

The Wisdom of Hypatia

The Third Degree of Wisdom Chapter 10: The Path of Love

Learning Outcomes:

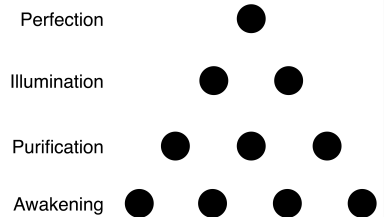
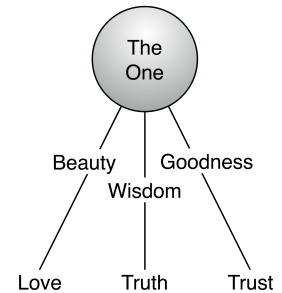
- You will understand that there are three ways of ascent to The One, corresponding to its three principal attributes
- You will understand the levels of ascent, symbolized by the Tetractys
- You will know the history of the Ascent by Love from Plato through the age of courtly love to modern times
- You will be able to practice the Ascent by Love, rising from the level of physical beauty, through beauty in the soul, to Ideal Beauty, in preparation for union with the Good
- You will understand the Platonic concept of deification and how to achieve it

Structure of the Ascent by Love

Level of Reality		Love as Desire for ...	Mental Faculty		Stage of Ascent	
World Body		physical beauty	sensation	vision	Awaken- ing	observed beauty
				imagin- ation		imagined beauty
World Soul		universal beauty	reason		Purifi- cation	calm lower soul
						concept of perfect beauty of soul
						beautifi- cation of soul
						moral virtues
World Nous	Being	Ideal Beauty	nous		Illumi- nation	Contemplation of Ideal Beauty
	Goodness	The Good				Love of the Good
The One		Divine Beauty	the god within		Perfection (Union)	

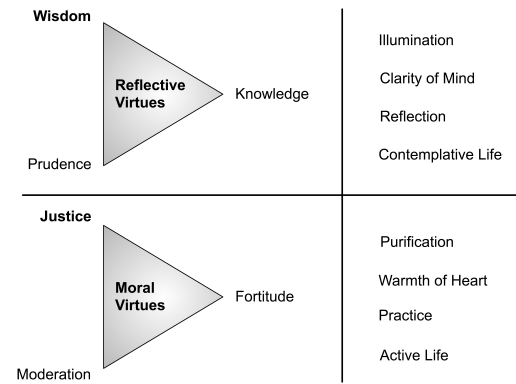
Key Ideas:

- The One possesses the three Chaldean Virtues (Excellences): *Beauty, Wisdom, and Goodness*
- There are three corresponding ways of ascent to The One: the Paths of *Love, Truth, and Trust*
- The levels in the ascents are represented by the Tetractys: *Awakening, Purification, Illumination, and Perfection (Union)*
- The Ascent by Love appears in Plato's *Symposium* and has descendants in Rumi's inspired poetry, the troubadours, courtly love, and Dante's *Divine Comedy*
- Beauty awakens love, which is desire for the good, and so Beauty draws us upward to union with The One
- The first step of Awakening uses the faculty of *sensation* to contemplate the *physical beauty* of the beloved
- In *courtly love* the heroic lover invites possession by Eros and the beloved lady invites possession by Wisdom so they can experience archetypal Love
- The second step of Awakening uses the faculty of *imagination* to assimilate the beloved into the lover's soul
- The myth of Narcissus and the story of Hypatia's suitor remind us that beauty in the soul transcends physical beauty
- The second level in the ascent is *Purification*, which separates the soul from the body
- The first stage of Purification is to calm the lower soul to achieve a state of tranquility
- The second stage of Purification allows the Ideal Beloved to appear in action in your imagination
- The third stage of Purification beautifies the soul by growing its two wings (see figure on next page)
- The *first wing*, practiced in your active life, comprises the *moral virtues*: moderation, fortitude, and justice, which subsumes the others
- The *second wing*, practiced in your contemplative life, comprises the *reflective virtues*: prudence, knowledge, and wisdom, which subsumes the others
- The third level in the ascent is *Illumination*, in which there is contact with the Ideas in the Cosmic Nous, especially Beauty and the Good
- The first stage of Illumination uses contemplation of Ideal Beauty to induce unselfconscious participation in the Cosmic Nous
- The second stage of Illumination, which may arise spontaneously, is all-consuming love for the Good
- The fourth level in the ascent is *Perfection*, a grace resulting in union with Beauty and the Good
- In spite of our flaws, we each can dwell as a god among the gods by centering our lives in the archetypal realm



Exercises:

- ☐ Providential and Returning Love (p. 216)
- ☐ Observed Beauty (p. 218)
- ☐ Courtly Love (pp. 219–20)
- ☐ Imagined Beauty (p. 220)
- ☐ The Ideal Beloved (p. 226)
- ☐ Beauty in the Soul (p. 228)
- ☐ Contemplation of Ideal Beauty (p. 230)
- ☐ Love of the Good (p. 231)
- ☐ Union with the Good (p. 235)
- ☐ Invocation of Love (p. 236)



Your Notes:

