

# Analysis of socrates' definition of justice

[Philosophy](#), [Personal Philosophy](#)



Justice is the proper human life. One of the reoccurring topics discussed between philosophers throughout history was the topic of justice. Many philosophers have had their fair share of debates and definitions for the justice, and today I will be explaining Socrates' definition of justice.

Socrates believed that a just life is a happy life, with many pleasures, because it is good for one's soul and offers the best human life. Happiness does not come from materialistic/external needs, such as money or power, but from living a life that is good for your soul and human life.

In Book IX of Plato's Republic Socrates proves that man ought to practice justice by showing us how an unjust, tyrannical, life has a negative effect on our soul and life, how to understand what pleasure and happiness is by being someone who pursues wisdom, and how just actions (with moderation) make the human soul happier and better. Socrates starts by breaking down the five character/city types and their level of happiness: the philosopher-king being the happiest, while the tyrant is the unhappiest. The philosopher-king is the rational part of a man as he is able to make the decisions that are best for oneself, while the tyrannical part only seeks to satisfy its own desires, at the cost of anything, making him unjust. Although these are polar opposites of one another, both of these character types can still be found in the same man. " Those that are awakened in sleep, when the rest of the soul – the rational, gentle, and ruling part – slumbers", this speaks of the desire for pleasure that powers the tyrant within us. Because the rational part is sleeping, the tyrannical part has the chance to roam free, creating a nightmare, but one only becomes a tyrannical man when these desires emerge during the hours of being awake.

A tyrant's desire is only materialistic/external and does nothing good for the soul. It serves no purpose, other than to satisfy the "erotic desire" and cause the tyrant to resort to "deceitful means" and "force" in order to satisfy his needs because they are the most important thing in his eyes, even more important than family and friends. He sacrifices what is good in order to achieve his twisted version of happiness and pleasure. Even if the tyrant were to have friends, they would simply be a means to an end, making them expendable. These unjust actions are what make the Tyrant the most "wretched". But no matter what he does to satisfy his desires, they are insatiable and only end up enslaving his soul. He becomes a slave to himself and is never free. He is trapped in a world full of "fear and erotic loves of all kinds" and has nothing but his twisted desire for pleasure to keep him company. In order to understand and know what pleasure really is, one must focus more on the learning-loving part of the soul, also known as the philosophical part of the soul.

Compared to the other parts, the honor-loving part and profit-loving part, the learning-loving part has the most experience when it comes to knowing what true pleasure is. What makes the philosopher more experienced than the others is that he has "tasted the other pleasures since childhood...", while the other parts of the soul have only experienced their own respective sense of pleasure, giving him the position of being the wisest and making the most rational decision that would benefit the soul.

The philosopher uses "experience, reason, and argument" as his means. Because he is able to use experience, reason, and argument, he can pursue

any pleasure in life because he will use his rationality to make sure that everything is under control and that he is not straying off into a path that could lead to unhappiness; thus, giving him the ability to have the most pleasant life and soul.