

To Kalon – The Call of Beauty

Peter Wallimann

To grasp the principle of Beauty from a holistic perspective, the author undertook a journey within. The following text is to be understood not as a philosophic discourse, but much more as reflections of a mystical nature. The starting point is the surprising observation that the English term *to call* can be traced back to the Greek *to kalon* (τὸ καλόν), which means nothing other than *The Beautiful*.



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1. Beauty springs from perfect void. In this void, cause is groundless, spirit boundless, love selfless. From perfect void, Beauty fashions perfect richness. As it pours itself into being, unnumbered worlds shoot up like flowers on its banks. Suns begin to shine, planets form, the seas flow together. At Beauty's call, life starts on its journey.

2. To speak of Beauty, is to be silent. Beauty is nothing but Beauty. Beauty knows nothing but Beauty. And Beauty acts through nothing but Beauty. Little can be said with words. Only Beauty itself could describe itself sufficiently. Part of Beauty lies beyond expression though, so inexpressible it remains.

3. The nature of Beauty is numinous. No one has ever glimpsed its true face. Only Beauty itself could bear its own sight. But though we never may gaze directly on its face, Beauty is always and everywhere. Its scent makes us dizzy, its sight makes us freeze, its voice makes us shiver. There where Beauty leaves its trail behind, we build temples and cities.

4. Beauty's trail is easily perceived. All that is beautiful, is simple, and all that is simple, is beautiful. The simple is simple, because it is not multiple. What is not multiple, is undivided, and what is undivided, is whole. Beauty is simplicity, wholeness, oneness – aspects of the Absolute.

5. We ourselves can neither create Beauty nor destroy it. The 'causeless' knows neither the one nor the other, neither beginning nor end. Beauty's works may rise and fall, but Beauty itself remains what it is. Beauty is never a thing of our making, but one of its own action. Only if we open ourselves to Beauty does it express itself through us. And as it passes through us into being, we become part of it.

6. Beauty is both sound and silence. With no sound, no silence, and with no silence, no sound. Unmanifest, Beauty is silence; manifest, Beauty is sound. Sound wells up from silence, and sound ebbs into silence. Between void and fullness, between silence and sound, resonance reigns in the form of Beauty. Whenever then we listen to the silence, it is the voice of Beauty that calls us.

7. Beauty calls us, since we are called to Beauty! Beauty is harmony and concord. Its call brings purpose and meaning. Everything alive has claim to Beauty, as all life holds purpose and meaning. Human worth comes from the right to Beauty, which is a basic right of all being.

8. Light and Beauty are as brother and sister. Both spring from the void, both create richness. Both speak the same language, both make the same patterns. Light and Beauty are all-pervasive – but nonetheless ungraspable. If Light is the essence of the Absolute, Beauty is its expression. Those who

speak Light's language, also know the speech of Beauty.

9. The speech of Beauty is universal, based on mutual exchange of energy. The cosmos is a vibrating sea of waves. Their overlapping creates resonance. Beauty comes to be, where consonance prevails. Consonance means strengthening, repetition, rhythm. Consonance allows structure, symmetry, sequence. In the consonance of creation, Beauty shapes chaos into order, order into consciousness, and consciousness into love.

10. In every part, though be it so small, there is the whole. This whole is inherently beautiful. In the seed of a plant slumbers the Beauty of the meadow. A single drop of water holds the Beauty of the ocean. The laughter of a child reveals the Beauty of humanity. Beauty fills the whole of being: from grain of sand to universe. Beauty lies in the first cry of the newborn, and Beauty lies in the last breath of one dying. Beauty is omnipresent.

11. Beauty is action without judgment. Beauty knows no difference between big and small, between important and trifling, between good or evil. Beauty knows no relativity. Everything relative is a mark of separation. Beauty, though, is absolute, as it is completely identical to itself. Neither can the Absolute be questioned, nor does it question. In its 'causelessness', the Absolute is Beauty proper.

12. Beauty can neither be created nor destroyed, neither gained nor owned. What we feel as Beauty is the expression of an idea, a manifestation of energy. A flower is neither beautiful nor ugly. It is what it is: a flower. It may be symmetrically formed, have colored petals, smell pleasant. Its outer features, though, do not constitute its nature. Only if we burrow deeper do we see why the flower has Beauty. It has Beauty because it makes us see our own Beauty. This aspect of the beautiful connects us with the world, connects all being. In a state of mystic unity (*unio mystica*), we are able to perceive the true nature of Beauty.

