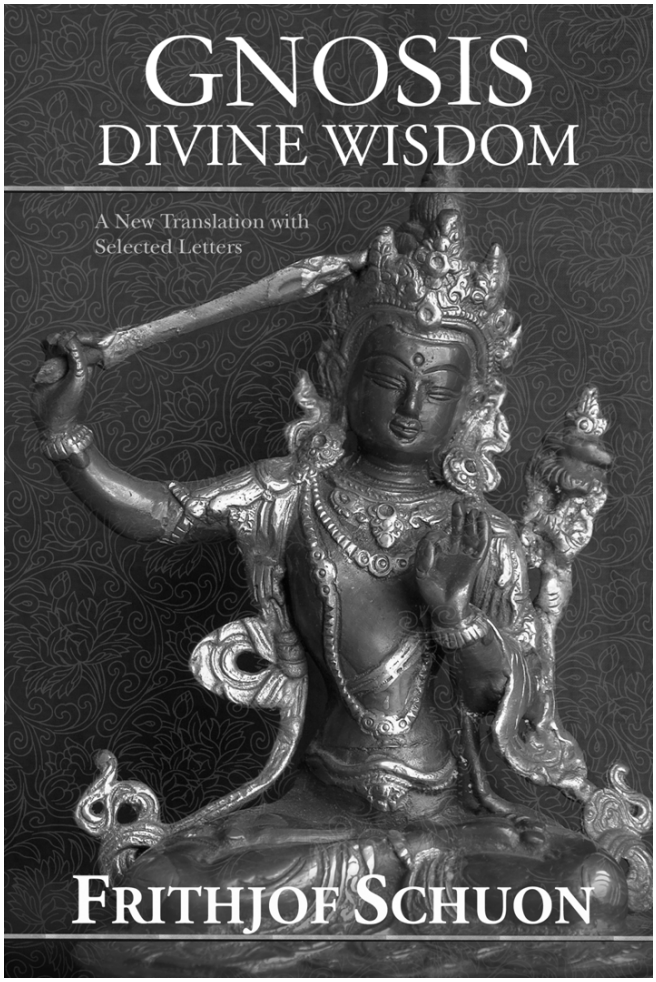
Gnosis: Divine Wisdom, A New Translation with Selected Letters

This new edition of philosopher Frithjof Schuon's classic work, *Gnosis: Divine Wisdom*, is a fully revised translation of the most recent French edition, and contains an extensive Appendix with previously unpublished selections from Schuon's letters and other private writings.

Schuon, the foremost representative of the perennialist school of comparative religious thought, writes on the diverse aspects of religion and the spiritual life, dealing with themes such as the diversity of revelations, gnosis, love of God, and the ability to "see God everywhere."



What is included in this volume?

- Editor's Notes
- Glossary of Foreign Terms and Phrases
- An Index
- Biographical Notes
- An editor's foreword by renowned scholar James. S. Cutsinger
- An Appendix
- Selections from Letters and Other Previously Unpublished Writings

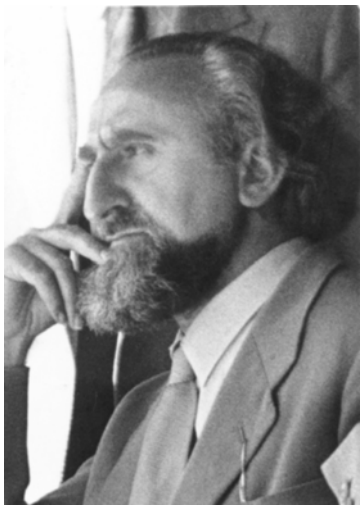
The book has a publication date of September 30, 2006, is 184 pages, and has a retail price of $18.95.

World Wisdom

An excerpt from *Gnosis: Divine Wisdom*

"Throughout his life Schuon carried on an extensive correspondence, much of it in response to questions posed by the many inquirers and visitors, from a variety of religious backgrounds, who looked to him for advice. He also composed nearly twelve hundred short spiritual texts for close friends and associates, compiled in his later years as "The Book of Keys". These and other private writings often contained the seeds of ideas that were later developed into published articles and chapters, and it is hoped that the selections included here will afford the reader a glimpse into a new and very rich dimension of this perennial philosopher's message."

About the author Frithjof Schuon



Frithjof Schuon was arguably the leading light of the Traditionalist/Perennialist school of thought during many of its formative years in the twentieth century. This school is marked by its dedication to the exploration of the single timeless Truth that finds its various expressions in the many spiritual traditions that have guided humankind over the millennia.

Over thirty titles of Schuon's work have appeared in English, covering themes on metaphysics, philosophy, comparative religion, symbolism, esoterism, critiques of the modern world, aesthetics, and the nature of human existence. In addition, he wrote thousands of poems in his native German, and produced hundreds of paintings, often with images of the American Plains Indians or Mary, the mother of Jesus. These poems and paintings, just as much as his prose, always carried a profound spiritual message for seekers who could think beyond the bounds of modernist prejudices.

Schuon was born in Basle, Switzerland, but was moved at age 14 by his widowed mother to France, where he learned French, the language in which he later wrote his masterpieces of metaphysics. From a very young age he was attracted to sacred things of both East and West, to beauty of soul and beauty of artistic creation, and to scriptures such as the Bhagavad Gita, the Vedas, the Koran, and, of course, to the Bible. Schuon was also attracted to Platonic thought and ideals. While still in his teens, he began to read the works of the pioneering Traditionalist René Guénon. Around 1930, Schuon began a correspondence with Guénon that lasted till the latter's death in 1951.

