

The paradox of inquiry



Have you ever wondered " how to find yourself? " But..

. how is " finding yourself" possible? If you're trying to find yourself, you really need to know what you're looking for, or you won't know when you've found it. Back in ancient times, the greeks had philosophers. They would do nothing but sit around and think. Plato is one of the most famous of the greek philosophers. He was a " teacher" to all of the others, and they followed him whole-heartedly. All of his teachings are used today in any and every philosophy and psychology class.

Meno's paradox is one of Plato's many dialogues. It is an attempt to discover the notion of general virtue. (Whether it can be taught, it is learned, acquired, or just is there from birth.) The goal of solving the paradox is finding a common definition that applies to all particular values. Socrates and Meno both argued about the different types of virtues. Menos suggested that there are different values for men, women, children and so on. While Socrates wanted to find a common quality, that shows the differences in the virtues.

Both Socrates and Menos were able to list virtues, but couldn't find a common virtue, until Menos suggested that all men (and women, and children... etc.) have a desire towards " good things. " (In the moral sense.) Socrates argued that no man knowingly desires " evil things.

" (In the moral sense.) So that the desire for " good" is common in everyone. Menos mentions that good things must be obtained in a good way. (Ex. If wealth is obtained in a just way= hard work) But Socrates again argues that " Virtue must be obtained in a virtuous way," creating a circular argument.

Menos, at the point of giving up tells him, (using an epistemological (a branch of philosophy that asks, " How do we know what we know? ") problem) " But Socrates, how do you know what you are looking for, when you don't even know what you are looking for, is? And when you find what you want, how will you know that this is what you were looking for? (What you did not know, is)" (Simply, if you don't know exactly what you're looking for, how will you know when you've found it?) Again, Socrates argues. He says that it is not a matter of what we learn, or do not learn, it is just a matter of " being reminded" because we already know it.

He exemplifies this by taking a slave boy and having him recite a simple geometry equation, even though he (the slave boy) had never even thought of it before. Because " no one really learns anything," it means that there are no teachers and no students, so virtue can't be taught. The conclusion of the argument was that everyone was born with virtue. But can never be sure of, until we know what actual virtue is. It really kind of makes you wonder what life means doesn't it? It's a big part in everyone's life when they go through a period of trying to realize who they really are. But if you don't know who you are, how will you know when you " become that person? " Any paradox is a confusing subject, and they are all created to make you think about what's going on, who you are, and what the purpose of life is. This is one of my favorites to think about.

It really is a challenge for your brain, and gets you to start thinking about it yourself. It's never been solved, and is still contemplated today.