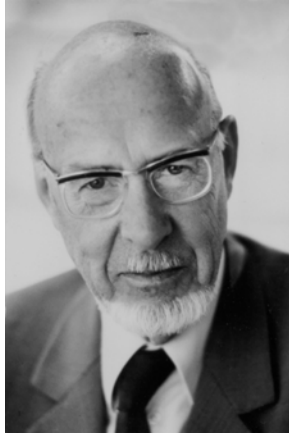


Author of the new release by World Wisdom,

The Essential Titus Burckhardt: Reflections on Sacred Art, Faiths, and Civilizations

Titus Burckhardt (1908-1984) was one of the most influential writers in the Perennialist school during its formative years in the twentieth century. This school is marked by its dedication to the exposition of the timeless Truth that underlies the many religions of humankind.



As a young man, Burckhardt lived and studied in Morocco, where he acquired a deep understanding of traditional art, thought, and culture. For many years he was the artistic director of a European publishing house that produced and published a series of art books on sacred cities. In his later years Burckhardt was a consultant for the United Nations on the restoration of the ancient and historic city of Fez.

Burckhardt's extensive writings covered a vast range of subjects, but all were devoted to reviving an understanding of universal truths, arts, and sciences that were at the heart of traditional societies across all times and nations. He translated and commented on a number of important works of Islamic thought, demonstrating a unique talent for clearly explaining complex ideas. This talent was also evident in his philosophical writings. Burckhardt's books and articles covered many topics (e.g. sacred art) within the traditions of Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam, amongst others. In all of these writings, his focus on the timeless spiritual nature of humanity helps us to better understand the limitations of many of our modern attitudes and ideas.

What others have said about the author, Titus Burckhardt

"One finds new insights on every page, and what is more, finds that these become more profound with each reading."

— **Professor Arthur Versluis**, Michigan State University

"Mr. Burckhardt has attended our Indian ceremonies, including the Sun Dance, and he has learned our legends and our sacred ways around the camp fires. He knows and understands the spirit of the olden-day Indians."

— **Thomas Yellowtail**, Crow Sun Dance Chief

"Titus Burckhardt lived the truth of which he wrote. The exceptional light of intelligence which emanated from him pierced to the heart of the texts he studied and illuminated their meaning in a manner which is possible only for a person in whom the truth has descended from the plane of the mind to the centre of the heart."

— **Professor Seyyed Hossein Nasr**, George Washington University

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“One of the leading authorities of the Perennialist School, Titus Burckhardt brought a unique combination of gifts to the exposition of the world’s great wisdom traditions. Burckhardt was at home in a variety of religious worlds and able to speak with authority on many wide-ranging subjects. His eloquently written and beautifully crafted books are an enduring treasure.”

—**Professor James Cutsinger, University of South Carolina**

“He devoted all his life to the study and exposition of the different aspects of Wisdom and Tradition. In the age of modern science and technocracy, Titus Burckhardt was one of the most remarkable exponents of universal truth.”

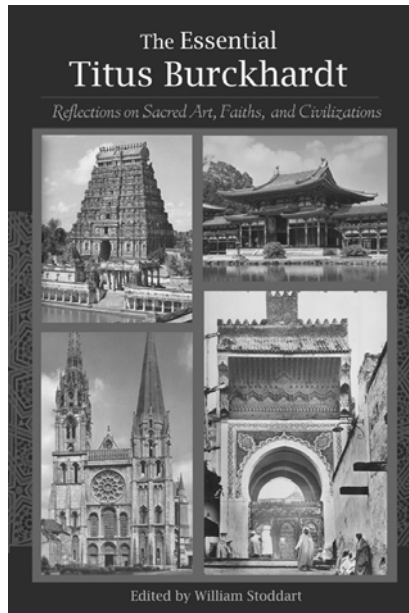
—**Dr. William Stoddart, author**

“Burckhardt’s thought is clear and soberly articulated, his argumentation intuitive and profound.”

—**Professor Victor Danner, Indiana University**

Major books in English by Titus Burckhardt

- ❖ *Chartres and the Birth of the Gothic Cathedral*
- ❖ *Sienna, City of the Virgin*
- ❖ *An Introduction to Sufism*
- ❖ *Mirror of the Intellect*
- ❖ *Sacred Art in East and West*
- ❖ *Alchemy: Science of the Cosmos, Science of the Soul*
- ❖ *Fez, City of Islam*
- ❖ *Art of Islam: Language and Meaning*
- ❖ *Moorish Culture in Spain*
- ❖ *Wisdom of the Prophets: Fusus Al-Hikam* (translation and commentary by Burckhardt)



The Essential Titus Burckhardt: Reflections on Sacred Art, Faiths, and Civilizations

What did Titus Burckhardt write about?

Burckhardt's books covered a very wide range of topics. This book, *The Essential Titus Burckhardt*, brings together selections that represent many of those topics. He was well known for his first-hand knowledge of Arabic, Sufism, and Islamic art and culture. He also was one of the world's most important writers on sacred art within many different traditions, including Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Taoism. Burckhardt was also an insightful critic of the modern world and wrote about how traditional and modern approaches differ in such areas as science, government, and spiritual life. His main purpose in writing was to help readers

understand the deeper meaning behind almost every aspect of life in traditional cultures, a meaning that can enrich readers' lives.

Why are the writings of Titus Burckhardt still of interest to readers today?

Burckhardt dealt with grand ideas, eternal realities. He used many interesting examples of particular works of art, cultural practices, or ideas of great thinkers, but these examples were always chosen in order to point out universal truths that apply to all people in all times and places. Therefore, for readers who are interested in the realities that underlie the nature of man and the universe, Burckhardt's words still resonate.

