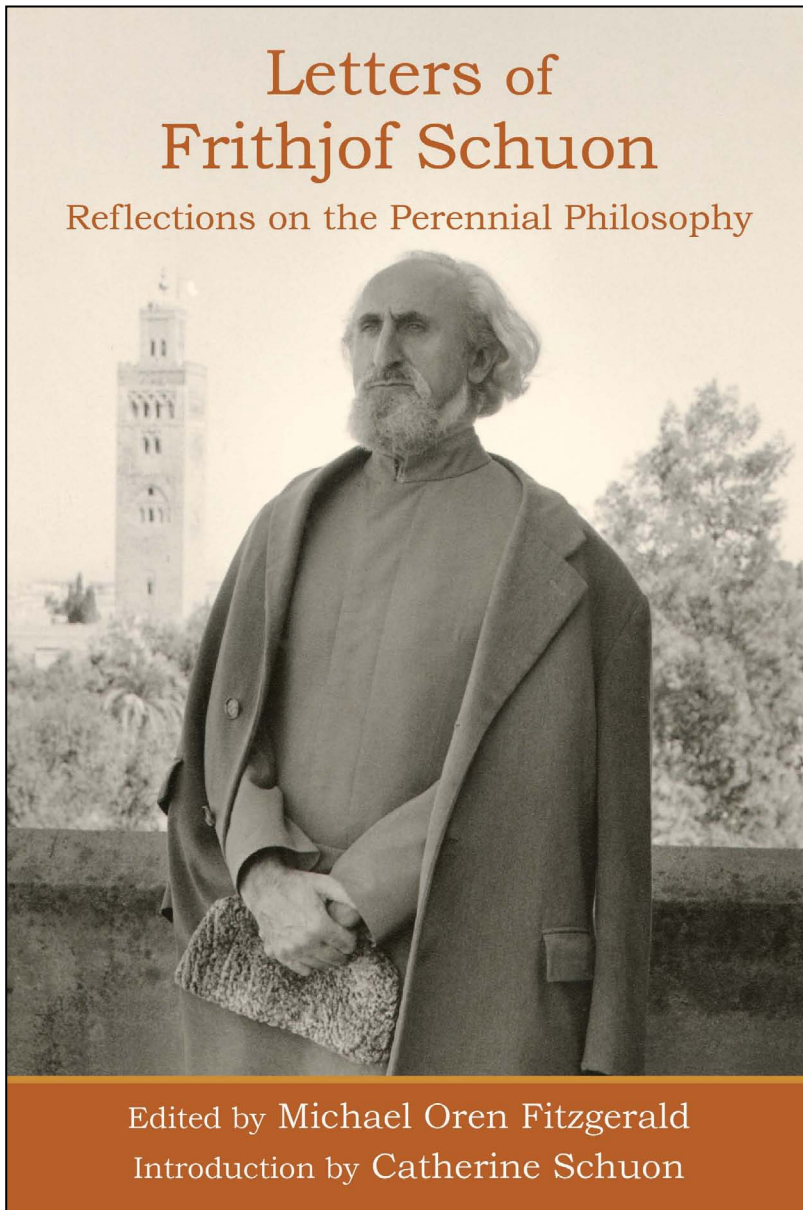


Letters of Frithjof Schuon

Reflections on the Perennial Philosophy

Edited by Michael Oren Fitzgerald

Introduction by Catherine Schuon



This collection of letters by Frithjof Schuon (1907-1998), the foremost spokesman of the perennial philosophy, contains nearly 200 newly translated letters from Schuon's youth to old age as written to friends, spiritual seekers, scholars, and others. Among the letters are those that address, in a simpler and more accessible manner, the same metaphysical subjects that continually recur in Schuon's published works. Other letters relate to the spiritual life in its simple and concrete aspects, by answering such fundamental questions as "Why is there evil in the world?", "How can I recognize if I am on a wrong path?", and "What should I do to be saved?" Finally, there are letters that relate to various aspects of Schuon's life, most of which were written to his closest friends. While not a comprehensive autobiography, these letters offer an intimate view of certain key moments in his life. Taken as a whole, the present collection of letters offers insights into the content of Frithjof Schuon's message—his exposition of the perennial philosophy—as well as a glimpse into his life as messenger of that philosophy.

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About *Letters of Frithjof Schuon*

“Michael Fitzgerald has previously undertaken the daunting task of writing a comprehensive biography of Frithjof Schuon. . . . To this, Fitzgerald now adds the present volume dedicated exclusively to [Schuon’s] letters written over the course of more than seventy years. The combination of these two volumes . . . give as accurate a picture as can be conveyed by words concerning a person of Frithjof Schuon’s scope.”

—Catherine Schuon, editor of *Art from the Sacred to the Profane: East and West*

“This new compilation of excerpts from Frithjof Schuon’s letters not only reminds us again of the timeless truths expounded in all his writings, but provides us with a more intimate understanding of his own heroic journey and his vocation as a spiritual guide—an abiding inspiration for all wayfarers.”

—Harry Oldmeadow, author of *Frithjof Schuon and the Perennial Philosophy*

“Schuon’s enlightening and inspiring letters of spiritual direction are a rare gift. We find therein an uncompromising discernment that brings human experiences and questions back to their metaphysical and spiritual roots, and a generous compassion flowing throughout.”

