

The Essence of all Wisdom



*the Absolute
Philosophy of Life*

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***Just as someone
who does not know the One,
knows basically nothing at all,
so does someone basically know everything
who truly knows the One.***

~ Giordano Bruno

***Know that,
through which all else
is known.***

~ Brihadaranyaka Upanishad

***Worship the Divine
with or without form,
until you realise
that you are it
yourself.***

~ Ramana Maharshi

***Agyasya duhkau gamyam,
Gyasya ananda mayam Jagat.***

***For those who do not know their true Self,
the world is full of suffering.***

***For those who know their true Self,
the world is full of happiness.***

~ Brihadaranyaka Upanishad

***The purpose of creation
is the expansion of happiness.
Happiness is the most important thing in life;
everything else is secondary.***

~ Maharishi Mahesh Yogi

***Doktrina multiplex,
Veritas uno.***

***There are many teachings,
though the truth is one.***

~ Medieval Latin wisdom

***Ekam Sat,
Vipra bahudha
vadanti.***

***The truth is one,
the wise speak of it
in many ways.***

~ Rig Veda 1.164.46

***Satyat naasti
paro dharmaha.***

***There is no higher religion
than the truth.***

~ Mahabharata

***The religion of the future
will be a cosmic religion.***

***It must transcend the personal
God and shun dogma
and theology.***

~ Albert Einstein

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Foreword

*Whether you have a clear or unclear experience
of the essence of life, it doesn't really matter.*

*Life is not a black-and-white story;
The essence is omnipresent and
pervades everything. It is Being itself.*

*Being is present and exists
at all levels of existence:
the material, energetic,
physiological, psychological,
spiritual and metaphysical.*

*You need to know only one thing:
There is a shared essence between you and me;
between you and your partner,
between you and your child,
between you and your enemy.*

*This shared essence is the common source
of all our thoughts, feelings, words and actions.*

*Being is both transcendental and immanent:
It stands on its own and expresses itself
in everything and everyone.*

*So it is quite enough if you know:
It exists, the common essence.
It exists, the common source.
It exists, the common substance.
It exists, the unchanging essence
of the ever-changing reality.*

*When you live and act in the world with this knowledge,
you will become increasingly imbued with this truth.*

*Thus, Being grows like a tree within your consciousness.
So do not seek a sharp contrast between the relative
and the Absolute. All relativity is an expression
and manifestation of the Absolute.*

*If you can intuitively recognise this truth,
then you can be calm and confident within:
you have already grasped the essence of life.
Therefore, the True, the Good and the Beautiful
will increasingly reveal themselves in your life.*

*In this way, you will become increasingly One
with what you truly are:
pure bliss!*

*Warm regards,
Frans Langenkamp,
12 July 2026*

Introduction

It is common knowledge that we can do a great deal for our physical health by eating healthy food every day. Could it not also be the case that we could promote our *mental health* just as effectively by consuming healthy *mental* and *spiritual nourishment* on a daily basis? Might we perhaps experience greater happiness and fulfilment if we nourish our inner selves with something that inspires us and aids our psychological development?

Has it not always been the intention of all sages to provide their fellow human beings with healthy nourishment for the soul? Did they not intend to help their fellow human beings in their mental, emotional and psychological development? By nature, all living beings strive to be happy and healthy. But if we wish to satisfy this deep need, we require a certain degree of knowledge and wisdom. **The sages of all ages were regarded as wise because they knew what is essential in life. They knew what a person needs to become happy, loving and wise.** They knew how we can become psychologically healthy and psychologically mature. They knew what is important and essential in this process. And this is where the value of this book comes into play. Here you will find the essential teachings of twenty-two sages from East and West – from ancient times as well as the present day. This makes this book a treasure chest brimming to the brim with true and useful wisdom for life! Pure nourishment for your soul!