13. The nature of Beauty is boundless oneness. Boundaries are an invention of mind. Through

defining itself, mind imagines itself mighty. Through identifying itself with shape, it imagines itself real. Through clutching to the past, it hopes to stay alive. Beauty, though, transcends this false divide. Beauty is consciousness, and Beauty is love, and both reach far beyond the bounds of mind. Beauty speaks to our innermost being, that realm where no divides exist, there where we are one with ourselves. Beauty unmasks division as illusion. In Beauty's eyes, being is interdependent oneness, intimately interwoven with itself. The various parts and aspects of this oneness all observe the same laws, in which the Beauty of eternity is mirrored.

14. None can stand apart from Beauty's laws. Beauty is law, and law is Beauty. Law holds sways throughout the cosmos, and law pervades all life. Truth is nothing other than the lawfulness of Beauty. This law pertains in absolute chaos, just as in most perfect order. Chaos and order are no opposites, but dual sides of Beauty's laws.

15. Beauty is source, effect, and goal. Chance, in an arbitrary sense, does not exist. Without exception, every event causes an effect, and each effect, in turn, is the cause of new events. So, life progresses as a wave of cause and effect. This wave through space and time follows the call of Beauty. In its original lawfulness, it mirrors the vital force of creation: the ultimate quest for love and consciousness. In the arms of Beauty, we are part of this consciousness and part of this love.

16. Beauty is urge for evolution, thirst for enlightenment, and yearning for love. In Beauty's eyes, evolution is play, enlightenment experience, love oneness. What drives us, deepest down, is Beauty: it is curiosity and mystery as one; it is infinite power and boundless drive. Without this drive, the caterpillar would not become a butterfly, and without this power, the universe would not evolve. Beauty has unnumbered facets. Beauty has myriad components. Still, Beauty is always one with itself. In this oneness, striving after diversity, Beauty is metamorphosis and evolution.

17. Nature has many faces, but only one expression. Nature has a thousand voices, but only one song. Nature follows many paths, but only one law. This law is called *Beauty*. As Nature follows Beauty, it is in perfect oneness with itself. Nature never takes more than it gives. It gives life, and demands it back once more. Hierarchy is not a mark of power, but a tenet of design. Food chains are not signs of force, but symbols of equilibrium and exchange. In Nature, giving and taking are the same. In Nature, life and death are one. Nature is always in perfect balance.

18. The laws of Nature are cyclic and rhythmic. After day follows night. After flow follows ebb, after sun follows rain. All life is a continuous circle: the movement of the stars, the succession of the seasons, the flow of the waters, the circulation of the blood, the metabolism of the body, inhaling and exhaling. All is in unending flux, but, overall, remains constant. Life and death, becoming and passing, are interdependent faces of being – and transience is the dynamic of eternity.

19. Nature is engaged in constant meditation. Through meditation, it enters into dialogue with itself. The splashing of a brook, the song of a blackbird, the lurking of a cat – all this is a sign of deepest contemplation. Immersed in itself, Nature celebrates its intrinsic Beauty. This Beauty is not only Beauty for its own sake, it is *Beauty* and *Function* as one. The beautiful and the functional help consciousness to see and to be seen.

20. Function implies goal, and goal implies evolution. In the material world, evolution means reproduction and adaptation – this is expressed through richness and diversity. In the spiritual world, evolution means intelligence and consciousness – this is expressed in creativity and genius. The joining of spirit and matter, the oneness of body and soul, leads to the awareness that our purpose lies within us; and the path to this goal leads over the heights of Beauty.

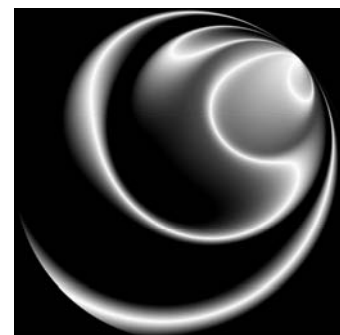
21. To scale the heights of Beauty means devotion. Devotion melts the limitations of our egoistic reason. Devotion lets us overcome our

identifying with form. Devotion lets us recognize the germ of Beauty in all things. As we give ourselves to the service of Beauty, Beauty readily flows to us. In the light of Beauty, we approach our true nature. This nature is unconditional love – love for ourselves, and love for all creation.

22. To develop talent requires effort. To experience inspiration requires emptiness. Inspiration does not come through mental or physical work. Inspiration is a gift. It fills us when we listen to the silence. As we become one with the all-embracing void, it awakens in us a vision of Beauty. Those who carry such a vision within, feel the need to share this precious gift with others.

23. Beauty cannot be captured through knowledge: it reveals itself wordlessly. Beauty cannot be captured through feelings: it overpowers directly. To experience Beauty needs neither religion nor philosophy, neither art nor aesthetics, neither science nor culture. All of being is flooded through with Beauty. All it needs is dedication.

