



## A False Distinction

1. PBS, *How Art Made the World: Ancient Greece*

<https://www.pbs.org/howartmadetheworld/episodes/human/greece/>

Ancient Greeks were preoccupied with philosophy and mathematics, but there was something in their culture that was the equivalent of Egypt's obsession with order and precision. The Greeks were fixated with the human body, and to them the perfect body was an athletic body. They believed their gods took human form, and in order to worship their gods properly, they filled their temples with life-size, life-like images of them.

2. *Plato on what makes us tick & why math matters so much*, <https://bigthink.com/culture-religion/why-did-plato-think-mathematical-beauty-would-make-us-better-people/> Jul 8 '16

Rebecca Newberger Goldstein: The reason mathematical beauty specifically matters, according to Plato, is that it is immanent in reality itself, or at least in physical processes, and seeing these mathematical relationships in physical reality provides their explanations... And our seeing all this—the simple mathematical relationships, lovely in themselves, being realized in nature and therefore making what was all tangled and unintelligible before all shinningly transparent now—is itself a profound experience of beauty.

3. Abarbanel (15<sup>th</sup> century Spain) to Shemuel I 9:2

הסבה הרביעית ליופיו ולתפארת תוארו, ועליו אמר משכמו ומעלה גבוה מכל העם, שהיה מינו נאה לאדנות ותוארו יורה על הממשלה.

The fourth reason: His beauty and splendid appearance. Upon him it says, "taller than all of them, from his shoulders and up," the type which is attractive for mastery, and his appearance indicating power.

4. Radak (12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> century France) to Shemuel I 16:12

והספור הזה להודיע כי הגון היה למלכות כי יפה תואר היה.

It reported this to inform that he was suited for monarchy, for he was attractive.

5. Talmud, Shabbat 133b

"זה קלי ואנוהו" - התנאה לפניו במצות! עשה לפניו סוכה נאה, ולולב נאה, ושופר נאה, ציצית נאה, ספר תורה נאה, וכתוב בו לשמו בדין נאה בקולמוס נאה בלבלר אומן, וכורכו בשיראין נאין.

"This is my Gd, and *v'anvehu*" – Beautify yourself before Him with mitzvot! Make before Him a beautiful succah, a beautiful lulav, a beautiful shofar, beautiful tzitzit, a beautiful Torah scroll, and write it in His Name, with beautiful ink and a beautiful quill from a professional scribe, and wrap it in beautiful silks.

6. Talmud, Menachot 28b

שפודים של ברזל היו וחיפום בבעץ העשירו עשאו של כסף חזרו והעשירו עשאו של זהב

The branches of their menorah were iron rods, and the Chashmonaim coated them with tin. When they became wealthier, they made the branches of silver. When they became still wealthier, they made the branches of gold.

7. Masechet Sofrim 20

ואסור להדליק בנר ישן, ואם אין לו אלא ישן, מלבנו באור יפה ומותר.

One may not light an old lamp; one who only has an old lamp may whiten it well in fire, and that is permitted.

8. Rabbi Yosef Karo (16<sup>th</sup> century Israel), Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 673:3

נר של חרס שהדליק בו לילה אחת נעשה ישן ואין מדליקין בו לילה אחרת, אלא לוקח חדשים בכל לילה. ואם אין לו אלא ישן, מסיקו בכל לילה באור.

If one lights a clay lamp on one night, it is considered "old" and one may not light it on another night; rather, one must take new lamps every night. One who only has an old lamp should fire it every night.

9. Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan (20<sup>th</sup> century Poland), Mishneh Berurah 673:29

אחרת - שהוא מאוס וביזוי מצוה:

"on another [night]" – For it is repellant, and this would degrade the mitzvah.