In this book you will find two things:

- 1. The essential messages from twenty-two world-famous teachers of wisdom.**
- 2. A clear demonstration of the fact that all these teachings of wisdom essentially mean the same thing and aim to achieve the same thing!**

I believe that these two points are quite unique. Normally, people are tied to *a* particular school of wisdom. This blinds many to other streams of wisdom. In this age of lightning-fast, global communication, however, it has become possible to examine any stream of wisdom up close and to compare many teachings with one another. That is exactly what we do in

this book! Here you will be introduced to the essence of the wisdom teachings of twenty-two world-renowned teachers. And as if that were not enough spiritual nourishment, it is also demonstrated that all these streams of wisdom *essentially* mean the same thing and are based on the same universal truths.

In this book, you will therefore find a wealth of universal and timeless insights that can serve as your daily portion of spiritual and mental nourishment. As you take in these many expressions of truth and wisdom from a wide variety of traditions, you will automatically realise that *the essence* of all these streams of wisdom springs from a common, timeless root and is therefore the same in all of them.

This spiritual, intellectual and emotional nourishment is so rich in vitamins and so exceptionally nourishing that it can help you achieve your life's purpose. For as soon as you gain *insight into the essence of reality* and realise that all people and all levels of reality are permeated by this *one essence*, you will feel deeply nourished spiritually and you will find yourself on the fast track to psychological maturity. (*Note: I know this is not an existing German word, but I would like to import it from Dutch, as it describes the purpose of life in a simple, non-esoteric way. The characteristics of psychological maturity are discussed in detail throughout this book.*)

Psychological maturity is simply the modern term for a state of consciousness that is celebrated under many names in the various wisdom traditions: enlightenment, liberation, salvation, moksha, jivan mukta, kaivalya, kensho, satori, samadhi, unio mystica or union with the Divine. I warmly invite you to enjoy the pearls and diamonds of wisdom—that you will find in this book, so that you may increasingly walk the effortless and ever-more-fulfilling path towards the full realisation of your psychological potential.

A universal philosophy

Life has always been infinitely complex, yet today it manifests itself as more complex than ever! Through modern means of communication and transport, we are confronted daily with events taking place in far-flung parts of the world. This can be quite confusing for us.

The complexity and the range of choices seem to be growing ever greater! More than ever before, we need an understanding that offers us an overview of the totality of life.

And that is precisely what we are exploring in this book. Everyone talks about this and that, and about this and that. The conversation is constantly about things, people and situations. It is about who said or did this or that, what this or that person should or should not do. It is about politics, economics, religion, art or science. It always revolves around specific things and how we should deal with them.

**In this book, however, we take a slightly different approach;
we interrupt this ubiquitous human habit.**

**Here, we are doing something quite spectacular,
something quite special, something new,
indeed, something truly unheard of.
We are talking about ... *the essence*.
We are talking about the *common*
essence of everything and everyone.**

We are talking about the shared essence of you and me, the essence of all people, all animals and all plants, the essence of all stars and planets, the essence of all sciences and religions. Of the essence of all philosophies and arts. The beauty that will come to light is that all these things, people and situations share *one and the same essence*. We will realise that there is only *one essence* of all reality!

To put it another way: by reading this book, we will realise that, at the level of our shared essence, we are all *one*. This unity amongst people and all that exists has always been there and always will be. **Yet because most people concern themselves only with concrete, practical and superficial matters, many have lost sight of the essence, of the view of what is essential.** It is very much in the spirit of the English proverb: '*Out of sight, out of mind*'. But if we fail to recognise our *one*, shared essence, and have eyes only for the infinite variety of things, then life can become rather complicated and problematic.

**With the aim of solving the inevitable problems
which arise when we are not aware of our common**

essence, countless wise men and women have sought to impart to us the eternal and universal insight into reality.

Throughout the ages, the sages have always done their utmost to impart to their fellow human beings a truth that is valid for all people and in all times. Many men and women have had profound experiences and gained deep insights; experiences that relate to the common essence of everything and everyone. It was in the spirit of the times over the last two millennia to clothe these essential experiences in *religious* terms. Thus, different religions have emerged on different continents. In keeping with the nature of these essential experiences, every founder of a religion had come to believe that their realisation was something absolute, something universal. **The essence of reality is by nature absolute, eternal and universal, but every teacher of wisdom formulated this timeless and universal experience within the context of their respective language and culture, as well as within the context of the prevailing spirit of the age.**

Thus, many separate religions arose, each in its own language, each with its own symbolism, rituals and ethical precepts, such as those governing right action and the like. **The founders of each religion were always convinced that they had found the key to the right way of life.** And indeed, every true spiritual experience is a *cosmic* experience; an experience of the unity, sanctity and wholeness of all life!

