

Philosophy

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1) Is there a satisfactory definition of holiness, as Euthyphro concludes? Do either Plato or Socrates think there is? What might this definition be?

“ What is dear to the gods is pious.” Euthyphro gives a general definition of piety. Euthyphro ends up going in circles as Socrates rebuts his definition of piety and ends up leaving because it is somewhat obvious that he does not clearly know.

Socrates wonders whether the love of the gods is even relevant to the meaning of piety, so he asks if “ Is the pious loved by the gods because it is pious, or is it pious because it is loved by the gods?” This is a question about causality. On the one side are the gods, in the act of loving. On the other side is piety. Is piety caused by the loving of the gods, or is the love of the gods itself caused by the nature of piety? In the former case, the pious is whatever the gods love, for whatever reason. Indeed, the gods must love things arbitrarily, for no reasons; for if the gods love something for some good reason, then the nature of the thing makes it worthy of love and the gods must merely recognize the objective value of the thing. This is a question that becomes of increasing theological importance in the future. That is because it can be generalized into a question about the relation of all value.

As for Plato, the stand that he takes is that God recognizes what is good and wants to do it because it is good, this posits the nature of value independent of Him, so that he must, and wishes to, conform Himself to it. This makes it sensible to praise and revere God's goodness, but it also means that God is no longer the Creator of everything: standards of value stand above and beyond Him, outside of his control and creativity. This is actually what Plato

thought. He thought that the Forms preexist the creative action of God, and provide the standard for it, in the *Timaeus*.

2) How can a citizen, how can this new kind of citizenship that Socrates is proposing in the *Apology*, how can any kind of citizenship be devoted just to private matters and not public?

In the *Apology*, Socrates has shown that he is, by his own definition, a patriotic citizen who cares deeply about the good of his polis and one who consistently acts in what he sees as his city's best interests; but he has also shown also that, in light of his own definition of patriotism, he must be regarded as a uniquely patriotic Athenian. Moreover, given the problematic current condition of the state, "doing good" means acting as a social critic and it meant questioning fundamental Athenian beliefs in conversations held in public and private spaces of the city.

By the end of the *Apology*, Socrates has shown (to his own satisfaction at least) that his accusers are fools, but fools appropriate to business as usual in the democratic state. He has established that he himself is a dignified private citizen rather than a pandering politician. But in the process he has also revealed that an active political life, one that included speaking out in the citizen Assembly, is impossible for a just man. Because the crowd presence meant, even in the most secret sense, man would only be courageous to say what he felt was socially acceptable. Finally he has shown that true dignity was not a social matter at all, but rather an affair of the individual soul.

3.) In the Crito, can the laws of Athens commit injustice? If they do, what recourse does a wrongly accused citizen have? Why is Socrates unable to overturn his unjust condemnation?

Socrates' lengthy discussion of the worthlessness of majority opinion could be thought to call into question the legitimacy of the verdict against him. The verdict was issued by non-expert jurors, many of whom came to their decision on the basis of prejudice rather than on the basis of the evidence – in violation of their oath. So in this sense this could mean that law is actually not devoid of flaws. It could also mean that the laws could also hold mistakes in itself. In this sense, the law could possibly be wrong. Crito tells Socrates that there are ways to release himself from the mistaken verdict.

The state is Socrates' superior, in relevant respect much like his parent or master, and Socrates is therefore obligated to obey the state. This is Socrates' fundamental argument against escape – the argument from superiority. The Laws of Crito, we remember, had claimed that Socrates must either accept his own execution or break his just and voluntary contract with them. The terms of that contract had specified the exchange of obedience to the city's Laws for Socrates' having received and accepted specific goods: his birth, nurture, and education. So in this sense, Socrates is unable to overturn his unjust condemnation because he chooses to remain in the state, which means he is obligated to follow their rules.

4) Aristotle believed that the entire universe is purposeful, both individually and collectively. Do you agree with his contention? Explain why or why not and provide an example to support your perspective.

Aristotle believes that the universe as a whole has a purpose and that we exist as part of such a goal-directed scheme of things. Aristotle constructed his view of the Universe based on an intuitive feeling of holistic harmony. Central to this philosophy was the concept of teleology or final causation. He supposed that individual objects (e. g. a falling rock) and systems (e. g. the motion of the planets) subordinate their behavior to an overall plan or destiny. This was especially apparent in living systems where the component parts function in a cooperative way to achieve a final purpose or end product.

This is akin to something like, “ this is a small picture that is part of a bigger picture”. Although I believe that indeed there are instances that make everyday mundane things part of something bigger and grander, I also believe that we are not puppets in life. We are given free will and choice. I believe in choices and that our choices are not predetermined by anything. We choose to do it and therefore the choices that we make affect the people around us and our world.