24. Beauty unveils its true splendor to those who unveil themselves. Beauty lends its true power to those who disown power. Those who call Beauty, are called to Beauty. Those who dedicate themselves to Beauty, experience devotion. And those who find Beauty in themselves, are fulfilled by it. *Khalil el Gibran* says, '*Beauty is eternity gazing at itself in a mirror*' (The Prophet; 1923). In the mirror of the opposite, we experience our own Beauty as a symbol of the Absolute. It calls us to ourselves and guides us to mastery. Embraced by Beauty, understanding and feeling meld into wisdom.



25. Beauty causes ecstasy on the one hand, and melancholy on the other. When we are at one with Beauty, we feel ecstatic. When we are separated from Beauty, we are depressed. All of life, all creation, contains ecstasy and melancholy side by side. Melancholy does not mean nostalgia. Nostalgia is self-pity with relation to the past; it comes from inner shortcomings. Melancholy, though, is a state of deepest empathy for suffering creation; it comes from inner richness. Even in absolute Beauty, a human can never be perfectly happy as a human. A drop of bitterness remains, until the circle of becoming and passing closes through the mystic reunion of all being.

26. Ugliness is the absence of Beauty, not its opposite. Something absent is a fiction, it has no presence. However, the ugly can still have effect. Ugliness comes from the failure to be aware of Beauty, from the illusion of being separated from Beauty. When this illusion takes hold, disharmony develops. Disharmony, in turn, leads to pain, pain leads to frustration, and frustration causes rage. All of these negative traits spring from an illusion, leading to a spiral of inner and outer conflict. This force can be countered only through Beauty. Beauty alone promises healing.

27. Those who fight ugliness, thwart Beauty. Ugliness feeds on resistance. As we resist, we unwittingly strengthen ugliness. Struggle blocks Beauty's natural flow. Only those who devote themselves to Beauty, who place themselves in its service, can overcome ugliness. The true presence of Beauty alone can break the vicious circle, in which negative consciousness imprisons itself. As we set Beauty against ugliness, ugliness simply fades, as darkness disappears when we kindle fire.

28. The need to bring Beauty and Light into a world of darkness and ugliness could not be greater. The spiritual suffering, caused by dying Nature, poverty, war, and oppression, is immense. But still, the glowing spark may not be there. Our reason still helplessly justifies itself. We still remain in ignorance. We still submit to the markets' diktat. We are still unready to act consistently, together,

and globally. But every day the suffering grows, and with it the will for change.

29. Change sweeps in as soon as consciousness awakes. Beauty is consciousness, and Beauty is change. Change is the only constant in the universe, the greatest force of all. This force comes from no programme, and from no utopianism. It comes from no political or social posture. This force is nothing other than life's urge for fulfillment. Beauty is like water: it always finds a way. It cannot be stopped by anything. Sooner or later, it washes away everything in its way.

30. Where Beauty is, there is consciousness, and where consciousness is, change ensues. Beauty is the living expression of sensitive consciousness. The revolution of consciousness serves the expression of Beauty, and vice versa. In developing consciousness, we recognize Beauty; and in recognizing Beauty, we develop consciousness. Those who live in the state of Beauty, can no longer tread unaware through life. And those who walk through life aware, can do nothing other than manifest Beauty.

31. Beauty demands absolute awareness. Only those who are aware, can know Beauty, and only those who know Beauty, can express it. To feel the presence of Beauty, we need to devote our full attention to the *now*. The given moment is all that we can influence. But to possess the *now* is anything but simple. When we let our thoughts dwell in the past, or worry over some fictitious future, we lose the strength of our consciousness. But only if the *present* is open to us can Beauty enter in. And only when Beauty dwells in us will it manifest through us. Beauty waits, indeed, to be discovered and celebrated. Today, here, and now!

32. Beauty transforms past and future into present. Beauty knows nothing but timeless present. Beauty does not work for a better future, nor strives to overcome the past. Beauty knows only the moment. Only the moment is real. In the moment alone lies power and crystal-clear consciousness. In the moment alone lies empathy and the chance for change. Beauty turns enemies

into people, people into friends, and friendship into love.

33. No pathway passes by Beauty. Beauty is the path of richness back to the origin. This path describes a perfect circle, whose beginning and end fall together, without being the same. *To kalon*, the beautiful, gives meaning and purpose to life. In following its call, we travel a mystic journey to ourselves.



Peter Wallimann (Ph.D.) is a Swiss scientist and artist working in Zurich. Raised in a spiritual tradition, but confronted with scientific evidence, integral and mystic approaches toward a deeper understanding of Nature and Life in general are among his major interests. The artworks reproduced are part of Peter's visionary project *Sensigns*®. For further information, please visit his website at www.sensigns.ch. German-English translation by Dr. Andrew Beard and the author.

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