

# Essay on justice in the republic

Experience, Happiness



This paper is an attempt to discuss and explicate the concept of 'justice' in Plato's work, 'The Republic'. To achieve the paper's objective, the paper gives an overview of 'The Republic'; then it continues with defining justice and its significance.

'The Republic' is Plato's most popular work on its full-grown philosophical outlook. It is a complete file of the most basic behaviors and ideologies found in human life. Plato explained the value and the nature of justice as well as the other related virtues as they emerge together in the formation of the society and in the individuality of a person. Plato uses the personality of "Socrates" as an imaginary narrator. Socrates disproves the explanations of his interlocutors and he developed an understanding on justice and its connection with happiness. He offered an extensive and complex, but integrated argument, in defense of the just life and its essential connection to a happy life.

So as to attempt to understand the 'Republic', it is necessary to wrestle with the idea of justice. The primary question is "what is justice?" Socrates deals with this question using the individual soul or person and using the political societies or states.

"Justice is harmony." Plato supported this statement by utilizing two major things - the soul and the state. Thus, it implies that justice is harmony within the soul and within the state. To further understand the harmony of the soul and the state, let us scrutinize the constitution of each.

The soul is made up of three portions, the rational, spirited and the appetitive. The rational portion of the soul is the part that computes and creates impartial choices. This part of the soul regards the welfare of the

entire soul as its major concern. The spirited portion is the part of the soul that is daring, strong willed and dynamic. According to the discussion, the spirited part logically partners with the rational element if “ it hasn’t been corrupted by a bad upbringing”. The appetitive is the part “ with which it desires, hungers, thirsts and gets excited by other appetites”. It is the portion of the soul that is capable of starving for immoral indulgence and has no balanced perception in its needs. The rational part keeps the desire contained and allows the soul to distinguish the good from the bad. The constitution of the soul shows that the soul possesses dissimilar wills; however, for a soul to continue in the just course, it ought to have a few kinds of chain of commands. Plato illustrates the spirited element as the audacious supporter of the rational element which controls the appetitive element; albeit the portrayal of the soul might equip a proposal concerning the description of Justice.

The state has three classifications of people: the rulers, the soldiers and the workers. Each person is headed to the best education with the greatest care towards the direction of the task he could do with superiority. People obtain similar and equivalent opportunity of becoming leaders or workers, exclusive of whichever discrimination concerning their background. They are assessed individually, wholly in line with their innate dispositions. People who are fitted to carry out an explicit type of work become workers. They are the part of the community whose responsibility is to supply the requirements of the states. Workers are enforced to be restrained and subservient to their leader. The soldiers are individuals who do best in fighting. They are spirited and have overcome the examinations of the state by grasping firmly to the

nationalistic outlook desirable to protect the state from alien and local opponents. Soldiers have the audacity and are knowledgeable enough to remain faithful. They do not harm the people even though they are as expected, stronger. The rulers have the virtue of wisdom, and they should not aspire for fame and glory. Rulers love their state, recognize its rules and thus will pursue justice as much as they can.

Plato argues that the justice is similar in both the state and the soul. The workers correspond to the appetitive part of the soul because they both need restraint in their yearnings. The soldiers and the spirited both possess the virtue of courage to protect the state and the soul. The ruler and the rational possess the wisdom that controls the state and the soul for the good of the whole state and soul.

“Justice is harmony” implies the idea where the rational leads, the spirited protects people and the appetitive stays moderate, and they all conform to this provision for the good of the whole.

Now let us go to the second description of ‘justice’ as “Justice is doing one’s job”. Plato also supported this statement using the concept of the soul and the state. We should take note that there will be no presence of errors in the partition of the classes in Plato’s state. In Plato’s state, every person is committing his best in every way; an individual is innately fit for his task, so as to realize the design of a just state. All people are doing their part with superiority known as virtue and thus, they are contributing to the virtue of the entire state. These ideas support the definition of justice as “doing one’s work.”

After defining ‘justice,’ let us now discuss its significance. Justice or moral

rightness has a very significant role in achieving a good life. As human beings, it is always our concern to be just. Plato's main objective in his work is to discuss human beings possessing reasons to be just all the time. It is in our nature that being just is in our best interest.

It is mentioned earlier that a just life has an essential connection to a happy life. The discussion of the interrelation of a just life and a happy life, as one you would expect, opened a way to the deliberations of the human nature, the means of attaining knowledge, the constitution of an efficient education, the characterization between reality and manifestation, and the basics of morality.

Justice is important because it is the key to achieve a happy life and all people aspire for happiness. To tackle both the concept of a just life and a happy life, Socrates made a just city called the 'Kallipolis.' Socrates together with his interlocutors clarifies what justice is, and subsequently carries on explaining justice by relating it to the human soul. Several other subjects entail the idea of a just life that encompasses justice, knowledge and education. A just life also includes the configuration of reality, the outlooks of human happiness, the significance of philosophy and philosophers, the virtues and vices, the nature and the Forms, the family, the position of women in culture, the good and bad souls and the afterlife.

Plato's justice is possible through deep understanding and proper management. Idyllically, all people must be aware that sustaining the harmony is for the good of the whole. The soldiers and the spirited are the ones who will maintain the order of things. Justice should be practiced both in the soul and the state. Justice is vital to all people because it is the key to

attain a happy life. And since all people aspire for happiness, being just is in our nature and always falls in our best interest.

## **Reference**

Allen, R. E. (2006). Plato: The Republic. New Haven: Yale University Press.