Mark Sedgwick

After Frithjof Schuon: Perennialism and Pluralism

The perennialism of Frithjof Schuon (1907-1998) and the approach to pluralism develop din his understanding of the "transcendent unity of religions" was further developed by three later Muslims, the Iranian-American scholar Seyyed Hossein Nasr, the Bosnian intellectual Rusmir Mahmutćehajić, and the Jordanian philosopher Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad. This paper explains these three further approaches, and the practical steps to improve interreligious relations taken by Mahmutćehajić and Prince Ghazi, more successfully in the latter case than in the former. It argues that the idea of the transcendent unity of religions provides an excellent basis for interfaith dialogue at the theological level, which can contribute to the success of inter-communal dialogue, and thus to improved inter-communal relations. It also argues that the work of Nasr, Mahmutćehajić, and Prince Ghazi offers little help with the place of Islam in secular societies, since Nasr and Mahmutćehajić were both outspoken critics of modernity, and thus also of contemporary secular societies.