

The Universe.

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Why is the world more prominent than God ?

Because to reveal art and conceal himself is the artist's aim.

Universe is an art of God and every other art derives its inspiration from it. Being the source of all arts, it can deservedly be called as the art of arts. Viewing it from an æsthetical point of view, we find, it surpasses all arts in their artistic characteristics. Let us see what are the chief features of an art.

The first and the foremost feature of a real art is its originality. It should not be imitative, but creative. Originality is the height of an artist's imagination. We are not attracted by an art, the like of which has already passed under our eyes. The art of God is unique in this respect, it is most original and its source seems to be nothing except the artist's imagination, for we do not find any parallel of it.

Another equally important characteristic of a fine art is that it must be full of life. If the characters are dull and dead, it is a great defect. If a picture reminds us only of the paper and brush, it has not served its purpose. Real art is something more than mere art. It is life which makes art a real art. It is full of the dynamic personality of the artist. While reading Shakespeare, we forget that his heroes are mere creatures of imagination, we feel them to be moving figures, our sympathies go with them in the same way as they go with any living creature. In short, the success of an art depends on the

life which it has. Universe is not only life-like, it is full of life. We forget that it is mere imagination, and therein lies the success of the artist.

Another feature of an art, which is rather the determining factor, is its beauty. If it is not beautiful, it is not an art. It may or may not have satisfied all the technical requisites; but every art, to be an art, must appeal. An appeal concerns the heart, to which every art is wedded. Feeling is the blood of art. A man who is devoid of feeling cannot be an artist. Feeling is the beauty of an art. This is the internal aspect of beauty. Externally, the artist makes use of various devices—the method of contrast being one of the effective ways. Contrast in colours increases the beauty of a picture, varying notes contribute to the charm of music, while opposition and struggle give beauty to a drama. We find in this art of universe a wave of feeling running through every character, and the method of contrast is almost always used. Life and death, light and darkness, plenty and poverty, gaiety and gloominess—all go together.

Another important feature of an art is its suggestiveness. A piece of fine art suggests rather than says, it presents rather than moralises. Nakedness loses its charm. Beauty must not be all exposed. It should lead us into an ocean of imagination. A little should be exposed but the greater part should be unearched by one who appreciates. If everything is made clear and no imagination is required to understand

or appreciate it, it loses at least half of its charm. From known to the unknown is the principle, not of teaching alone but of art, too. This Universe—the art of God—is not all exposed, and the more one has the power of imagination, the more will one understand and appreciate it. It requires the utmost power of imagination, for it is the product of highest imagination. A beautiful piece of art is unintelligible to the vulgar. The universe, to the vulgar, is ugly and full of miseries while to sages it is a source of inspiration and joy. We must be cultured before we can understand it.

Another notable feature that we find in this art is that it co-ordinates every art. We find painting in clouds, rivers and mountains; music in cuckoos and nightingales; tragedies and comedies in the drama of life; poetry in love; dancing in ripples, and imagination in philosophy. Thus every art finds its representative in the Universe. It is universal art.

Lastly, every art leads to joy. This, and not any materialistic gain, is the end and aim of every art. Joy is æsthetic, and so is art. Even tragedies give us pleasure, and in a sense more than comedies. We read and enjoy them. Pathos also adds to the charm of an art. Light literature which moves us to laughter is meant for lower intellects. The more we are advanced in our literary habits, the more we rise above what is external and mere show. We then search for feelings, struggle, sacri-

fic, which characterise higher poetry and drama. Macbeth may find his life miserable, Hamlet may find his life desolate, Othello may find life ugly, but Shakespeare and his readers view their lives from a higher standard. Burns might have found his life to be stale, but his miserable life makes him immortal. In the same way our Master-dramatist has a higher aim in His tragedies. His real merit lies in his tragedies, comedies of Life are mere trash. Majority of us do not think like this, for we feel ourselves to be Macbeths and Othellos and forget that they are not apart from Shakespeare's mind—rather they are the creatures of his highest imagination. Tragedies embody Shakespeare's best mind, he is at the top of his imagination in tragedies, he is immortal because he wrote tragedies. Tragedy, as an art, is given a higher place than comedy. This we understand and appreciate when we rightly trace the origin of an art, and remember that every art is the imagination of the artist.

Let us view the Universe as a fine art, the imagination of God, and then we shall have the right attitude towards it. It means, we have to rise above the Universe in order to appreciate the tragedies and comedies of Life, the use of the device of contrast in the various colours of Life and the rise and fall in the music of Life. This is the highest culture and every other art dwindles into nothingness before this masterpiece of God.

