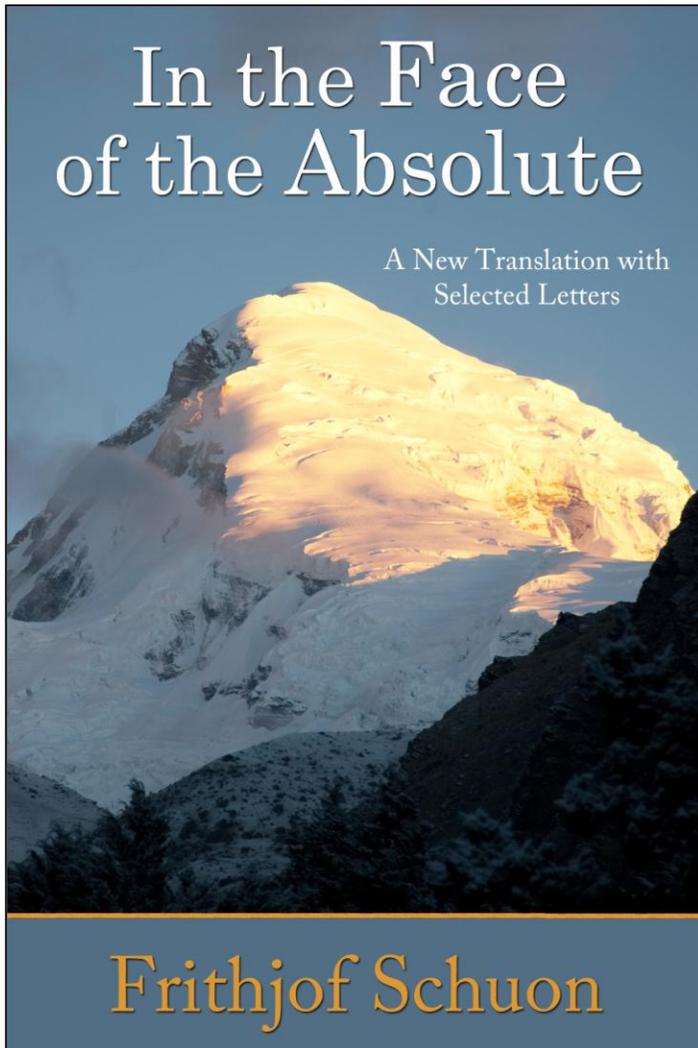


In the Face of the Absolute: *A New Translation with Selected Letters*

By Frithjof Schuon

Edited by Harry Oldmeadow



In this new edition of his masterful work, Perennialist author Frithjof Schuon provides insightful answers to age-old religious and philosophical questions such as predestination and free will, the reason for evil, and the meaning of eternity in heaven and hell.

This Book Features

- ❖ 60 pages of completely new material, including a fully revised translation from the French original
- ❖ previously unpublished selections from Schuon's letters and other private writings
- ❖ editor's notes by Harry Oldmeadow which help to explain and annotate various key terms, references, and historical figures mentioned in the text
- ❖ a glossary of foreign terms and phrases, and an index

Publication Details

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Praise for *In the Face of the Absolute*

“This book is, indeed, a serious challenge to the ‘modern spirit,’ whose ‘ideas no longer bite.’ Highly recommended for all who seek an understanding of the ‘traditional spirit.’”
—*Choice Magazine*

“If there is any body of writings . . . that speak so directly to our contemporary spiritual condition, it is the writings of Frithjof Schuon. . . . *In the Face of the Absolute* is yet further confirmation that a voice is crying in our wilderness which we ignore at our peril.”
—James Burnell Robinson, University of Northern Iowa, author of *Hinduism*

“Schuon’s latest opus is once again concerned with the central issues of religion . . . discussing some of the most difficult aspects of the theology of the two religions [of Christianity and Islam] and ending with one of the most important essays of the author on Islamic esoterism dealing with the mystery of the spiritual substance of the Prophet.”
—Seyyed Hossein Nasr, The George Washington University, editor of *The Essential Frithjof Schuon*

“Schuon has a fascinating ability to look at how things are spiritually relevant to us here and now. . . . The universality of [his] perspective at the level of ideas is matched by a remarkable breadth of applications. Thus it is not surprising that his books are reviewed and appreciated by a wide range of serious readers. . . . *In the Face of the Absolute* is prime Schuon. His knowledge of Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, is holy.”
—*The Reader’s Review*

“Once again Frithjof Schuon treats of the nature and necessity of the religions as well as the limits and apparent contradictions of their exoteric aspects. The present work, however, is not simply a restatement of the doctrine already given in his earlier books, but a fresh presentation bringing to light new clarities, and on occasion, new insights that take one’s breath away. One might add that the whole is suffused as it were with a sheer contemplative joy that gently transfers itself to the reader, and a serene beauty that pacifies and liberates. . . . As has sometimes been pointed out, the writings of Frithjof Schuon have no peer. The position they occupy is central, reflecting the centrality of the Intellect itself.”
—Wolfgang Smith, author of *Cosmos and Transcendence*

Praise for Frithjof Schoun

“[Schuon is] the most important religious thinker of our century.”
—Huston Smith, author of *The World’s Religions*

“I have met with no more impressive work in the comparative study of Oriental and Occidental religion.”
—T. S. Eliot, on Schuon’s first book, *The Transcendent Unity of Religions*

“Schuon’s thought does not demand that we agree or disagree, but that we understand or do not understand. Such writing is of rare and lasting value.”