#### 10. Talmud, Shabbat 21a

מצות חנוכה נר איש וביתו והמהדרין נר לכל אחד ואחד והמהדרין מן המהדרין בית שמאי אומרים יום ראשון מדליק שמנה מכאן ואילך פוחת והולך ובית הלל אומרים יום ראשון מדליק אחת מכאן ואילך מוסיף והולך

The mitzvah of Chanukah is for each family to light one lamp. Those who beautify light one lamp for each individual. According to Beit Shammai, those who beautify still more light eight lamps on the first day, and then reduce by one per day. According to Beit Hillel, they light one lamp on the first day, and then increase by one per day.

#### κάλλος

11. David Macintosh, *Plato: A Theory of Forms*, [https://philosophynow.org/issues/90/Plato\\_A\\_Theory\\_of\\_Forms](https://philosophynow.org/issues/90/Plato_A_Theory_of_Forms)

Behind this unreliable world of appearances is a world of permanence and reliability. Plato calls this more real (because permanent) world, the world of 'Forms' or 'Ideas' (eidos/idea in Greek). But what is a Platonic Form or Idea?

Take for example a perfect triangle, as it might be described by a mathematician. This would be a description of the Form or Idea of (a) Triangle. Plato says such Forms exist in an abstract state but independent of minds in their own realm. Considering this Idea of a perfect triangle, we might also be tempted to take pencil and paper and draw it. Our attempts will of course fall short. Plato would say that peoples' attempts to recreate the Form will end up being a pale facsimile of the perfect Idea, just as everything in this world is an imperfect representation of its perfect Form. The Idea or Form of a triangle and the drawing we come up with is a way of comparing the perfect and imperfect. How good our drawing is will depend on our ability to recognise the Form of Triangle. Although no one has ever seen a perfect triangle, for Plato this is not a problem. If we can conceive the Idea or Form of a perfect triangle in our mind, then the Idea of Triangle must exist.

The Forms are not limited to geometry. According to Plato, for any conceivable thing or property there is a corresponding Form, a perfect example of that thing or property. The list is almost inexhaustible. Tree, House, Mountain, Man, Woman, Ship, Cloud, Horse, Dog, Table and Chair, would all be examples of putatively independently-existing abstract perfect Ideas.

12. Prof. Werner Jaeger, *Paideia, The Ideals of Greek Culture*, tr. Gilbert Highet, pg. 13

The chivalrous ideal of the complete human personality, harmonious in mind and body, foursquare in battle and speech, song and action.

13. Jowett translation of Plato's Phaedrus (4<sup>th</sup> century BCE Greece) 248C-D

[T]he soul which has seen most of truth shall be placed in the seed from which a philosopher or lover of beauty and follower of the Muses will spring; that which has seen truth in the second degree shall be some righteous king or warrior chief; the soul which is of the third rank shall be a politician, or business manager or trader; the fourth shall be a lover of gymnastic toils, or a physician; the fifth shall lead the life of a prophet or seer;...

14. Jowett translation of Plato's Phaedrus (4<sup>th</sup> century BCE Greece) 249D-251A

When he sees any earthly beauty is transported with the recollection of the true beauty; he would like to fly away but he cannot; he is like a bird fluttering and looking upward and careless of the world below; and he is therefore thought to be mad... Only a few retain an adequate remembrance of them; and they, when they behold here any image of that other world, are rapt with amazement; but they are ignorant of what this rapture means, because they do not clearly perceive it for what it is. For there is no radiance in our earthly copies of justice or temperance or those other things which are precious to souls: they are seen through a glass dimly; and there are few who, going to the images, behold in them the realities, and these do it only with difficulty.

15. Talmud, Niddah 30b

ואין לך ימים שאדם שרוי בטובה יותר מאותן הימים שנאמר "מי יתנני כירחי קדם כימי אלוק ישמרני." ואיזהו ימים שיש בהם ירחים ואין בהם שנים? הוי אומר אלו ירחי לידה. ומלמדין אותו כל התורה כולה שנאמר "ויורני ויאמר לי יתמך דברי לבך שמור מצותי וחיה..." וכיון שבא לאויר העולם בא מלאך וסטרו על פיו ומשכחו כל התורה כולה שנאמר "לפתח חטאת רובך..."

