Beauty and The sense of beauty

We have all heard the popular saying: *"beauty is in the eye of the beholder".* By that we mean that beauty is subjective, and strictly tied to the individual's taste or appreciation. However, this very common and widely accepted interpretation harbors a contradiction which we experience every day. The notion that beauty is in the eye of the beholder is also a common source of much of today's crisis, that create disharmony in society.

Yet, harmony is also an objective attribute of beauty, whose understanding or interpretation seldom leads to disagreements. Therefore, logically speaking, a concept that embodies harmony cannot at the same time create disharmony. Thus, this suggests that our subjective definition of beauty is limited, and cannot have universal application.

But since the saying is nonetheless true, it suggests that this subjective interpretation must reflect the individual's level of maturity or appreciation. By contrast, the objective attributes of beauty, like harmony and proportions, appear to hold true for all persons and situations. For example, everyone recognizes and experiences the effect of harmony or disharmony in the same way, i.e. pleasant or unpleasant. Also, proportions evoke similar emotional responses. For example, the sense of awe evoked by the symmetry and sizes in nature. Or the universal appreciation of the beauty of shapes and colors, of flowers, and nature in general.

In addition to the attributes mentioned, we also apply the concept of beauty to things that lie beyond our physical senses (i.e., eyes, taste, touch, ear, smell). For example, we describe *thoughts, words, a person's character, our experiences, emotions, and even mathematical equations* as elegant or beautiful. Which means that to awaken or enhance one's sense of beauty, one must increase their awareness of the different ways in which beauty manifests in the physical as well as in the non-material dimensions of our existence.

Also, since beauty is a sensation, it follows that the process of enhancing or awakening beauty in us would include cultivating or refining our tools with which we are endowed, or the mechanisms, by which we experience the external stimuli, that we end up describing as beautiful.

Since to cultivate means *to try to acquire or develop a quality, sentiment, or skill*, it means that we must first become exposed to the stimulus, then get ourselves favorably attuned to it, before we advance to finding it enjoyable. For example, a person becomes exposed to classical music, and overtime, with greater exposure and other contributory social factors, acquires a tase for this type of music, and then begins to enjoy it, and to find it beautiful. By contrast, another person is exposed to heavy metal music. Over time he or she grows to enjoy it and to find it beautiful. These are two examples of a cultivation that becomes *the beauty that is in the eye of the beholder*.

However, knowledge of the spiritual principles that govern creation, and our lives, tells us that every activity of a human spirit (human being) takes on a form, and these forms exist at their corresponding vibrational frequency, which is also emitted to their surroundings. How we experience these forms, through their vibrational frequency, is what we describe as pleasant or unpleasant. And the pleasantness or unpleasantness of the experience is in turn determined by the level or state of our own inner vibration. When the frequencies are aligned, we find the stimulus pleasant, and where not aligned, we find it unpleasant. However, there is no noticeable disharmony when the two vibration levels do not come in contact with each other. In other words, *there should*

be no problem for you to enjoy your classical music in your own space, while I enjoy my heavy metal music in my own space.

But there is another factor that many fail to take into consideration, as we enjoy the stimuli that we describe as pleasant. This is their long-term effect on our wellbeing, physical or and non-physical. Using music as our example, it has been reported that listening to classical versus heavy metal music can have different effects on people. Classical music is often reported as promoting relaxation and reducing tension (like lower heart rate). By contrast, Heavy Metal can increase arousal, tension, or even feelings of anger in some. Though some fans of Heavy Metal say that it helps them process negative emotions, this can nonetheless be seen as using one negative force to suppress another, which does not necessarily eradicate the original ill.

From this example alone, it should become clear to the objective person that true beauty has to look beyond *the eye of the beholder*. It must also take into consideration the quality of the forms that the object of beauty is creating, and fostering in the individual, as well as their effect on the person and society at large. For example, there should be no debate that anything which creates forms that increase sensuality, arousal, tension, anger, hate, laziness or rage cannot bode well for the individual or society. And an objective thinker would have to agree that only things that foster the opposite would be better for the individual and society too.

Therefore, a true and better yardstick for defining beauty has to look beyond personal appreciation or taste, to the ultimate effect on the individual and society.

