

Virtue

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In Plato's Protagoras, Socrates suggests that virtue, or human excellence, amounts to the possession of wisdom. Explain what Socrates means by this, and give one of the arguments he uses to demonstrate it. Then, explain how this doctrine might be related to his claim in the Apology that "the unexamined life is not worth living". Protagoras is a dialogue by Plato, the main characters being Socrates and Protagoras. In the dialogue, Socrates suggests that human excellence amounts to the possession of wisdom. To explain this further, he gave his idea of wisdom. Wisdom may be in the form of enlightenment as in depicted in the Allegory of Cave, when the cave is left and the world outside of the cave is viewed from a whole different perspective and observe the world as it really is and not what has been imagined or envisioned. However, the world outside of the cave is not in complete isolation from the inside. For example, inside the cave, it had been deduced that there is a dog or a cat judging from its shadow, but outside the cave the dog or the cat could be seen in flesh, in reality, the way it actually was and in the trueness of its form. Therefore enlightenment is not completely isolated from the life of the cave, but offers the truth about the life in the cave. Socrates also said that not knowing is a form of wisdom. Explaining this further he meant to say that if there are two people – one who does not have knowledge and still thinks that he knows and the other who does not have knowledge but does not think that he knows as well. Upon comparison, Socrates considers the one who does not have knowledge and thinks that he does not have knowledge as well is the wiser man of the two. Another way by which can be considered as wisdom is how a philosopher tends to his soul and takes care of it. This is related to his famous saying 'for the unexamined life is not worth living for men' (38a) in <https://assignbuster.com/virtue/>

the Apology. This pertains to utilizing one's wisdom into making his life better and full of virtues implementing his wisdom into a practical sense and daily lives. According to Socrates the best a man can be is by discussing excellence and virtue so as to make one's life better and to test himself and others for this wisdom as, according to him, a person who does not examine his life and implement his wisdom to make it better, has a life not worth being lived. Without examining it, life is inhumane and dysfunctional and not complete at all. Not examining our thoughts deprives our brain and our existence of its basic need. A life which is being lived with thorough examination of thoughts is a life well lived and by changing your own and others' lives with examination of thought does one live a virtuous and excellent life. Plato was of the opinion that the best possible way in which a life can be lived is with considering every activity with philosophy, deep examination and wisdom. In Apology, Socrates addresses Athens and says that he respects them and has their best interests at heart, but he is not obliged to follow anyone's command other than the command of God and as long as he lived he will remain a philosopher and encourage the people of Athens to do the same. To every citizen he crossed path with, Socrates would say that they were Athenian, people of the greatest city which was known for its limitless wisdom and power. It should be a cause of great shame that they were keen upon acquiring as much wealth and honor as they could possibly acquire and yet they remained ignorant of the wealth of wisdom and truth and made no efforts to acquire that which is the most essential for their souls and which is needed to get their souls to the best state it could get to. To take care of their souls they should have deep and philosophical conversations full of wisdom, daily and regularly for a life

without philosophy and wisdom is deemed not worthy of living. Socrates concludes by virtue is one thing since every virtue is knowledge and that virtue is the amount of wisdom. For example people commit vice keeping in view the immediate gains they get from it and overlooking the losses that they might incur by doing so in the future, which is their lack of knowledge. If they had the knowledge of what would happen they would stick to the virtuous life (Richard Parry). References: Parry, Richard. " Ancient Ethical Theory (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy/Fall 2009 Edition)." Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. N. p., n. d. Web. 19 Feb. 2013. . Plato, and C C. W. Taylor. Protagoras. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976. Print.