

## **Plato's Book Four**

Plato will continue in the first part of book four to develop his city-state, discussing and detailing his plans and policies. By the end of the book four he will be ready to start providing he answer to what is justice and where it is to be found in both society and the individual. Let's now turn to Plato...

### **Plato's Republic, Sections 419-425c of Book Four**

- 1) Plato uses the example of the painting of a statue for the best over-all effect to explain...
  - a) Why he is not giving wealth and a private life to his warriors and leaders.
  - b) Why not everyone can be a painter and some must work with their backs.
  - c) His plan for decorating the city.
  - d) Both A and C.
- 2) Plato is taking extra care to safe guard the characters of his warriors and leaders as...
  - a) Leaders always need pampering and extra things.
  - b) He did not think he character was safe guarded enough when he was young.
  - c) He was of noble birth and wants to keep the traditions of this nobility alive.
  - d) If a shoe-maker does their work poorly it is not significant, if a guardian does his job poorly the whole city can be lost.
- 3) Plato intends to remove wealth and poverty from his city as...
  - a) He tends to agree with Karl Marx, a leading proponent of communism and who was Plato's teacher.
  - b) These two things ruin people for work.
  - c) You cannot have one without the other.
  - d) None of the above.
- 4) Plato thinks that despite the lack of wealth in his city it will be well protected as...
  - a) Philosophers make the best generals.

- b) He will hide his city in the mountains where enemies will have a difficult approach.
- c) He will create a class of defensive engineers who will devise terrible weapons of war.
- d) His city has a class of professional soldiers, cities seeking war for wealth will have little reason to attack a city without wealth and unjust cities are divided while his is united.

5) According to Plato the one general rule applicable to all citizens is...

- a) Listen to the guardians in all matters.
- b) One man, one job.
- c) Do what your are asked but never what you are told to do.
- d) None of the above.

6) For Plato the laws he has been discussing are trifling in importance compared to...

- a) The rules of war.
- b) The rules of diplomacy and peace.
- c) A good education for all the citizens.
- d) Knowledge of religious history.

### **Commentary on questions 1-6. Sections 419-425c**

The first question Plato deals with in this reading is the issue of the happiness of the rulers of Plato's society, by denying them personal possessions and a good deal of the benefits of a private life, Adeimantus thinks the rulers will not be very happy. Socrates has two primary points that he makes in response, the first is that he is concerned with the over-all happiness of the society and not so much with the happiness of the rulers. He makes the analogy between painting a statue so that the eyes look the best (trying to make the rulers happy) with painting a statue for the best over-all affect (trying to make the society happy) the focus of the whole group is what gets Plato's attention.

The importance of being very careful with the education and treatment of the guardian class, both the warriors (the silvers) and the leaders (the golds) is tantamount for Plato. A horrific military defeat, the writing and enforcing of laws that manufacture discontent and possibly incite a revolution are things

that destroy a city in short order. The warriors must be prepared to defend, the leaders actively working on creating and maintaining harmony, all with the focus on the happiness of the working, trading and craftsman classes (the iron or the bronze).

Extreme wealth and extreme poverty are things Plato wishes to keep from his city. Too much money and person does not work, having no job they become the idle rich and may well be tempted to meddle in the affairs of the state, the job of the warriors and leaders, a clear injustice. A wealthy merchant is not to try and be a political leader, he needs to focus on his work and if he has too much money he may not need to focus on his work. In a similar fashion a craftsman who is too poor to afford tools and housing is unable to work and is not good for the city either.

In terms of the defending the city against foreign threats Plato seems to have some good or at least basic ideas. In Plato's home city of Athens the warrior class was a mixture of citizen/soldier, not a highly focused group of fighters like the very successful armies of a neighboring and sometimes rival city, Sparta. Plato thinks it best to copy the system of Sparta and introduces a program meant to create a professional class of defenders. Additionally by avoiding the extremes of wealth, by shying away from gold and silver Plato hopes to make his city less attractive to those who attack others to get rich, an idea on borrow from Spartian thought as well. Lastly, on defense, Plato thinks the unification of his society will help protect it and the political discord in unjust or unethical societies will work against his enemies. In sum Plato intends, a tough army to defend the city, little to gain if you win and the chance of creating trouble for yourself in your home country, if you attack his city.

Plato is now in a position to put out his first definition of justice, one man, one job; one person, one social duty. If you want the best warriors they must focus on one thing, if you want the best leaders they must be focused on one thing and the merchants, farmers and craftsman must remain focused on their one thing. Minding your own business, in a social sense, are the rudiments of justice. Plato will develop these rudiments into virtues or human excellence in the next section but the idea of focusing the different labors of the different parts of the mind or society will remain.

A theme which Plato will repeat is the importance of a good education, here as in earlier he will focus on music and poetry as these were the big

influences of the day. If there is at least a tendency for life to resemble art, if not a strong tendency in the young, keeping a watchful eye on these matters and promoting the better paths in life does seem to make sense.