A person never has a better existence than [in utero], as Job 29:2 says... And they teach him the entire Torah, as Proverbs 4:4 says... And when he enters the world, a *malach* comes and slaps his mouth, causing him to forget the entire Torah, as in Genesis 4:7, "At the entrance, sin crouches."...

16. Nehamas translation of Plato's *Symposium*, 211D

Only in the contemplation of beauty is human life worth living.

17. Tehillim 27:4

אסת שאלתי מאת ד' אותה אבקש שבתי בבית ד' כל ימי חיי לחזות פְנֵעַם ד' ולבקר פְּהִיכְלוֹ:

I have asked one thing of Gd; this I will ask: to sit in the house of Gd all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of Gd and to examine in His sanctuary.

Hiddur

18. Shemuel I 16:6-7

ויהי בבואם וירא את אליאב ויאמר אך נגד ד' משיחו: ויאמר ד' אל שמואל אל תבט אל מראהו ואל גבה קומתו כי מאסתיהו כי לא אשר יראה האדם כי האדם יראה לעינים וד' יראה ללבב:

When they came, he saw Eliav and said: Gd's anointed one is before Him! And Gd said to Shemuel: Do not look at his appearance and height; I have rejected him. It is not as Man sees; Man sees to the eyes, but Gd sees to the heart.

19. Mishlei 31:30

שקר החן והבל היפי אשה יראת ד' היא תתהלל:

Charm is false and beauty is empty; a woman who is in awe of Gd is to be praised.

20. Talmud, Taanit 7a

אמרה ליה ברתיא דקיסר לרבי יהושע בן חנניה: אי חכמה מפוארה בכלי מכוער! אמר לה: אביך רמי חמרא במני דפחרא! אמרה ליה אלא במאי נירמי? אמר לה: אתון דחשביתו רמו במאני דהבא וכספא! אזלה ואמרה ליה לאבוה, רמיא לחמרא במני דהבא וכספא ותקיף. אתו ואמרו ליה, אמר לה לברתיא מאן אמר לך הכי? אמרה ליה רבי יהושע בן חנניה. קרויהו, אמר ליה אמאי אמרת לה הכי? אמר ליה, כי היכי דאמרה לי אמרי לה.

The Caesar's daughter said to Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chananiah: Woe, beautiful wisdom in an ugly vessel! He replied to her: Your father puts wine in clay vessels! She responded: Then what should he put it in? He replied: You are important, put it in vessels of gold and silver! She went and told her father, and he put the wine in vessels of gold and silver, and it went bad. They told [the Caesar]. He asked his daughter: Who told you to do this? She told him it was Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chananiah. They called him, and [the Caesar] said to him: Why did you tell her to do this? He replied: As she told me, so I told her.

21. Mishnah Avot 4:20

רבי אומר אל תסתכל בקנקן אלא במה שיש בו. יש קנקן חדש מלא ישן, וישן שאפילו חדש אין בו:

Rebbe said: Do not look at the barrel, but at what is in it. There are new barrels filled with old, and old barrels which don't even contain new.

22. Tosafot (12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> century Western Europe), Shabbat 21b **והמהדרין**

והמהדרין מן המהדרין – נראה לר"י דב"ש וב"ה לא קיימי אלא אנר איש וביתו שכן יש יותר הידור דאיכא היכרא כשמוסיף והולך או מחסר שהוא כנגד ימים הנכנסים או היוצאים אבל אם עושה נר לכל אחד אפי' יוסיף מכאן ואילך ליכא היכרא שיסברו שכך יש בני אדם בבית.

It appears to Rabbeinu Yitzchak that Beit Shammai and Beit Hillel (candles-per-night) refer only to the candle-per-household approach, so that this would provide greater beauty...

23. Rashi (11<sup>th</sup> century France), Shabbat 21b **והמהדרין**

והמהדרין – אחר המצות – עושין נר אחד בכל לילה לכל אחד ואחד מבני הבית.

Those who pursue mitzvot use one lamp each night for each member of the household.