—Patrick Laude, co-author of *Frithjof Schuon: Life and Teachings*

“As in his books, Schuon’s writing in his letters is often aphoristic and his ideas are distilled and clear, filled with wisdom. . . . This is an extraordinary anthology of letters, offering a rare glimpse into the inner life and teachings of a remarkable man.”

—Ali Lakhani, editor of *Sacred Web: A Journal of Tradition and Modernity*

About Frithjof Schuon

“I knew when I was in his [Schuon’s] presence that I was in the presence of a true saint and also the spiritual master that I was seeking. When I say ‘true saint’, I don’t mean just a saintly man but a true saint of the first magnitude, such as one cannot expect to meet in the twentieth century. I mean a saint of the magnitude of St. Bernard, St. Francis, or St. Augustine in Christianity; of Ibn Arabi or Rumi in Sufism; of Shankara in Hinduism; and of Milarepa in Buddhism. I knew this with a certainty.”

—Martin Lings, author of *A Sufi Saint of the Twentieth Century: Shaykh Ahmad al-‘Alawi*, describing his first meeting with Schuon

“[Schuon is] the most important religious thinker of our century. . . . [He] is the only person I have known who invariably made me feel on leaving him that I had been in the presence of a different order of human being.”

—Huston Smith, author of *The World’s Religions* and *Why Religion Matters*

“I think that he [Schuon] is a great man. . . . I know that people come over here to see him from other countries—from all over the world. I regard him as a holy man. . . . Considering this and because he is a good friend, I did something well worth doing by adopting a great man into [my] family.”

—**Thomas Yellowtail**, Crow Medicine Man and Sun Dance chief, speaking about adopting Schuon as his brother

“His face was bright with the light of inner illumination. He possessed a regal bearing . . . but he was at heart so humble, simple, and loving. . . . The love in his heart was manifest on his face. . . . The tall and stately figure of the Sufi saint stood out in great prominence above us all—a very prince among saints.”

—**Swami Ramdas**, from the chapter “Visit to a Sufi Saint” in his book *World Is God*

“Knowing Schuon created for many of us all over the world a fraternity. We often met for the first time in his name and became fast friends. Humanly he created a cosmopolitan international fraternity, which reaches far beyond the circles that any one of us individually knows. . . . For this enrichment of our lives at so many levels, from the practical to the social, the intellectual and above all, the spiritual, thousands of people all over the world will remain truly grateful.”

—**Mudumbaï Ramachandran**, a Hindu admirer and disciple of the 68th Jagadguru of Kanchipuram

“I have met with no more impressive work in the comparative study of Oriental and Occidental religion.”

—**T. S. Eliot**, Nobel laureate for literature, on Schuon’s first book, *The Transcendent Unity of Religions*

“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**, The George Washington University, author of *Knowledge and the Sacred*

“[Schuon] is, without doubt, one of the most penetrating philosophical minds of the twentieth century, if not well beyond.”

—**Keith Critchlow**, Professor Emeritus, The Prince’s School of Traditional Arts, and President of the Temenos Academy



About the Editor

Michael Oren Fitzgerald (b. 1949) is an award-winning author, editor, and publisher of books on world religions, sacred art, and traditional culture. He was introduced to Frithjof Schuon in 1971 through Thomas Yellowtail, the Sun Dance Chief of the Crow tribe, who also adopted Fitzgerald into his family and the Crow tribe. Fitzgerald was Schuon's neighbor for the last eighteen years of his life and is the executor of his estate. He has previously written and lectured on aspects of Schuon's life and work, notably in the biography *Frithjof Schuon: Messenger of the Perennial Philosophy* (World Wisdom, 2010). He also recorded Yellowtail's autobiography and description of the Sun Dance Religion, published as *Yellowtail: Crow Medicine Man and Sun Dance Chief*, and has edited more than a dozen other books and produced two documentary films. Several of his books and both of his documentary films are used in university classes. Fitzgerald has taught Religious Traditions of the North American Indians at Indiana University, an institution from which he earned a degree in Religious Studies as well as a doctorate of Jurisprudence. He lives with his wife in Bloomington, Indiana.

About the Author of the Introduction

Catherine Schuon was born in Bern, Switzerland in 1924. Her interest in world religions and spirituality brought her into contact with Frithjof Schuon, whom she married in May 1949. She accompanied her husband on all of his travels and helped him to receive visits and answer correspondence from spiritual seekers. Along with her husband, Catherine Schuon was adopted into the Sioux and Crow tribes; in addition, the Lakota holy man, Black Elk, gave her the name Wámbli Oyáte Win ("Eagle People Woman"). The Schuons lived near Lake Geneva until 1980 when they moved to the United States and established themselves in the forests of Indiana. After her husband's death in 1998, Catherine Schuon spent several months each year traveling throughout the world to visit many of her late husband's admirers, each time returning to the serenity of her home in the woods outside of Bloomington, Indiana. She translated the French edition of John G. Neihardt's, *Black Elk Speaks* (1969), edited her husband's selected writings on art in the illustrated *Art from the Sacred to the Profane: East and West* (World Wisdom, 2007), and co-edited (with Michael Oren Fitzgerald), *A King James Christmas: Biblical Selections with Illustrations from Around the World* (World Wisdom, 2012), which features nine of her paintings. Catherine Schuon died in 2021.