

PHILOSOPHY

INTRODUCTORY COURSE – WISDOM

Session Eight

The Power of Beauty

Summary

1. The Power of Beauty

Practice

1. Look at beauty everywhere and in everything. This may be in the sensory world, or the beauty of ideas, or conduct or character.
2. Continue to use the question, 'What would a wise man or woman do now?'
3. Practise the awareness exercise twice a day.

Quotations

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Essays, First Series (1841) Ch 12: Art

Though we travel the world over to find the beautiful, we must carry it with us or we find it not.

Emily Dickinson

Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson, Poem 516

Beauty is not caused. It is.

Attributed to Confucius

Everything has its beauty, but not everyone sees it.

Kahlil Gibran

The Treasured Writings of Kahlil Gibran

Beauty is not in the face; beauty is a light within the heart.

Hans Albert Einstein

The highest praise for a good theory was not that it was correct, nor that it was exact, but that it was beautiful.

Śrī Śāntānanda Sarasvatī

Conversations 1976 Day 1

Beauty is reflected in the objects and in the observers who receive the beauty through the objects. If there were no beauty in the observer then he would not find beauty outside. The mere fact that beauty is seen proves that there is beauty already present in the being of the observer.

Plato

Symposium 212

He who has been instructed thus far in the things of love, and who has learned to see the beautiful in due order and succession, when he comes towards the end will suddenly perceive a nature of wondrous beauty – a nature which in the first place is everlasting, knowing not birth or death, growth or decay; secondly, not fair in one point of view or foul in another . . . but beauty absolute, existing with itself, simple, and everlasting, which is imparted to the ever growing and perishing beauties of all other beautiful things, without itself suffering diminution, or increase, or any change.

Diagrams

Forms of Beauty

Beauty Itself

Beauty of Conduct

Beauty of Inner Qualities

Beauty of Thought

Sensory Beauty

Diotima on Beauty

1. Everlasting
2. Absolute
3. Imparted to all other beautiful things
4. Unchanging

Additional References and Quotations

Ralph Waldo Emerson 1803-1882

American philosopher, led the Transcendental movement in the Massachusetts area of America. This included such people as Thoreau. Some of his great essays included 'Self-Reliance' and 'The Over-Soul'. He was much influenced by Plato and was an early western scholar of the Vedic literature of India. The quotation in this material comes from Essays: First Series, 'Art' in 1841.

Emily Dickinson - American poet, 1830-1886

Poet from the same area as Emerson and influenced by him.

Kahlil Gibran 1883-1931

From Lebanon. His most famous work is 'The Prophet'.

Leon MacLaren 1910-1994, founder of the School MacLaren Lectures Vol4, p. 9

Years ago, there used to be a comedian and he always introduced his act with the words: 'Oh you beautiful people'. In fact, he was quite right, and it was also a rather popular statement, and the audience would shine back with the beauty, on being reminded. And this beauty, which shines from people when it is allowed out, is the beauty of the Self. All beauty, whatever it shines from, is the beauty of the Self. A thing is never beautiful. It is the Self that is beautiful, and it shines from different things according to their qualities.

Śrī Śāntānanda Sarasvatī Conversations 1976 Day 2

'Those who have love in their hearts and reason in their minds act in unison.'

Leonardo Da Vinci Notebook

'One of the functions of art is undoubtedly to allow us to escape from the narrowness of our own vision and discover something of the breadth and depth, beauty and wholeness of life.'

Keats Ode to a Grecian Urn

'Beauty is truth, truth beauty.'

Marsilio Ficino Letters, Vol 1/42

It was the chief work of the divine Plato....to reveal the principle of unity in all things, which he called appropriately the One itself. He also asserted that in all things there is one truth, that is the light of the One itself... which is poured into all minds and forms, presenting the forms to the mind and joining the mind to the forms....It's splendour shines in every individual thing according to its nature and is called grace and beauty; and where it shines more clearly, it especially attracts the man who is watching, stimulates him who thinks, and catches and possesses him who draw near to it.

Simone Weil, The Need for Roots: Prelude to a Declaration of Duties towards Mankind, p. 258

'True definition of science: the study of the beauty of the world.'

Helen Keller The Story of My Life

'The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen, nor touched... but are felt in the heart.'