However, a problem soon became apparent: **whilst the founder of each religion had indeed had an essential experience, their environment and followers were usually far removed from it!**

An essential experience is defined as an experience of the absolute and universal level of reality. This is usually referred to as a spiritual experience. **The normal waking state, however, has no receptors for that which is abstract, absolute, eternal, essential, divine or cosmic (omnipresent).** But what exactly *is* this essential, absolute and omnipresent? *It is Being itself.* If we wish to develop a philosophy that is truly essential and universal, then it must be based on *Being*. Only *Being* is truly *essential!* (the Latin '*esse*' means: to be)

A philosophy based on Being is very logical and also very easy to understand. Let us consider the following: **everything that exists is ultimately a form of Being; a form, therefore, that Being has taken on. Everything that exists is ultimately a form in which Being appears to us. Or one could also put it this way: everything that exists is a form in which Being has manifested itself.** We ourselves, too, are a form of being, an expression of being. I think you'll agree with me that human beings represent a rather *special* form of being. What makes us very special is that, in principle, we are capable of thinking about ourselves, of reflecting on ourselves. **In principle, we are capable of looking deep within ourselves and becoming aware of our own essence.**

As soon as we experience our own essence, a wider horizon opens up spontaneously. What is special and also beautiful about this is that our essence is not just *our* essence ... it is *the* essence. There is only *one* Being, and as such, this *one* Being is the essence of everything and everyone!

**Since, by definition, there is only *one* Being,
we experience the universal, eternal and
absolute essence of reality, as soon as
we have experienced our *own*
essence, our own Being.**

Being is truly and without doubt universal; it is omnipresent and it is One! There is only *one* Being, as the source *of* the *infinite* forms of being. Please realise that Being is not merely a beautiful philosophical concept, but a reality. **Being truly exists. It is genuinely real!** One could even say that Being is more real than its manifestations! The manifestations of Being are bound by space and time; they are temporary in time and limited in space. Every manifestation, every experience is transient, but Being itself is eternal and imperishable! **So if we are able to develop a philosophy of reality founded on Being, then we truly have a universal and eternal philosophy of life!**

Being is thus the essence of all reality. If a philosophy of reality claims to be universal and eternal, then it should be geared towards enabling all

people to gain an *insight* into Being. And perhaps even more importantly: it should also be geared towards enabling all people to *experience* Being.

**True wisdom should be aimed at
enabling every person to gain knowledge of *and*
experience of the universal and eternal essence of reality.**

Religions generally assume that one comes closer to the spiritual, essential experience through ethical behaviour (thoughts, words and deeds). Although this view is almost universally held, it is ultimately incorrect ... indeed, one must even say that it is misleading.

By definition, a religion aims to reconnect people (the Latin *religare* means ‘to reconnect’) with the essence, with the primordial reality, with the Divine. Wonderful! **But can this be achieved by focusing on correct behaviour? Can it be achieved through guidelines for moral conduct? History has now convincingly demonstrated that focusing on moral conduct does not have the desired effect!** The focus on moral conduct is too superficial; it does not go deep enough to evoke a spiritual experience. **Reconnection with our essence can only be achieved via the direct path inwards: silence exercises, meditation, self-reflection, self-study. And it is only through a spiritual experience that behaviour becomes increasingly ethical and more conducive to the common good.**

We should not forget that the *origin* of every religion lies in the spiritual experience of its founders. However, if, as an ordinary mortal, one has not had a genuine spiritual experience, then it is not possible to think, speak or act on the basis of a genuine spiritual experience. Any attempt to behave according to ideal (spiritual) norms and values whilst in the normal waking state is doomed to failure. By definition, our behaviour is always an expression of our inner condition.

