

Socrates' convictions



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In this essay I evaluate according to Socrates, must one heed popular opinion about moral matters? Does Socrates accept the fairness of the laws under which he was tried and convicted? Would Socrates have been wrong to escape? In my evaluation I explain Socrates' decision to accept his conviction, and that popular opinion will likely do great damage to the spiritual/mental/moral well-being, and if he would have decided to escape his life of virtue would end with that decision.

Socrates was born 469 B. C. his father Sophroniscus, was an Athenian stone mason and sculptor. Socrates followed his father's footsteps and practiced it for many years. His mother Phaenarete was a midwife. Athenian law required men to serve in the service at this time. Socrates also serve as a civilian soldier as an armored infantryman, known as the hoplite. Which is a soldier with a shield, long spear and face mask, where he participated in three military campaigns in the Peloponnesian War, at Delium, Amphipolis, and Potidaea. Socrates was known for his bravery saving the life of one of his Generals. Being in the military you learn the principles of honor, loyalty, duty, respect, courage, fearlessness and it changes a person's life that does not already have those attributes. I would think that Socrates instilled these attributes also through combat and brotherhood for one another. Especially instilling courage and selflessness during saving the lives of his peers. Those traits stayed with him the rest of his life. Once the trial had ended, he compared the trial to his military experience.

Socrates had an ordinary Greek education and gave most of his time to philological interests. He is thought to be the first moral philosopher, of the tradition of thought. The character of our soul, where virtues are found, are

more important for our lives than our bodies or external conditions. That the quality of the soul decides is the aspect of our lives, for the good or the bad. He says that if we want to do well in this world, we must take care of our soul. That we must want to get the virtues to change our souls better and live our lives for the better. To get these virtues we must have knowledge of how to act in the best interest of any way of life. That if you act badly it's because of your incomprehension of how to act and why.

Socrates, a citizen satisfied with his faithfulness to Athens, engaged in discussions and dialectic on essential questions of ethics, politics, religion and education. He went against the traditional knowledge of the elites. Socrates did not offer his teachings as a way to support his family, he took no payments. He just wanted to give the people of Athens the knowledge for them to think through and give them the opportunity on how to manage their lives. Once the uncertainty of a disturbed age in Athens, due to economy crashing and men coming home from the foreign and civil wars dead, the population starved and the political scene in turmoil, that brought Socrates to the hemlock. Other than follow the lead of his persecutors, we should perhaps honor Socrates' encouragement to know ourselves, to be independently honest, to do what we, not the next man, knows to be the right way to live our lives. Just because the majority has hatred for something does not mean you have to also, the roar of the crowd so to speak, but to go hard as it might be towards the good life. Socrates states that, its not my crimes that will convict me, but instead, rumors, gossip; the fact that by whispering together you will persuade yourselves that I am guilty.

In my opinion, this is true even in our society. People tend to listen to the word of the majority other than making their own minds up using the methods of reasoning to understand what makes them happy, which is the rule of living a good life. Because if you are sad and not happy your life would not be good. This comes in fact with our social media we have today, which is good on both sides of the table. One, we can practice our freedom of speech and get our message across. But on the other side, it tends to build up to changing someone else's mind due to the lack of knowledge someone has on that subject. This results in the people going with the majority and not thinking for themselves. In which he had angered the majority of the wrong people and led to his conviction.

Socrates' trial was completed in two stages, the first was to convict him of his crimes of not believing in the mythical gods, and corrupting the youth of Athens. The second stage was to sentence him to which was obviously death. The trial took nine to ten hours in the People's Court, the civic center of Athens. The jury consisted of 500 male citizens over the age of thirty. The magistrate questioned both Socrates and the accusers. He also gave all of them the opportunity to question each other. The three accusers had a total of three hours to present their argument. One of the accusers, Anytus was the driving force behind the prosecution of Socrates. In my opinion, to the relationship of Anytus' son and Socrates. Socrates did not really try to defend himself but to lecture his accusers and the magistrate by using his method of Socrates paradox.

Since Socrates was sitting around quite willing to wait his impending execution. His old friend Crito gives him many arguments to persuade

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Socrates to escape. The first was, what will people think? In the eyes of Socrates his friends could have a bad reflection on themselves if they helped him escape. That Crito was well acquainted with the Guard and could persuade him to let Socrates leave. But in the eyes of his friends the people of Athens would think they did not try to help him get out of prison. Was he just thinking about his friends' finances because they were willing to provide or was it totally his own morals that held him from escaping? In my opinion after reading his dialogues, He had strong moral concepts of the laws of Athens and he understood those laws and wanted to respect them. Crito also thought if he stayed and went through with the sentence, he was just aiding his antagonists to unjustly wronging him, at the same time acting unjust himself. Socrates states that one is never just in doing wrong, even if it is for the right reasons. In other words, two wrongs do not make a right. He had made a commitment to obey the laws of Athens and has lived happily for many years under them. So, if he attempted to escape it would not only break his agreement, but also challenge the weight of the law. Would've Socrates been wrong to escape his imprisonment? He believes it would have been wrong to escape stating that he wasn't afraid of death, felt he would be no better off in exile and said he was still a faithful citizen of Athens. This is an extremely moral and honest and unbelievably honest level of integrity. This belief is based on what we call the social contract theory of government today. Social contract theory states a persons' moral and/or political obligations are dependent upon a contract or agreement among them to form the society in which they live. Socrates did not want to break his agreement with the laws of Athens.

Socrates was also true to his beliefs in the truth. He also believed that for him if death was like a sleep without interruptions or migration of the soul to another world it would be good for him. Because he says if it's like sleep this would only be on night of eternity in a state of unconsciousness compared to other days of his life. He seemed to want to go to this place to reach new truths. Also, to find out who is wise, who pretends to be wise, who is not, and to continue his research and knowledge. Since he says that everyone already knows everything, they just have to recollect the knowledge. Thinking of this, makes me wonder if he thinks that going back to this state, he will receive the knowledge he is in search of. Socrates would have been labeled even if he had exiled to another Greek town. He would have gone against his morals and been disappointed the rest of his life living in hiding. He wanted even in the trial to continue his teaches and frankly despite his accusers.

Socrates' mindset was that no one should listen to the popular opinion and listen to the intelligent, professional advice, and behave well. Socrates argues that if it is never good to do wrong, then you should never act illegally in the reaction of a wrong action. The statement from Socrates, for the unexamined life is not worth living. Here he meant if it refers to a life by rote under the rules of others without the subject ever examining whether or not he truly wants to live those routines or rules. According to Socrates, this type of life was not worth living. Rather than living an unexamined life, Socrates chose death.