Schuon completed military service and moved to Paris, where he learned Arabic and Arabic calligraphy. In 1932 he left Europe to spend some months with the renowned Sufi master, Ahmad al-'Alawî, in Algeria. Following additional trips to the Orient, Schuon returned to France to again enter military service due to the Nazi threat. He was captured by the enemy but escaped to Switzerland, where he settled for the next forty years. Now focusing on his writing, Schuon became an important contributor to a number of journals on traditional spirituality and comparative religion and soon became known as the preeminent interpreter of the Perennial Philosophy. Frithjof Schuon moved to America in 1980, where he continued to write and paint. He died in 1998.

What others have said about Frithjof Schuon

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

"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 appreciate him more and more…. I am grateful for the chance to be in contact with people like him."
—**Thomas Merton**, from a letter published in his *The Hidden Ground of Love*

"The man is a living wonder; intellectually *a propos* religion, equally in depth and breadth, the paragon of our time. I know of no living thinker who begins to rival him."
—**Huston Smith**, author of *The World's Religions: Our Great Wisdom Traditions*

"M. 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,*** on Schuon's *Stations of Wisdom*

"Readers … will certainly find in the writings of Schuon … completely new perspectives in every aspect of religious thought—on the meaning of symbolism, for example, or the idea of sin, or the warfare between scientism and religion, or the idea of esotericism, and much, much else. Very probably, it will seem to the reader that until now he has ignored an entire dimension in his thinking…"
—**Jacob Needleman**, San Francisco State University

"It is a very good thing to see a book with Mr. Schuon's writings about the American Indians. His words are important because he sees the Indian traditional religion with the eyes of a man who prays and who loves the Indians. He has studied all the religions in the world so he can compare our Indian ways to the ways of other religions."
—**Thomas Yellowtail**, Crow Sun Dance Chief, on Schuon's *The Feathered Sun*

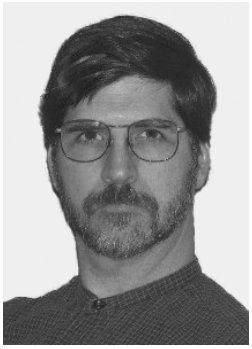
Major books in English

- *The Transcendent Unity of Religions*, 1953
- *Spiritual Perspectives and Human Facts*, 1954
- *Gnosis: Divine Wisdom*, 1959
- *Language of the Self*, 1959
- *Castes and Races*, 1959
- *Stations of Wisdom*, 1961
- *Understanding Islam*, 1963
- *In the Tracks of Buddhism*, 1968
- *Logic and Transcendence*, 1975
- *Esoterism as Principle and as Way*, 1981
- *Sufism: Veil and Quintessence*, 1981
- *From the Divine to the Human*, 1982
- *Christianity/Islam: Essays on Esoteric Ecumenicism*, 1985
- *Survey of Metaphysics and Esoterism*, 1986
- *In the Face of the Absolute*, 1989
- *The Feathered Sun: Plains Indians in Art & Philosophy*, 1990
- *To Have a Center*, 1990
- *Roots of the Human Condition*, 1991

World Wisdom

- *Images of Primordial & Mystic Beauty*, 1992
- *Echoes of Perennial Wisdom*, 1992
- *The Play of Masks*, 1992
- *Road to the Heart*, 1995
- *The Transfiguration of Man*, 1995
- *The Eye of the Heart*, 1997
- *Songs for a Spiritual Traveler: Selected Poems*, 2002
- *Form and Substance in the Religions*, 2002
- *Adastra & Stella Maris: Poems by Frithjof Schuon*, 2003
- *The Fullness of God: Frithjof Schuon on Christianity* (J.S. Cutsinger, Ed.), 2004
- *Prayer Fashions Man: Frithjof Schuon on the Spiritual Life* (J.S. Cutsinger, Ed.), 2005
- *The Essential Frithjof Schuon* (S.H. Nasr, Ed.), 2005
- *Light on the Ancient Worlds: New Translation with Selected Letters*, (Deborah Casey, Ed.) 2006

About the editor James S. Cutsinger



James S. Cutsinger is Professor of Theology and Religious Thought at the University of South Carolina and is an important contemporary author on spirituality, particularly within the Christian tradition. He is also emerging as one of the most widely recognized authorities on the Traditionalist school of comparative religious thought. Professor Cutsinger currently serves as secretary to the Foundation for Traditional Studies and is the recipient of numerous teaching awards (for example, he was honored in 1999 as a Michael J. Mungo University Teacher of the Year). He offers courses at both the undergraduate and graduate levels in Religious Studies at USC.

Professor Cutsinger edited *Paths to the Heart: Sufism and the Christian East* (World Wisdom) in 2002, an essential reference work for those looking for points of concurrence between the esoteric doctrines of these two ancient traditions. He has also recently edited an anthology of Christian mystical writings, *Not of This World: A Treasury of Christian Mysticism* (World Wisdom, 2003), which is presented from a perspective of the transcendent unity of denominations and includes selected writings of Christian sages and saints from the Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Evangelical, and Celtic branches of the Christian tradition. Professor Cutsinger is now working with World Wisdom on the long-term project of editing revised editions and anthologies of the works of Frithjof Schuon, the late philosopher, poet, and artist of whom Professor Cutsinger is one of the world's best known interpreters. *The Fullness of God: Frithjof Schuon on Christianity* (World Wisdom, 2004) was the first of these anthologies. He is also the editor of *Prayer Fashions Man*: *Frithjof Schuon on the Spiritual Life* (2005).

Professor Cutsinger is a nationally known advocate of Socratic Teaching based on the classics. His consulting work has included curriculum development and design, contributions to great books seminars for professionals, and workshops in discussion-based pedagogy. He has also served as director of three National Endowment for the Humanities summer seminars.