Unfortunately, most religions do not provide effective methods through which a person can experience their essence and thus have a spiritual experience. **This is indeed tragic, as without spiritual experience, proper, ethical behaviour cannot manifest itself.** Ethical and ideal behaviour is the spontaneous expression of a ‘higher’ state of consciousness than the usual waking state. By focusing on behaviour in the waking

state, religions have put the cart before the horse. The spiritual law of life is based on the opposite principle:

**To the extent that we have had a spiritual experience,
our behaviour becomes spontaneously correct and ethical!**

**The (spiritual) horse should therefore be harnessed
to the front of the cart of proper behaviour.**

**The more we have made the relaxed
and authentic experience
of our essence, the more
our behaviour becomes relaxed,
natural and authentic.**

**Since Being is our true Self,
our thoughts, words and actions
become more authentic and truthful
of their own accord, the more we are aware of our true Self,
and the more we feel grounded in our true Self.**

The emphasis of *true* wisdom therefore lies on methods and techniques that enable the experience of *Being*. **When we experience *Being in itself*, we become aware of what it means simply to *be*. We become aware that, *in essence*, we *are* Being! Being is our essence, and thus our *true identity*! We *are* Being! We simply become aware of our own Being! Our consciousness becomes ‘conscious being’! Our consciousness becomes one with Being!**

**Our consciousness becomes one
with universal, absolute and eternal Being.
This is the true spiritual experience that awaits us all
at the source of our thoughts.**

Through a spiritual experience, the ordinary waking state is expanded and deepened! When we become aware of Being itself, we have experienced our essence and thus the essence of all reality. This is the deepest *essential* experience a human being can have. This is the deepest *spiritual* (or religious) experience a human being can have at all. It is the deepest *scientific* experience a human being can have. This is the most *intimate* experience a human being can have. This is the most *peaceful* experience

a human being can have. **This makes us a profound scientist and, at the same time, a deeply spiritual person!**

If we wish to experience simple and abstract being, we need only allow our mental activities to come to rest. To do this, we must learn to be still within. As we become increasingly accustomed to the pure state of being through daily silence exercises, we gradually learn to think and perceive from the stillness of universal being. **The experience of being takes place in an extremely simple state of human consciousness.** This simple experience of being enables us to perceive and understand reality in depth. In the past, those *who understood reality in this way* were referred to as mystics or Gnostics. I would like to argue here that the ability to grasp reality from its very foundations is the natural ability of a person who has attained the state of psychological maturity. What is termed ‘enlightenment’ in the various spiritual traditions is, then, nothing other than psychological health and psychological maturity. But more on that later.

Characteristics of Being

Let’s try to understand more about Being itself, and let’s find out where that leads us! The more we know about Being, the greater the likelihood that we will also experience Being personally and directly. **What we think about every day tends to manifest as reality; such is an ancient, universal wisdom.**

So what can we discover about Being? **Although Being is entirely abstract, we find that, by definition, it is the source of everything concrete.** As I said, everything that exists is a form of Being! And since everything *truly* exists, Being must also be *real*! Without Being, nothing could exist. **Although Being is entirely abstract, it is an obvious reality!** So when we talk about Being, we mean much more than a mere idea or an old-fashioned philosophical concept!

And although Being is not *something* in the sense of something concrete – in other words, although it is *not a thing* – it is nonetheless real. And there is more: Being in itself – absolute nothingness – is the source and ultimate substance of everything that is! **Being in itself is not matter. It is not even energy!** *But it is the source of all kinds of energy, and therefore also the source of all kinds of matter!* It is the essence of

all reality. Without Being, nothing could exist! Everything is, after all, a form of Being. **Thus, every kind of energy, every material form is an expression, a manifestation of Being.** For purely logical reasons alone, therefore, everything points to the existence of Being. That is why we assume the existence of this *level of Being*.

Is that all we can say about Being? Can we find out more about Being? **Could it be that Being represents more than a *passive* plane of existence? Can we perhaps identify certain properties of Being?** If we assume that everything that exists is a form of Being, might it not be the case that Being is not only the silent, passive *essence*, but also the *origin* or *cause* of the entire relative, constantly renewing creation? An interesting question, isn't it?

