

## To Have a Center: A New Translation with Selected Letters

**Frithjof Schuon**

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In *To Have a Center*, Swiss-born philosopher, author, artist, and poet Frithjof Schuon (1907-1998) expresses his faith in an “absolute principle,” or God, and affirms that such faith is the necessary basis for an authentic life. Considered by many to be the preeminent exponent of the Perennial Philosophy, Schuon brings his vast experiential knowledge of world religions to touch on humanity’s need for a coherent, faith-based center from which to navigate a world drowning in relativism and obsessed with the Western cult of “the genius,” which he calls “a phenomenon seeking to compensate for the impoverishment of the modern ambience.”

What he advocates is not a new religion, but the religion of the heart—the truth that underlies all religion; essentially metaphysical, esoteric, and primordial, it is also traditional, and “revealed.” A religion of this type, he affirms, would provide spiritual seekers not only with a metaphysical, doctrinal, and spiritual method, but also with a spiritual environment of beauty and holiness.

During his lifetime, Schuon was initiated into the order of Shaykh Ahmad al-Alawi in Algeria, was taken prisoner by the Germans in WWII, and lived with and studied the sacred traditions of various Native American tribes. He also founded a Sufi order devoted to Mary.

Philosophically, anthropologically, metaphysically, and historically rich, Schuon’s thinking may arouse some contention these days, yet his devotion to all that is best in human character cannot be denied. Unapologetically placing the spiritual at the center of all of human life, he offers light and clarity in dark and confusing times.

KRISTINE MORRIS (Fall 2015)

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