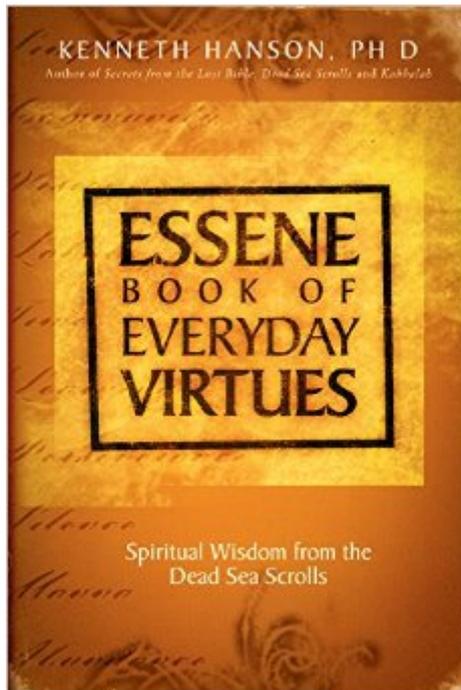


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# Essene Book Of Everyday Virtues: Spiritual Wisdom From The Dead Sea Scrolls



## Synopsis

A handbook of spiritual living for contemporary readers based on the 2000-year-old practices of the Essenes.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In the *Essene Book Of Everyday Virtues: Spiritual Wisdom From The Dead Sea Scrolls*, Kenneth Hanson (Judaic Studies, University of Central Florida, Orlando) draws upon the writings of the Essenes (or Sons of Light as they called themselves) discovered in Israel in 1947. These writings consisted of 38 books of the Hebrew Bible (the oldest known copies in the world) as well as apocryphal material, original rule books for community living, psalms, and books of prophesy, and are the basis (along with accounts by Josephus (an ancient Jewish historian) and contemporary archaeological discoveries), and are the legacies from which Professor Hanson has developed a kind of ethical handbook for contemporary readers. With an emphasis on community, simplicity, learning and perseverance which were hallmarks of the ancients, the *Essene Book Of Everyday Virtues* underscores how in these present times, so many centuries later, what those long-lost ascetics, scholars, visionaries, and holy men have to offer us in achieving lives of spiritual wealth and abundance today. *Essene Book Of Everyday Virtues* is a wonderfully fascinating and informatively engaging read that can be confidently recommended to modern readers of all denominations and faiths seeking to enhance their personal spiritual growth while living in a secular world.

This is a great book to help you feel grounded and whole. Kenneth explains the daily life and practices of the Essenes, something I knew nothing about until I picked up this book. This is truly an uplifting book that can help you have a better understanding of yourself and your spirit. This is a great book to read a little bit from each day to help you uplift your spirit.

I bought this book about a year ago while I was taking the Dead Sea Scrolls class from Dr. Ken L. Hanson at UCF. I have really enjoyed reading this book. It is a wonderfully fantastic and spellbinding book. I would highly recommend to all today's readers of all denominations and faiths who seek to heighten their own personal spiritual growth in this cruel and secular world. It really helps me to connect with God deeply and I believe it makes me more mystical.:) Professor Hanson has that perfect eloquence that I am so caught up with his buoyancy and persistent good humor. I really admire this awesome professor. He reminds me of one of my favorite characters, Indiana Jones. And he should be one! Amen!

'How are we then, to live? Ever since at least the days of Plato this question above all others follows each person throughout their life, and has been the constant refrain of reformers, ascetics, families, communities, nations, and religions the world over, down through the millenia. Answers are sought through philosophy, science, and religion. As far back as ancient Greece and India, founders of philosophical schools enshrined a way of life in their teachings. Answers to this question from a Christian perspective are to be found in the Evangelical Counsels of the Gospels, in "The Acts of the Apostles", and in the model of monasticism. An alternate answer is offered by Dr. Kenneth Hanson, of the Judaic Studies department of UCF. In his book, "The Essene Book of Everyday Virtues" Professor Hanson offers us, as his subtitle suggests "Spiritual Wisdom from the Dead Sea Scrolls", which he has studied for over 30 years. Professor Hanson takes from the Scrolls and the community of which they formed a part the following virtues: Simplicity, Community, Vision, Labor, Time, Learning, Perseverance, Silence & Right Speech, Manna, and Abundance and presents them as valuable and viable virtues to be followed even today, as a path live more meaningful lives. The book is comprised of a short personal introduction, ten chapters (one for each virtue to be covered) a (minimal) section of notes, and an index. He combines historical accounts, archaeological findings and his own paraphrase translations of source documents (designed to make the text more readable to a general audience). Its more a meditation on a way of life and an assertion on how to live, than a scholarly assessment of the Qumran community's accomplishments. As he admits, "I

have attempted to draw from [the Scrolls] some of the most meaningful, graspable and spiritually suggestive passages and to construct a series of ten disciplines from the ancient world that are relevant to contemporary life" (p5-6). It is also though, more a secular approach than a religious, for of his enumerated virtues, not one is primarily 'religious' in nature -that is, relating to the vertical dimension of life (there are for instance, no virtues associated with prayer, or sacrifice, or conversion and repentance)- though this is not necessarily in itself a weakness, more an observation. What is missing from the text is a precaution against taking any one virtue to the extreme, or warnings about taking a virtue (or virtues) out of context, or even an analysis of the weakness of the virtue in isolation, or what part of a broken life the particular virtue fills, although this weakness is mitigated, as after the first "Simplicity" every virtue builds on the one preceding it. The implicit conclusion is that the fullest expression of any one virtues requires the living out of all the virtues. These are, then, not necessarily the traditional virtues of an institutional monasticism (Christian or otherwise), and readers should be aware that this is not a Christian presentation or understanding of the enumerated virtues, but one that springs from a lifetime of scholarship on the sectarian documents of the Jewish sect of Essenes found at Qumran. Hanson's book has many worthwhile insights and does provide the outline of a program for right living, but it should not be taken in isolation, apart from the (written, oral, social and emotional) resources of a supportive community, but it is a good first step.

I purchased this book because I was so amazed at how reading Kenneth's, secrets of the lost bible, has transformed my life even further. I've read a lot of books on different cultures and religions, but he always manages to find the perfect balance between story telling and how it applies to our lives. I decided since secrets of the lost bible was so damn good, I'll try another of his books, even though I wasn't particularly interested in the Essenes. Long story short, I'm glad my path took me to this book.

If you are looking for information about the Essene culture, life style, or beliefs this is a great book to read.

This is a book to read some - put down - meditate - incorporate into daily life. Read some more.  
Thank you.

I have only positive things to say. This book will absolutely help you paint a better image of the time,

the event and the subject matter. The rest is your own journey. Happy reading!!

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