Since Being is, by definition, eternal and unchanging, we can also equate it with what philosophers have called the *Absolute*. Plato and Aristotle liked to refer to absolute Being as the *Unmoved Mover*. Buddha, too, clearly had this abstract, universal plane in mind when he spoke of *Shunya*, the Void: the nothingness from which everything arose. Helena Blavatsky liked to call Being the *cause without a cause*. Albert Einstein referred to the abstract source of all energy and matter as the *unified field*, which he saw as the home of all natural laws, the abode of all the laws that govern the processes of natural phenomena.

Since everything that exists exhibits a remarkable order or structure, we can conclude that a certain order or structure is inherent in Being. A cosmic order, so to speak. We might perhaps say that order is an inherent property of Being. **And since Being is the *source* of all forms of existence, we can conclude that it is also characterised by infinite creativity.** Seemingly effortlessly, Being manifests all manner of electromagnetic radiation, all manner of elementary particles, atoms, molecules, cells, organs, organisms, individuals, societies, ecological systems, planets, solar systems, galaxies and, indeed, even the entire expanding universe!

That is what I call creativity! A form of creativity that is thoroughly intelligent and purposeful. **We can therefore describe Being as a field of infinite creativity and infinite intelligence.**

**Although Being is invisible and abstract,
we have already come to know several properties of it.**

**Let's make a list of the properties
that we can attribute to Being.**

- It is abstract
- it is not *a thing*
- it is smaller than the smallest
- it is greater than the greatest
- it is the omnipresent nothing
- it is omnipresent
- it is universal
- it has no beginning
- it has no end
- it is unchanging
- it is eternal
- it is timeless
- it is absolute
- it is the same for everyone who perceives it
- it is infinitely creative
- it possesses an absolute, inherent order
- it has an inherent creativity
- it has an inherent intelligence
- it is the source of the relative creation
- it possesses an infinite inherent dynamism

- it is the Absolute of the philosophers
- it is the Emptiness of the Buddhists
- it is Aristotle's unmoved mover
- it is Helena Blavatsky's causeless cause
- it is Einstein's unified field
- it is the zero-point field or the vacuum state of modern physics
- it is the home of all the laws of nature
- it is the essence of everything and everyone
- it is the essence of you and me
- it is the essence and source of all reality
- it is That which religions refer to as God, Allah, Brahman, Shiva, Ahura Mazda, Wakan Tanka, Ain Sof etc.

Here we already have a considerable amount of knowledge about *something* that cannot be seen or heard, touched, smelled or tasted. That is probably why hardly anyone concerns themselves with Being! Hardly anyone thinks about it, hardly anyone talks about it, hardly anyone knows it, hardly anyone experiences it. Thus, Being is something with which humanity hardly concerns itself. Even scientists are of the view that nothing can be said with certainty about Being! A pity, because that is not true at all! Religions, too, believe they cannot make sense of universal Being, as they usually prefer to uphold a personal, culturally determined image of God.

**But here we *do* want to engage with Being!
For we suspect that we are on the trail of something
very important – something essential.**

Is there anything *else* we can establish about Being? Certainly!

**We can say with a calm mind
and with certainty that universal Being
manifests itself in three 'aggregate states:**

1. Being as such – still, abstract, omnipresent, all-pervading, absolute and eternal.

2. Being in motion – all forms of energy.

3. Being that has taken on a form – all forms of matter.

And because we ourselves are also a form of Being, it is only logical that we can also observe these three aggregate states within ourselves:

1. We can experience **Being as such** within ourselves. We can become aware of it as the source of our thoughts, our essence, our identity, our true self – in a word: as our consciousness. It is simply what we are *in essence*.

2. We can experience **Being in motion** within ourselves as our mental activities – thinking, feeling, perceiving, desiring, wishing, wanting, distinguishing, deciding, dreaming, fantasising, judging something to be good or bad (evaluating), etc.

3. We can experience **Being that has taken on a form** in ourselves as our body; an ordered, intelligent and creative material structure.

