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Socrates about Wisdom The ancient Greek philosopher Socrates did not leave written treatises. His teachings and ideas of wisdom can be found in the treatises of his pupil Plato, in which Socrates is the protagonist. Based on the study of Platos dialogue called Apology, it can be argued that Socrates understands wisdom primarily as ethical knowledge. Moreover, Socrates considers himself a wise man capable of a critical attitude to the existing knowledge while looking for the real truth.

To begin with, Socrates is convinced that the truth requires knowledge of the distinction between good and evil actions and behavior (Plato 28). Thus, Socrates sees wisdom primarily a practice of the moral life, in which the main role is played by such realization. Socrates connects wisdom with ethics, since he considers man as a social being living among other people, and therefore obliged to follow the ethical principles of harmonious coexistence with them. Socrates believes that morality and the truth provided by wisdom are identical concepts. A good man is both a moral and intelligent in his/her actions, since he/she is guided by moral principles. All actions that are based on virtue are good. A man who knows the essence of such acts does not want to commit a bad act, while a person who has no idea of morality can make a mistake, even trying to do good. Every virtue is wisdom, and only wise men are able to commit good deeds.

Considering wisdom, Socrates argues that the first step to wisdom involves ignorance (Plato 26). Its task is to justify the need to search for the truth that is possible using dialogue as a comparison and analysis of the various points of view. Wisdom requires an active search for the truth that suggests a denial from ready-made answers. Based on this understanding, Socrates says the following: " I am very conscious that I am not wise at all" (Plato 26).

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Socrates makes demands not only to himself but also to other people so that they could understand that there is nothing worse than to assume that they know everything (Plato 33). Nevertheless, there is evidence to suggest that Socrates thinks that he is much closer to wisdom than all other people. In particular, when in the Apology the oracle calls Socrates a wise man, the philosopher demonstrates faith in relation to the words of the oracle. Though he attempts to verify the validity of these words, nevertheless, given that the wisdom presupposes the recognition of personal ignorance, Socrates gives a hint that he has the wisdom. The main reason of this is in the fact that he is aware of his ignorance, and hence, he possesses wisdom.

To sum up, Socrates considers wisdom as ethical knowledge capable of distinguishing good from evil. In addition, the initial step to this wisdom implies recognition of one's ignorance. Ignorance is not yet wisdom, but one who recognizes ignorance automatically becomes a wise man. Given this, Socrates makes it clear that he sees himself as a wise man as compared with others.

Work Cited

Plato. *Five Dialogues: Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Meno, Phaedo*. Trans. George M. A. Grube. 2nd ed. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company. 2002. Print.