

PHILOSOPHY

INTRODUCTORY COURSE - WISDOM

Session Two

Know Thyself

Summary

1. Self Knowledge
2. How do we proceed?
3. The Awareness Exercise

Practice

1. Practise the Awareness Exercise twice a day.
2. Ask “What would a wise man or woman do here?”
3. Practise having a clear mind, enquiring within, and being aware not only of life’s becomings but also our essential being.

Quotations

Temple at Delphi

Know thyself.

Lao Tzu

Tao Te Ching, ch. 33

Knowing others is intelligence.
Knowing yourself is true wisdom.

Ānandamayī Mā

Autobiography of a Yogi, ch.45
Paramahansa Yogananda

My consciousness has never associated itself with this temporary body... As a little girl ‘I was the same’. I grew into womanhood but still ‘I was the same’.... in front of you ‘I am the same’. Ever afterwards... ‘I shall be the same’.

Ānandamayī Mā

The Essential Ānandamayī Mā
Joseph A Fitzgerald (Ed)

Acquire a firm will and utmost patience. Precious gems are profoundly buried in the earth and can only be extracted at the expense of great labour.

Zen Flesh, Zen Bones, p.17

Nan-in, a Japanese master during the Meiji era (1868 – 1912), received a university professor who came to enquire about Zen. Nan-in served tea. He poured his visitor’s cup full, and then kept on pouring.

The professor watched the overflow until he no longer could restrain himself. ‘It is overfull. No more will go in!’

‘Like this cup,’ Nan-in said, ‘you are full of your own opinions and speculations. How can I show you Zen unless you first empty your cup?’

Hildegarde von Bingen

Meditations with Hildegarde of Bingen, Gabriele Uhlein, p.74

When one’s thoughts are neither frivolous nor flippant, when one’s thoughts are neither stiff-necked nor stupid, but rather, are harmonious -- they habitually render physical calm and deep insight.

Rumi

Daylight: A Daybook of Spiritual Guidance

People of the world do not look at themselves, and so they blame one another.

James Allen

As A Man Thinketh, Ch 1

Only by much searching and mining are gold and diamonds obtained, and man can find every truth connected with his being if he will dig deep into the mine of his soul.

St Augustine of Hippo

Confessions Book 10

People travel to wonder at the height of mountains, at the huge waves of the sea, at the long courses of rivers, at the vast compass of the ocean, at the circular motion of stars; and they pass by themselves without wondering.

Plato

Timaeus 27d

What is that which always is and has no becoming, and what is that which is always becoming but never is?

Śrī Sāntānanda Sarasvatī

Good Company, p. 22

If you begin to be what you are, you will realise everything, but to begin to be what you are, you must come out of what you are not.

You are not those thoughts which are turning, turning in your mind; you are not those changing feelings; you are not the different decisions you make and the different wills you have; you are not that separate ego.

Philosophy Student

I was sitting in a medical waiting room before being called in for some surgery to remove a skin cancer. I decided to do the

exercise while I was waiting and when I was called in the nurse gave me a series of tests and put my score up as zero. I asked why I got a zero, thinking it was a problem, and the nurse explained that it was a routine test for anxiety and people normally score around 20 just prior to a surgical procedure and was amazed at such a low score. I had been quite nervous coming in to the surgery and the result could only be due to doing the awareness exercise.

Rudyard Kipling
The Thing Hid Inside a Man

Once upon a time, or rather, at the birth of time, when the Gods were so new that they had no names, and Man was still damp from the clay of the pit whence he had been digged, Man claimed that he, too, was in some sort, a God.

The Gods weighed his evidence, and decided that Man's claim was good.

Having conceded Man's claim, the legend goes that they came by stealth and stole away this Godhead, with intent to hide it where Man should never find it again. But this was not so easy. If they hid it anywhere on Earth the Gods foresaw that Man would leave no stone unturned till he had recovered it. If they concealed it among themselves they feared Man might battle his way up to the skies.

And while they were all thus at a stand, the wisest of the Gods said: 'I know. Give it to me'. He closed his hand upon the tiny unstable light of Man's stolen Godhead, and when that great hand opened again, the light was gone.

'All is well. I have hidden it where Man will never dream of looking for it. I have hidden it inside Man himself.'

Plato
Timaeus 28a - 29b

Timaeus: Now everything that becomes or is created must of necessity be created by some cause, for without a cause nothing can be created. The work of the creator (in other texts: Maker, Demiurge, Craftsman), whenever he looks to the unchangeable and fashions the form and nature of his work after an unchangeable pattern, must necessarily be made fair and perfect; but when he looks to the created only, and uses a pattern, it is not fair or perfect.

Was the heaven then or the world, whether called by this or by any other more appropriate name - assuming the name, I am asking a question which has to be asked at the beginning of an enquiry about anything - was the world, I say, always in existence and without beginning? or created, and had it a beginning? Created, I reply, being visible and tangible and having a body, and therefore sensible; and all sensible things are apprehended by opinion and sense and are in a process of creation and created.

Now that which is created must, as we affirm, of necessity be created by a cause. But the father and maker of all this universe is past finding out; and even if we found him, to tell of him to all men would be impossible. And there is still a question to be asked about him: Which of the patterns had the artificer in view when he made the world,--the pattern of the unchangeable, or of that which is created?

If the world be indeed fair and the artificer good, it is manifest that he must have looked to that which is eternal; but if what cannot be said without blasphemy is true, then to the created pattern. Everyone will see that he must have looked to the eternal; for the world is the fairest of creations and he is the best of causes. And having been created in this way, the world has been framed in the likeness of that which is apprehended by reason and mind and is unchangeable, and must therefore of necessity, if this is admitted, be a copy of something.

Now it is all-important that the beginning of everything should be according to nature. And in speaking of the copy and the original we may assume that words are akin to the matter which they describe; when they relate to the lasting and permanent and intelligible, they ought to be lasting and unalterable, and, as far as their nature allows, irrefutable and immovable—nothing less. But when they express only the copy or likeness and not the eternal things themselves, they need only be likely and analogous to the real words. As being is to becoming, so is truth to belief.

Hildegard von Bingen
Causae et Curae (Causes and Cures)

Humanity, take a good look at yourself. Inside, you have got heaven and earth, and all of creation. You are a world, everything is hidden in you.

Diagram

Diagram 2 (b)

| KNOW THYSELF | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| BEING | BECOMING |
| Always is | Never is |
| Never becoming | Always becoming |