So we see that Being is truly very essential! In the language of science, Being is the home of all natural laws and the source of all energy and matter. In religious terms – if we free ourselves from the many different culturally determined images of God – we can simply equate Being with the Divine! **God or the Divine is, by definition, the source of everything and everyone!** That is why every truly wise religion assumes that the Divine is our *essence*! **Mystics from East and West have claimed for millennia that they are, in essence, one with the Divine, or with God.** There are many examples of such mystics: Jesus, Rama, Krishna, Shankara, all the teachers of the Upanishads, Patanjali (the founder of yoga philosophy), Rumi, Lao Tzu, Buddha, Giordano Bruno, Meister Eckehart, Eckhart Tolle, Neale Donald Walsch, Louise Hay and many others.

In the spiritual experiences that these persons and many others have had, it becomes clear, *firstly*, that there is indeed such a thing as an essence. And *secondly*, they have all realised that Being is their ultimate identity, their true self. **In the stillness of an experience of Being, we realise that**

Being is our ultimate identity, our true self. As such, it is the source of our sense of self, the source of our ego.

The ego can be seen as the centre of our personality. The sense of self comes from deep within; it dwells in our soul; it originates from our true self.

**The ego is therefore not founded in itself;
it has a source, a foundation as its basis.
The ego's sense of self is an *expression* of the Self.
The ego has its *source* in the Self.**

The *true Self* is absolute and universal; it is Being itself. The *individual self* can be understood as a wave arising from *the Universal Self*, the ocean of Being, the ocean of consciousness. **As soon as we have an experience of Being, we spontaneously realise that is our true Self. We are Being! Being is our true Self!** Thanks to an experience of Being, we realise that our personal sense of self – our personal ego – has its source in Being. So we are not our ego; we are the Self! The ego, like all other relative phenomena, is an expression, a manifestation of the Self. **Thus we realise that every human being, indeed every living creature, borrows its individual sense of self from universal Being!** Meister Eckhart expressed this eternal and universal truth in religious terms: *Actually, only God is justified to say "I"*.

**As we delve deeper and deeper
into the nature of Being – and we can do so
by adding a stillness exercise to our daily routine –
then we experience more and more
that our individual consciousness
gradually aligns with universal Being,
with universal consciousness!
Our ego becomes increasingly
grounded in the Self.**

Just like the mystics mentioned above, *we* too can experience our consciousness becoming one with universal Being. To put it better: **we can gradually become aware of the fact that our consciousness is, in essence, one with universal Being.** Although we have then transcended our *personal* sense of self, we also experience that consciousness itself

has *not* disappeared! **We have not disappeared! And even our sense of self has not disappeared!** Our sense of self has become universal! Our individual consciousness has expanded into infinity; we become one with cosmic Being! **In other words: our consciousness has become cosmic!**

It is at this point that a great ‘aha’ moment arises ... our personal consciousness makes a kind of quantum leap into unboundedness and realises that, in essence, it has *always* been cosmic. We simply did not know it. **Just as a fish does not recognise the water around it, so we had not recognised the all-pervading and omnipresent nature of our consciousness.** We had no inkling of our unbounded, indeed divine, essence. In our ordinary waking state, we had identified with our mortal body. In an experience of Being, we detach ourselves from our identification with matter and discover who or what we truly *are*. We discover that we *are* consciousness and that we *have* a body.

Being and Consciousness

**With the discovery that our consciousness
is, *in essence*, universal and cosmic,
we realise within ourselves that consciousness
and Being are, in essence, one and the same.**

Consciousness does not arise from the electrochemical activities of our brain, but rather the reverse: the electrochemical activities of our brain, and the brain itself, arise from the creative intelligence of conscious being! The brain is limited in time and space, but consciousness itself is eternal, universal and cosmic! In the experience of absolute Being, we experience the truth that Shankara, the founder of the ancient Indian Vedanta tradition, expressed in the famous words (see Shankara’s text *Brahma Jnana Valimala*, verse 20): ***Jivo Brahmaiva, na parah* – Individual consciousness is cosmic, and nothing else.** We have already discussed at length above that *Being* is eternal and cosmic. At this point, I would like to emphasise that Being is *not unconscious* Being! **Being is self-aware! Being is aware of its own existence! Being is, by definition, *conscious* being!** After the personal experience of Being, we automatically realise that Being is consciousness! We discover that Being is self-aware! *Consciousness is an inherent quality of Being!* **Being is identical with consciousness!** Here, then, we have the ultimate define-