If we use this yard stick, beauty would then have to be judged by how the cultivated appreciation helps to promote our internal and external harmony. Internal harmony being anything that helps to promote *equanimity* in us; that is, an inner mental and Spiritual state of calmness, composure, and emotional stability. A state that is characterized by an even-minded perspective that doesn't get swept away by strong reactions. In other words, a mindset that helps us navigate the ups and downs of life with calm and composure. Equanimity is also achieved through enhanced mindfulness, acceptance and practice of selflessness, which allows for a balanced centered response to the experiences of life, rather than a reactionary and resentful attitude towards life's experiences. It is noteworthy that this is also the advice and the central theme of all sacred and true spiritual traditions, whose primary goal is to promote peace and happiness in our lives. In short, to bring us to the point where we can live and enjoy a beautiful Life.

It is therefore not surprising that in his lecture "Let Easter Arise within You" (from The Grail Message), Abdrushin stresses that anyone who wishes or hopes to experience the true resurrection of their Soul/Spirit, needs to awaken their inner sense of beauty. The advice on this subject spells out how comprehensive such reawakening must become. Abdrushin's advise on this matter is as follows:

- 1) "*In the first place* you must *live* in an absolutely exemplary manner *in the earthly sense,* if you wish to fulfill the task….
  To lead an exemplary life on earth however, means to be natural! In <u>the way Creation shows</u> to you, so that you fit into it and do not merely sojourn there as caricatures, the way you are today."

"The way creation shows" us, implies acquiring/cultivating a deeper awareness and appreciation of the Will of The Creator, as it manifests in the Laws of Creation.

- *2) "To guide you in leading a God-willed life here on earth, you have been endowed with the sense of beauty, which comes from the purest intuition. This intuition holds within it the memory of the Luminous Heights, where beauty is the natural thing! For Light and beauty simply cannot be separated. They are one! If you now wish to carry Light onto this earth, then you must also bring beauty. Beauty in all that you do!*

"Which comes from the purest intuition" implies the purest part of the human being, i.e., our Spirit. Thus, true beauty can only be recognized by a Spirit that is alive!

- 3) "*But what you have hitherto considered beautiful, have been for the most part, the products of the intellect, cunningly thought out and formed by men, who relied only upon your weaknesses, and wished to stimulate them in order to gain earthly advantages for themselves… Everything was based on calculation. There was no trace of pure beauty! Only stimulation of the senses in some way or other! Every stimulation is an <u>inducement willed by the intellect</u>, which can never be uplifting! It is an enticement for some purpose."*

Avoiding ***"inducement willed by the intellect"*** shows that much of what we consider beautiful today is based on purely the material or physical, i.e., the domain of our intellectual thinking, which is frequently limited to our personal wishes and desires, and not necessarily in accordance with the Will of The Creator.

4) "You have already become accustomed to adapting yourselves to foreign ideas in these matters; you accept them and thus become the victims of foreign calculations which confuse and degrade you more and more; for through this, you have voluntarily surrendered a part of your freedom, and, with the freedom, your own right to the sense of beauty.

Thus you have renounced rights, which should have afforded you great support, and have left behind on your journeying that staff which was to have been a strong mainstay for you and a protection against all that was false, whereby you would immediately have had to recognize the caricatures that are so enticingly set before you, but which have nothing to do with true beauty.

"Thus, you have renounced rights,"... shows how, by not exercising our own sense of true beauty, and all that it implies, we become susceptible and easily manipulated by others. The result of which is that we go through life without having fully exercised and developed our own pure intuition, which is necessary for the development and growth of our Spirit.

In addition to the forgoing, Abdrushin points to how a true sense of beauty applies to what many would consider inconsequential. He adds:

1)And one step leads to another. The second one soon diverted you from naturalness in your movements! They became awkward and artificial, thereby losing more and more of their beauty and strength. ...Indeed, you try to adapt yourselves to your clothes, instead of fashioning the clothes to yourselves. Look at your posture! Consider your walk, the movements of your hands! Even here the intellect dominates; for everything is artificial, one-sided. It is quite evident that the attention is always purposely directed to one point! This immediately reveals the activity and domination of the intellect! . But what is one-sided disturbs the harmony of the whole! And thus, the beauty!

2) Do not let yourselves be guided by fashion which seeks to put a quite definite stamp of uniformity upon all human beings, especially on women, who are more sensitive to it! That is certainly false! Where then does the vitality remain which should exist in Creation! Let your personal taste make itself felt at last! Force it through, each one for himself! Soon you will thereby have shattered all that is stereotyped around you, because your re-emerging individuality carries with it the Power and the Law of Creation!

