

PHILOSOPHY

INTRODUCTORY COURSE – WISDOM

Session Ten

The Desire for Truth

Summary

1. The Desire for Truth
2. Review of the Term

Practice

Continue to practise the awareness exercise at least twice per day.

Quotations

Shakespeare

Hamlet, Act 1, Scene 2

This above all: to thine own self be true
And it must follow, as the night the day
Thou canst not then be false to any man.

Galileo

Dialogo sopra i due massimi sistemi del mondo

All truths are easy to understand once they are
discovered; the point is to discover them.

Einstein

Archives 28-1098

Whoever is careless with the truth in small
matters cannot be trusted with important matters.

Edith Stein

Finite and Eternal Being, chapter 1

There is indeed only one Truth but it
unfolds itself to our human perspective in
a manifold of individual Truths which
must be conquered step by step. If we
succeed in penetrating to a certain depth
in one particular direction, a larger
horizon will be opened up and with this
enlarged vista a new depth will reveal
itself at the point of departure.

Mark Twain

Following the Equator

When in doubt, tell the truth.

Juan Mascaro

Lamps of Fire

One day a king called one of his ministers and
told him: 'Go, good fellow, and bring here all the
men of the town that were born blind'.

When the blind men had been assembled, the
king told a servant: 'Show these men an
elephant'.

The servant did as he was commanded, and he
made one blind man touch the head of the
elephant, another the ear, another the trunk, a
tusk, a foot, the back, the tail, and the tuft of the
tail; and to each one he said that he was touching
the elephant.

After this the king went to those blind men and
asked them: 'Have you studied the elephant? Tell
me your conclusions.'

The man who had touched the head said, 'It is
like a pot. The one who had touched the ear said,
'It is like a fan'.

And so for the others the trunk became a plough;
a tusk a ploughshare; a foot a pillar; the back a
granary; the tail a pestle; and the tuft of the tail a
broom.

And each blind man thought that what he had
touched was the elephant.

Then they began to argue with each other and to
quarrel, saying, 'An elephant is like this – no, it is
not, it is like this – I tell you it is not'; and so on,
until in the end they came to blows.

Quotations - Continued

Śrī Śāntānanda Sarasvatī

If there is a desire for truth, no doubt there will be barriers, but in course of time they will be overcome. The desire for truth is like a river, like the river Ganges. She starts somewhere with a small beginning, facing all sorts of high mountains which hold her up; but she fills up and flows over them, intertwines around them for nearly two hundred miles of high, low and deep mountainous ranges, and she finds her way to the ocean to which she belongs. These mountains are also there in search of truth, but have now become established as traditions and cannot move. Even in their earnest they become obstacles, like all the traditions of philosophical or religious thought. They lead to a point and stop.

One need not be lured by high peaks nor sink into deep ravines, but keep going. One day truth will be found. No attraction, howsoever lofty, no obstacle howsoever deep, could force a spirit to stop if the search for truth is true. Spirit will find the truth one day.

Leon MacLaren 1910 - 1994

Truth lies in each of us, waiting to be revealed, but does not act as master. In truth, each is made whole, in truth all are united... No happiness is like to that in which whole people move together, manifesting the truth in all of them, showing unity in diversity and permanence in change.

Review of Term

1. The Wisdom Within

The idea that wisdom is innate, that it only has to be accessed.

2. Know Thyself

What does it mean to know oneself?
How should we proceed in order to discover this?

3. Being Awake

We discussed the five levels of awareness; deep sleep, dream, waking sleep, fully awake and higher consciousness.

4. The Present Moment

We referred to the present moment being more than being sandwiched between the past and the future, but being eternal.

5. Living Justly

Not being tyrannised by such things as anger and fear, pleasure and pain, jealousy and desire. Plato describes living justly as living under the guidance of wisdom.

6. The Threefold Energy

Based on the description given in the Bhagavad Gita. This referred to the energies of sattwa, rajas and tamas, how to use them and how to avoid mis-using them.

7. The Light of Reason

We considered certain guides for the use of reason – letting truth be the aim, a willingness to be refuted, listening and questioning. We also discussed reason being used to unify rather than to separate people.

8. The Power of Beauty

We discussed whether there is such a thing as absolute beauty, which lends something of itself to things in the world. This included things with physical beauty, beauty of thought and beauty of conduct.

9. Unity in Diversity

An analogy was used of gold and objects made out of gold. The gold is the unity and the objects are the diversity. But the gold is always present.