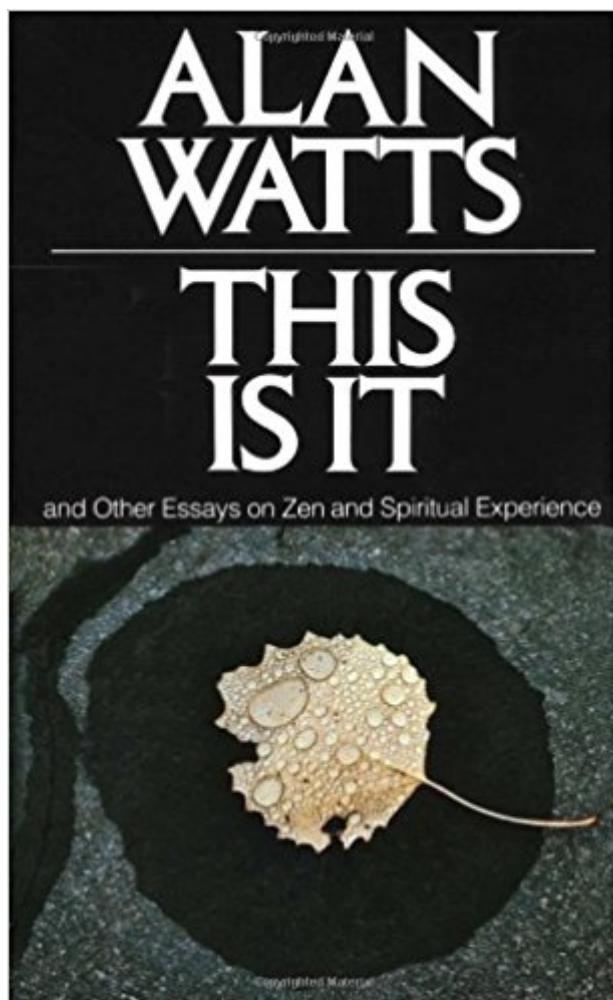


The book was found

This Is It: And Other Essays On Zen And Spiritual Experience



Synopsis

In six revolutionary essays, philosopher Alan Watts explores the relationship between spiritual experience and ordinary lifeâ "and the need for them to coexist within each of us. With essays on â œcosmic consciousnessâ • (including Wattsâ™ account of his own ventures into this inward realm); the paradoxes of self-consciousness; LSD and consciousness; and the false opposition of spirit and matter, This Is It and Other Essays on Zen and Spiritual Experience is a truly mind-opening collection.

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The apparent simplicity of a statement like "This is it" is beautiful, and at the same time it is clear and equivocal. Why would we be dissatisfied with "This is it" as an explanation, proclamation, or celebration? Perhaps because we have been conditioned to expect more before ever being given the chance to appreciate the immanent. Aside from theology, no field is more guilty of overlooking the "here and now" than philosophy - overlooking it, or simply missing it. But Alan Watts believes in a philosophy that is true to its spirit, the love of wisdom. "Such philosophy will not preach or advocate practices leading to improvement." As he understands it "the work of the philosopher as artist is to reveal and celebrate the eternal and purposeless background of human life." It may seem presumptuous for Watts to use the word purposeless, but in fact it's the opposite. To begin with, in relationships that involve observation, appreciation, celebration, or interaction with the "here and now," (life) there should be no assumptions made regarding a purpose. Assuming a purpose is already removing oneself from the "here and now" by imposing an impression that only could have

been established through time, in the past. In truth, the purpose or lack thereof is not important. We don't realize how many of these assumptions form the base for all that we experience. Watts pulls a wonderful line from Dostoyevsky: "Man is unhappy because he doesn't know he's happy. It's only that...If anyone finds out he'll become happy at once, that minute." Watts isn't trying to imply that happiness is easy. But we don't make things easier on ourselves by entangling ourselves in webs of assumption, dogma, and rigidity.

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