

What is the  
relationship between  
philosophy and the  
good life



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Relationship between Philosophy and Good Life In order to understand the relationship between philosophy and good life, one must know what philosophy is and also what constitutes a good life. Philosophy is a Greek word which means 'the love of wisdom.' It can be defined as "the pursuit of a meaningful life. Since a meaningful life is a life lived in touch with reality, philosophers develop many strategies for breaking through the delusions and self-deceptions that keep us human beings from seeing things as they really are." (What is philosophy). A good life is where a human being lives the life for the virtues and values one receives from life and not just for materialistic accomplishments. Such a life cares for values like honesty, integrity, independence and justice, over personal comforts or wealth. Thus a human being can understand the values of life only through philosophy; and therefore it becomes apparent that philosophy is the path to good life. Thus when a good life is the end, philosophy is the means to attain that end. Philosophy has developed and evolved as a most significant branch of learning because humans always pursue a better understanding of the meaning of life. Ancient philosophers like Socrates have seen the purpose of human life as serving for the common good of all as is evident from the way he lived his life. Rather than being blinded by materialistic pursuits he has lived his whole life in learning and teaching philosophy. Thus his life inspired many people, especially Plato who took up the call and embarked upon a journey similar to that of his teacher, seeking a good life by pursuing and teaching philosophy. Their search for the true meaning revealed to others that a good life is a life that gets closest to the realities, eschewing the delusions that veil the face of truth. It is through philosophy that their lives became meaningful by which they still retain their validity in the modern

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world.

Philosophy's relation to good life is emphasized by many experts in the field.

“ It is the task of philosophy to determine the central values pertaining to conscious life, which provides guidance in the choice of those concrete values, thereby enabling the achievement and enjoyment of life.”

(Philosophical Reflections: Values). This theory confirms the role of philosophy in attaining the objective of a good life and establishes that to reach the actual goal of life one must follow the path of philosophy. This is further evidenced in the lives of great thinkers like Socrates and Plato whose philosophical ways we emulate even the present day, to understand human life in its real perspective.

The evolution of humans, and their transformation to the present state as the most sophisticated form of life on earth, derives from the fact that unlike other living beings humans possess the ability to discern the qualitative aspects of things and understand their value over the quantitative aspects. This specific ability comes to the humans because of the power of thinking that they are bestowed with.

Therefore, the humans are capable of taking logical decisions based on reasoning which enables them to understand the philosophy behind every thing, as opposed to the other animals. “ The only answer is to live by rational virtues. A prime purpose of philosophy is to determine what those are.” (Philosophical Reflections: Virtues). From the above, it transpires that what makes humans a unique animal is their understanding of what good life is. They try to attain this through the practice of philosophy. This basic fact itself validates the theory that philosophy is path to reach the goal of a good life.

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