—*Times Literary Supplement*

“In reading Schuon I have the impression that I am going along parallel to him, and once in a while I will get a glimpse of what he means in terms of my own tradition and experience. . . . I think that he has exactly the right view. . . . I appreciate him more and more. . . . I am grateful for the chance to be in contact with people like him.”

—Thomas Merton, from a letter to Marco Pallis

“Schuon is unsurpassed—and I would add unequalled—as a writer on comparative religion. . . . If I were asked who is the greatest writer of our time, I would say Frithjof Schuon without hesitation.”

—Martin Lings, author of *Ancient Beliefs and Modern Superstitions*

“Schuon seems like the cosmic intellect itself impregnated by the energy of divine grace surveying the whole of the reality surrounding man and elucidating all the concerns of human existence in the light of sacred knowledge.”

—Seyyed Hossein Nasr, author of *Knowledge and the Sacred*

“[Schuon is in] possession of ‘the gift of tongues’, the ability, that is to say, both to speak and understand the various dialects through which the Spirit has chosen to communicate itself to men in their diversity and therefore, in practice, also the ability to communicate clearly with one’s fellows across the religious frontiers. . . . [He] exemplifies the power to penetrate all traditional forms as well as to render them mutually intelligible.”

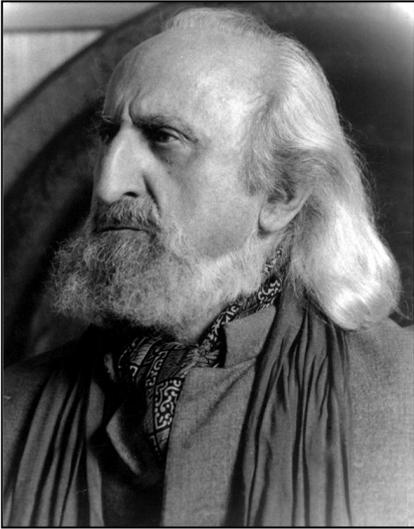
—Marco Pallis, author of *Peaks and Lamas*

“[Schuon is] widely acknowledged as one of the twentieth century’s greatest authorities on the world’s religions, and the leading spokesman for the traditionalist or perennialist school of comparative religious philosophy. Schuon was the author of over twenty books, as well as numerous articles, letters, texts of spiritual instruction, and other unpublished documents . . . and by the time of his death in 1998 at the age of ninety, his reputation among many scholars of mysticism, esoterism, and contemplative traditions was unsurpassed. Frithjof Schuon was much more than a scholar, however. An accomplished artist and noted religious poet, he was above all a man of prayer, whose fundamental message, whatever its particular thrust in any given article or chapter, was always linked to the importance of faith and spiritual practice.”

—James Cutsinger, author of *Advice to the Serious Seeker: Meditations on the Teaching of Frithjof Schuon*



About Frithjof Schuon



Frithjof Schuon (1907-1998) is best known as the foremost spokesman of the “Perennialist” or “Traditionalist” school and as a philosopher in the metaphysical current of Shankara and Plato. He wrote more than two dozen books on metaphysical, spiritual, artistic, and ethnic themes and was a regular contributor to journals on comparative religion in both Europe and America. Schuon’s writings have been consistently featured and reviewed in a wide range of scholarly and philosophical publications around the world, respected by both scholars and spiritual authorities. Besides his prose writings, Schuon was also a prolific poet and a gifted painter of images that always portrayed the beauty and power of the divine, and the nobility and virtue of primordial humanity.

Also, from early on, he developed those reading interests that were to make of him a man of formidable learning and a self-taught scholar, readings that for the growing young man spanned metaphysical and mystical material from sacred scriptures such as the Bhagavad Gita and the Psalms, but also the writings of authors such as Goethe, Schiller, and Emerson, and later and most importantly that of the French metaphysician, René Guénon who was a forerunner for Schuon’s resurrection of the *religio perennis*. The universe of the Upanishads and of the Vedas determined the young man’s innermost vocation as a Vedantist, namely someone who saw Reality in terms of pure divine metaphysics—first the distinction between Reality and illusion, then total conformity of the soul to the Real—while the Psalms provided the human complement as it were to the transpersonal vistas of the Vedanta in that they nurtured his innate sense of prayer and trust in the Lord in which, already as a child walking along the Rhine to school he would converse directly with God, sharing everything with Him as spontaneously and naturally as a child with his father; this became a lifelong habit of personal intimacy with God at all hours.

About Harry Oldmeadow

Harry Oldmeadow was, until his recent retirement, the Coordinator of Philosophy and Religious Studies at La Trobe University Bendigo. A widely respected author on the perennialist school, his publications include *Traditionalism: Religion in the Light of the Perennial Philosophy* (2000) and *Frithjof Schuon and the Perennial Philosophy* (2010). He has edited several anthologies for World Wisdom, the most recent being *Crossing Religious Frontiers* (2010), and has contributed to such journals as *Sophia* and *Sacred Web*. In addition to his studies of perennialism, he has written extensively on the modern encounter of Eastern and Western traditions in works such as *Journeys East: 20th Century Western Encounters with Eastern Religious Traditions* (2004) and *A Christian Pilgrim in India: The Spiritual Journey of Swami Abhishiktananda* (2008). He lives in Australia.

