

**Plato, "Morality and Happiness" – pp. 487-492****1. Explain the three different ways Socrates believes we consider things to be good.**

In the forthcoming text, I will enumerate and elaborate on the three distinct methods that Socrates believes we perceive as good. Initially, Socrates contends that acquiring knowledge of the essence of good is of utmost importance. However, he also postulates that justice, courage, and wisdom are interdependent, and must be linked to be cogent. Socrates maintains that the preeminent veracity is good, which necessitates a gradual progression towards completeness and certitude. To conclude, Socrates asserts that the validity of justice hinges upon good, as it requires the latter for proper justification. Accordingly, the three constituents of the soul that endeavor towards equitable balance are the harmonization of the four virtues.

**2. Present in your own words the "Ring of Gyges" story that Plato's brother Glaucon discusses. What is the ultimate point Glaucon is trying to make about why we behave justly?**

The narrative "The Ring of Gyges", as recounted by Glaucon, Plato's sibling, is a tale about a shepherd who, following a quake and tempest, chances upon a bronze steed containing an inert body at the base of a precipice. This lifeless body was adorned with a ring, which the shepherd elected to keep. However, he was unaware that the ring possessed magical properties. Once Gyges flipped the ring, his corporeal form became invisible. He then used the ring's powers to seduce the queen and murder the king to gain control of the kingdom. Glaucon's underlying

purpose in relating this story is to elucidate why we exhibit just behavior. He posits that people are inherently unjust, and that our adherence to justice is only because we dread legal repercussions or reap rewards for our virtuous conduct. If individuals were invisible in legal proceedings, justice would be diminished, as our inherent unjust nature would manifest itself.

**3. What do Glaucon and Adeimantus ultimately think is the best life for a man, and how should we pursue it? Do you agree or disagree, and if so, then why?**

In the ensuing discourse, I shall expound on Glaucon and Adeimantus' conception of the superlative existence for a human and how individuals should aspire towards it. In accordance with Glaucon, the ring would not have altered any man's conduct, thereby implying that humans are inherently self-serving. Adeimantus shares this sentiment and affirms that righteousness is not a voluntary act, but rather the result of the benefits conferred in life and the hereafter. Personally, I concur with their arguments and consider them reflective of reality. Humans, as living entities, are innately motivated to pursue the best possible outcomes for themselves. Absent punitive measures, individuals would accord less consideration to others. To be sure, this notion is not universally applicable, and some individuals do experience remorse. However, for the majority, early life experiences in competition with society impart a realization of what is optimal for oneself.

**Aristotle, "Ethical Virtue" – pp. 492-495**

**1. Characterize the "happiness" (Greek: eudaimonia) that Aristotle thinks is the ultimate end for man's pursuits.**

As indicated by Aristotle, felicity is the utmost aspiration of human enterprise and a moral excellence. He enshrined felicity as the crux of human existence. Aristotle posited that both corporeal and psychological welfare is indispensable to attaining a joyous existence. This conception gave rise to Aristotle's formulation of a happiness science as a novel area of scholarship. Hence, as previously noted, felicity represents an ultimate objective that encompasses the entirety of life and not something that can be instantaneously acquired or forfeited. Aristotle delineated it as an extended process that occurs over a protracted period.

**2. What does Aristotle argue is the function of a human being?**

As per Aristotle, the purpose of humanity is to pursue a thriving existence, which entails a mode of life that a virtuous person would lead and that constitutes human excellence. In his perspective, the function of humanity encompasses deliberate rational action and guided cognition. Rationalism denotes a theory that asserts the universe adheres to logical and calculable principles. To discern veracity, solely one's intellect suffices. Thus, in rationalism, our senses assume a secondary function in the observation of the world. By utilizing reason appropriately, an individual can improve and advance.

**3. What does Aristotle mean by saying virtue is a disposition, and not just a feeling or a capacity?**

Aristotle asserted that virtue is not a mere sentiment or capacity but a deliberate disposition. He termed it a teleological disposition, which implies that virtue is not merely an inert quality but a motivating factor that propels us to act virtuously. This moral disposition is not inherent but can be acquired through conscious effort.

**4. How do we gain virtue?**

The concept of virtue refers to a way of approaching life that aims for moral excellence, and through constant practice, a person can achieve freedom. In essence, virtue encompasses a positive and fully developed human capacity in the mental and spiritual realms. Aristotle believed that everyone possesses a natural disposition towards virtues, but these must be cultivated and developed through self-discipline. He emphasized that virtues are character traits that can be learned and trained through practice and emulation of moral exemplars, similar to how physical skills are honed through exercise.

**5. Explain how virtue is like a mean, or balance point between extremes. Present an example of such a virtue.**

Aristotle posits that virtue is akin to a mean or equilibrium between two extremes. He outlines the definitions of deficiency and excess for some of the primary character virtues. For instance, a lack of courage is a deficiency, while insensibility is an excess of desire, and weakness is an excess or lack of anger. Aristotle acknowledges that it can be challenging to strike the precise balance, so he advises that when uncertain, one should choose the lesser of two evils.