

Beauty

“In the Name of Allah” The Most Merciful and Compassionate

“God is beautiful and He loves Beauty.” What is beauty? The more we stop to consider this question, the more we shall realize that it cannot be answered. One sees Beauty in form, in Nature, in a woman’s face, in a child’s eye, in an arm or leg, in clothes, jewelry. One sees it in buildings, in sculpture, in painting. Others do not see it but hear it as in poetry, music, children’s voices (waterfalls, etc.). Others even smell it as in perfumes, the fragrance of flowers and trees (and salt air). Some feel it as in the atmosphere after a rainstorm, or in the fur of animals or the pat of the hand. Some even taste it, and indeed all of us who enjoy good enjoy the beauty therein. Pretty dishes are almost always appetizing, much more than where no Love is put into the cooking or arrangement.

Then there are those who dissociate the thought of beauty with the senses to a greater or less extent. They read it in one’s eyes, in one’s smile; they feel it in a personality, they associate it with good deeds or kind thoughts. The most cold-blooded businessmen in Wall St. have been known to do the most sentimental deeds in the giving of charity. Then some associate it with love, affection, reverence. All these are forms of Beauty. Saint and sinner love beauty. If we stop to consider the motives behind crimes, sins, misdeeds, we shall find that somewhere or other Beauty played a part. The form that Beauty takes depends entirely on the evolution of the individual. Venus and Astarte were alike the goddesses of the highest forms of Beauty and Love and also the lowest forms—gaudiness and lust.

The more we consider Beauty the more we find it is a part of religion. Even men who say they do not believe in God believe in Beauty. Ernst Haeckel would even call himself an atheist, but he believed in the Good, the Beautiful, and the True, and when he was not working in the field or laboratory, he was at the canvas with brush and easel. If Jules Fabre were not so well known as a scientist, he might have been famous as an artist. Go to a symphony concert, or to an art gallery and what do we find? The great proportion of men are doctors, scientists, skeptics, materialists. There are men who revel in the name of scoffer and atheist whose hearts cry at the missing of violin concerts or operas. And not only that, you will find them in Nature, in the woods and hills on Sundays, climbing mountains, etc. What are they seeking? Even the most skeptical atheists, agnostics and materialists love Beauty.

And where is the seat of beauty? Why do we appreciate Beauty? The more we consider, the more we find the hand of God. We see it in the beauty of Trees and flowers, of sunsets and rainbows, of snowflakes and dewdrops—that is God working from without. But God also works from within. The greatest incentive for Beauty has been religion, reverence. Everywhere we can see the arts associated with worship; in the temples of Ancient Egypt and Greece, in India and China, in Rome, in medieval Europe. Even though the Mohammedans seem to prohibit certain forms of art, they have given the world the most beautiful building; the prettiest homes and Moorish architecture probably stands foremost in this respect. Even the Taj Mahal was dedicated to a woman, Shah Jahan. (The builder was a lover of God and Beauty and he showed it everywhere in word and deed.)

The Greeks made Beauty a part of their religion and women and youths of beauty were revered by them. And they gave to the world beauty, not only in the form of buildings, but in sculpture, poetry and prose, and even thoughts of beauty. Plato’s own writings and his methods prove

his philosophy. It was love for the Madonna that was the greatest incentive to the painters of the Renaissance, and even Dante keeps before him the ideal of a woman in his Divinia Comedia, when he reaches the highest heavens—his praise is of the Formless.

Forms are but steps toward the love of the formless, until we pass even the beauty of good deeds. Then comes the Beauty of prayers. In many cathedrals and temples, the very atmosphere breathes Beauty, and one loves to pray or hesitate in them. And this is high up on the ladder toward the love for Beauty itself, in form or formless. Our love for colors in the rainbow and in decorating and in music also shows steps toward the love of the formless, and we come then to that love for Beauty which we shall find only through Love. Samuel Johnson thought his wife beautiful, though she was among the ugliest of women and George Sand attracted many men. So we can see that there is even in this world love for formless Beauty.

This last step is the love for a personality, an ideal and we raise that ideal until we come to the highest, the Ideal of the Ideals, where we find that Beauty has a source. Beauty is the ladder by which the lover mounts step by step to find his Beloved.

If we could once realize this, God has implanted Beauty within us. It is not an inherited characteristic for it varies with each individual according to his own evolution. And why has God given it to us? As a guide to lead us to Goodness and Truth—to Him. As a beacon light on our way. Goodness is the path, Beauty is the lamp, Truth is the goal. Goodness and our ideals are different as we go step by step on the path, and the nearer we come to Truth the more we realize God's goodness. Then we can be a joy to our fellow creatures, we can see the love of God both in form and out of form, "in a loving mother, in a kind father, in an innocent child, in a helpful friend, in an inspiring Teacher," in saint and sinner, rich and poor, high and low, until we shall know and realize that God is Beauty, that He is in us all, that He is All in All.

Dictated not only under inspiration of Pir-o-Murshid, but he seemed to be right here telling me what to write.