Which readers will be interested in this collection?

- ❖ Some **students of the Perennialist school** will focus on Burckhardt's place among the most influential of the Perennialist authors during the formative years of the school, and a collection such as this is therefore especially valuable to these readers.
- ❖ Others will undoubtedly be **seekers** looking for spiritual and intellectual insights from an author known to offer both in abundance.
- ❖ Still other **students will look for authentic and objective information on specific subjects** that are often grossly misrepresented. A notable example of this last case would be the subject of alchemy, of which Burckhardt is one of the few modern Western authors ever to reveal its true nature and purpose. Another example would be sacred art.
- ❖ Other **readers of comparative religion** will appreciate Burckhardt's profound expositions of specific aspects of Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, and American Indian thought and practice.

World Wisdom



How is the book organized?

The book has seven headings under which representative selections of Burckhardt's writings have been grouped. They are: (1) Some Fundamental Doctrines and Principles, (2) Traditional and Modern Science, (3) Sacred Art as the Expression of Religious Truth, (4) History, the Governance of Men and Nations, and the Modern World, (5) Alchemy, (6) Aspects of the Spiritual Life, and (7) Evocations of Traditional Moroccan Life. There are also color illustrations and a number of Burckhardt's own beautiful and evocative drawings. The book concludes with a comprehensive bibliography of Burckhardt's work in numerous languages.

Burckhardt was an important writer in the "Perennialist" School. What does that mean?

Sometimes also called the Traditionalist school, this is a movement that arose in the 20th century and continues to influence many writers on spirituality and culture. The "Perennial Philosophy" begins with the idea that there is a timeless Truth that underlies the world's many different religions. Perennialist writers trace how and why specific religious and cultural manifestations relate back to that Truth. The data and facts of particular religious forms are not of interest merely as details of some human system but rather as vehicles of a higher reality. The goal is to promote deeper spiritual understanding regardless of an individual reader's religious orientation.

What did Burckhardt find wrong with the modern world?

In general, he perceived a tendency on the part of most modernists to dismiss the valuable and essential spiritual heritage left by traditional cultures. Modernists of Burckhardt's day, carrying the banner of science, saw earlier thinkers and cultures as unenlightened and backwards, and saw themselves as the historical culmination of intelligence. Burckhardt demonstrated how this kind of attitude in fact broke the chain of true human intelligence that had been transmitted from generation to generation through human history, leaving modern civilization in desperate need of essential spiritual Truths that make life comprehensible and fulfilling.

Who edited the book?

The Essential Titus Burckhardt was edited by Dr. William Stoddart, certainly the greatest living expert on the work of Titus Burckhardt. Stoddart, himself an author and prolific translator, knew Burckhardt well and translated many of his writings from French and German into English. Here, Stoddart has skillfully selected dozens of short excerpts from longer books and articles from numerous journals and put them into a volume that fairly represents the thought of one of the 20th century's most remarkable authors.

When is the book scheduled for publication?

It is currently scheduled to be published by World Wisdom in May of 2003.

What others have said about *The Essential Titus Burckhardt*

"On all that is mentioned in the subtitle of this book, Titus Burckhardt is no doubt the twentieth century's greatest authority, except for his own teachers, Frithjof Schuon and Ananda K. Coomaraswamy. Whatever page I turn to in this book, I am immediately fascinated."

- **Martin Lings**, former Keeper of Oriental Manuscripts at the British Museum and the author of *What is Sufism?*

"Titus Burckhardt looks at Islam and Christianity with the eyes of a scholar who combines deep spiritual insight with the love of eternal Truth. Burckhardt's writings reveal that this Truth is as fresh today as it was millenia ago, and that it will last as long as humans long to see the Divine light."

- **Annemarie Schimmel**, Harvard University, author of *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*

"*The Essential Titus Burckhardt* is a veritable theophany. Wherever you open the pages, whether it be *The Sun Dance*, *Bathing in the Ganges*, *Christian Art*, or *Insight into Alchemy*, it all breathes like some mighty and single cosmic rhythm, which Burckhardt understood so well, in both the Source, and in the consummation of all that is sacred."

- **Sir John Tavener**, composer, and author of *The Music of Silence: A Composer's Testament*

"Dr. Stoddart has provided us with far more than an anthology. This book is a spiritual and intellectual journey that requires repeated reading. It brings together the wisdom of the major religious traditions, and demonstrates how the metaphysical principles involved play out in the various fields of human endeavor, in science, art, government and individual spiritual lives. Anyone wishing to understand and or heal the wounds of the modern world would be well advised to study in depth this wonderful book."

- **Rama P. Coomaraswamy**, M.D., F.A.C.S., author of *The Destruction of the Christian Tradition*

"As a writer and thinker on a wide range of topics integral to the sacred traditions, Titus Burckhardt has an unerring ability to reach to the essential truths and to speak persuasively of their relevance and importance to the contemporary mind."

- **Brian Keeble**, author of *Art: For Whom and For What?*

"Two words spring to mind on reading *The Essential Titus Burckhardt*: awe and gratitude. Awe because of the extraordinary perception and beauty of his writing, and gratitude, such tremendous gratitude that we now have at our disposal writings of such caliber to guide us through not just sacred and traditional art but through so much else.

- **Emma Clark**, author of *Underneath Which Rivers Flow: The Symbolism of the Islamic Garden*

"No one since the legendary A.K. Coomaraswamy has been able to demonstrate how entire civilizations define themselves through their art with the precision of Titus Burckhardt. This distillation of his life's work is a precious memento."

- **Huston Smith**, author of *The World's Religions* and *Why Religion Matters*