3)Men should not appear outwardly as mere empty forms either; they should not be so uniformly dressed, but should give expression and life to their own individuality, corresponding entirely to their own nature! Also, to their figure and general appearance! It is just therein that imitation must end. It brings standstill, retrogression and finally the paralyzing indolence of your spirit! No wonder then, that much truly artistic talent was bound to be stifled therein. —

4)Your forms are at one with your inner being; for the outer forms shaped themselves according to your inner being; they must be the expression of your inner being! For this reason, let your personal taste alone now be the deciding factor for yourselves at all times, and not fashion! Then your appearance, in color and style of dress, will also adapt itself to the nature of your spirit, whereby you will at last, have the effect of a complete being, and bring animation to your environment, each for himself.

5).. it is necessary for everyone to develop further in the mode of expressing the language, and even in speaking as such. There is no excuse for a human being, who, as the highest creature in this Subsequent Creation, is also its crown, if he lets himself go, is careless in one way or another, and does not use his whole strength to unfold, to the highest beauty, all that was once given to him in trust! The poorest of the poor has the duty and also the possibility to control himself in his behavior, his manner of expression and his speech! It requires only a serious volition and a little effort, nothing more! It is contempt for the gifts of God, when a man behaves in an uncouth and ill-bred manner, thereby offending against every sense of beauty. In future, such a man shall also be despised through the reciprocal effect and cast out from human society, because he does not show himself as a human being, as the crown of this Creation.

6)To develop beauty in all things, even in the smallest detail, is to honor God, and a prayer of thanksgiving through the deed!

No doubt, it would be difficult for many to grasp the relevance of these additional pieces of advice (that relate to an extended concept of beauty), believing them as inconsequential to our Spiritual growth or wellbeing. But Abdrushin assures us of the benefit of cultivating these additional attributes within us, with the following words…

Just let your intuition come once more to full value, and you will perceive how the body then forms a complete whole in its movements. Everything then helps simultaneously to perform this or that action, which naturally brings about harmony of movement. As in a graceful play, the entire body then carries out everything willed by the intuition. It is much freer, more natural and less constrained. Always remember: the intellect always forces towards one definite part only, which immediately destroys the sense of proportion and harmony. It is a restraint which man places upon himself, but no proud and free action…….

Therefore, first of all, let the intuition for the beauty of naturalness re-awaken within you! This is the law for you from now on! for it is a great help in keeping to a straight path in Creation; a help which will never fail you, nor lead you into any doubt……

A few years hence, you will still shudder at the thought of how it was today and in past centuries. It is now time to lay aside these faults!...Stand like a rock in the surging sea! You have nothing to fear if you follow the Law of Beauty! And everyone can easily observe it, if only he takes the trouble to listen to himself.

Obey this commandment. You will see that everything will change for the best in the lives of individuals, in family and nation!

Much more lies in this than you may think today, and it guarantees peace, harmony and happiness!

You are to ennoble yourselves, not merely to change by imitating others. What lies within you should come to the most beautiful blossom! Otherwise, you will not remain yourselves. Within every man lies another great treasure which should now also find expression outwardly in color and in form, as with the flowers.

Whoever submits to fashion plainly indicates his spiritual indolence in accepting an alien volition, merely to avoid having to listen to his inner voice, and to take from it what is appropriate for him.

And behind all that is classed with fashions and similar customs, there lurks nothing other than the greed for wealth of those who exploit the vanity and spiritual indolence of their fellow-men, in order further to increase their acquisition of earthly goods.

Take the trouble to think seriously about this! Everyone shall become an artist in his own taste, which is only for him personally! Not for others. In this way you will begin to re-awaken the

true sense of beauty, so that it may rise anew and become a strong support in your wanderings through the realms of this Creation. You will need this help on each plane, in order to adapt yourselves to it and develop thereby. Not one plane is like another. Yet each is beautiful in its own way! —

As with the planes of Creation as a whole, so shall it also be with each individual human being! Not one is quite like another! Why then should you wish to conceal this outwardly, through imitation? Just for once, become what you really are, but completely so! Always seek to ennoble all that already exists. Only the sense of beauty can be the support for you in this! It is of much greater value than you think! It makes you independent and free! Like-minded persons will then automatically be drawn to each other. For this too the sense of beauty indicates and eases the path, if you follow its call! Again, in this respect, the woman should also take the lead! —

Final Word

With His pieces of advice, Abdrushin gives to the objective person a clear and most comprehensive explanation of what many sacred teachings have tried, in vain, to bring to man's attention and appreciation; i.e., the importance of cultivating out inner sense of true beauty.

As has hopefully now become obvious to the objective listener or reader of this piece, Abdrushin's explanation shows how our understanding and grasp of the concept of true beauty, and the cultivation of our individual sense of true beauty is the only path to true inner peace and social harmony, as well as our individual spiritual growth.