### **Plato's Republic, Sections 425d-434c of Book Four**

- 7) According to Plato an abundance of laws and rules is unnecessary as...
- a) They are hard to write and change over time.
  - b) Poorly behaved people will pay no heed and well behaved people don't need them.
  - c) Small groups of people, like the city Plato intends, do not need them.
  - d) None of the above.
- 8) For Plato his city is good in the fullest sense as it possess...
- a) Wisdom, courage, temperance and justice.
  - b) A three part division between workers, warriors and statesmen.
  - c) A very strong fighting force and justice is the interest of the stronger.
  - d) Temperate workers and skilled warriors, which follows the natural hierarchy of humans, the strong lead, the meek follow.
- 9) Plato thinks that he will find wisdom in his city when...
- a) The workers follow the warriors.
  - b) The warriors follow the workers.
  - c) A class of warriors is no longer necessary.
  - d) The gold class, the ethically tested and well-educated guardians are at the helm.
- 10) Courage in the good city, for Plato, is to be found...
- a) Among the wool dyers as they understand how to keep the colors or patriotism in the things they make
  - b) In the warrior class and their ability to win battles.
  - c) In the warrior class of the city as their education and training will keep them from being swayed by promises of pleasure or threats of pain.
  - d) In the working class as they form the backbone of the city.

11) Temperance in the good city, for Plato, is to be found...

- a) When the workers follow the warriors.
- b) In the working class alone, leaders and warriors, because of the pressures of the job cannot be expected to be temperate.
- c) In the support troops for the fighting class, those who deliver the supplies to the army should not consume them.
- d) In all three classes, the leaders, the warriors and the workers as temperance is a form of harmony.

12) Justice in the good city, for Plato, is to be found...

- a) When each of the three classes does its job and does not try to do another's classes job.
- b) When the workers have input on the political decisions but not the warriors, the warriors should enforce the law, workers and leaders should work together in ordering matters in society.
- c) When the warriors advise the council of leaders as those who do the fighting should get a voice in when and how much fighting occurs.
- d) Each person is capable of tries and to participate in the activities of all three classes.

**Commentary on Questions 7-12.** Sections 425d-434c.

If a society does not have much of an inclination to follow its' laws it would not seem to matter much if one had many laws or a few laws, they will mostly be ignored anyway when they are inconvenient. For Plato a small number of very good laws combined with citizens who are strongly inclined to follow the law is the proper way to approach laws and law making.

With the construction of his city in the abstract Plato is now ready to provide his definition of justice. Proper conduct, ethics, justice is the presence of three other virtues or patterns of behavior; temperance, courage and wisdom. Temperance is the proper pattern of behavior for everyone, leaders, warriors, merchants, craftsman and the working class. They each do their job and do not try to do the jobs of the others. Courage is the pattern of behavior shown by the warriors and leaders, it is the spirited element lead by reason. Courage keeps one from turning from being moved from the proper path by 'threats of pain or promises of pleasure.' Wisdom is found in the gold class, the well-educated and ethically tested group of leaders and lawmakers. With

each class doing one job and doing it well the city will run in harmony, one will have a justice society. Minding your own business, sticking to the task in front of you, is how one keeps the peace and maintains cultural unity, cultural sanity.

### **Plato's Republic, Sections 434d-445e of Book Four**

- 13) Plato thinks that justice in a city and justice in an individual are...
- a) Two very different things, just as a single soldier does not an army make.
  - b) Very similar things.
  - c) Incomparable as what is good for a society may not be good for the individual, the rights of the individual can conflict with the good of the state.
  - d) None of the other three.
- 14) According to Plato if a person is thirsty, they have water in front of them and they do not drink then this...
- a) Demonstrates a divided mind, a mind with at least two elements, one saying drink, one saying not to drink.
  - b) Demonstrates that the person was not really very thirsty.
  - c) Shows that the person does not think the water healthy.
  - d) Demonstrates the need for more and readily available water, how else could this person be thirsty?
- 15) For Plato the soul or mind has...
- a) Two parts.
  - b) Three parts.
  - c) Four Parts
  - d) It is a unified whole, having no parts.
- 16) In the just person reason and the spirited element are...
- a) Separated by the appetites, reason is the highest element, appetite the second and spirit the third.
  - b) In conflict as reason must never rule by itself. Action will cease and only contemplation will result.

- c) Not mentioned by Plato.
- d) Allied with reason in the lead.

17) Plato's formula of 'one man, one job' for justice in the city translates into his theory of personal justice by...

- a) Showing how it is possible to rotate the leadership of three drives, reason, spirit and the appetites so that one does not become worn out by a single life-style.
- b) Assigning two jobs, but only two jobs, to each part of the soul.
- c) Assigning each part of the soul its' proper function, reason and wisdom lead and govern while the spirited or emotional side is allied with reason in controlling the appetites which are then in harmony with the whole.
- d) None of the above.

18) Plato compares the unjust soul or mind to...

- a) An unhealthy body.
- b) Dishonest holy men.
- c) Traveling in foreign lands.
- d) All of the other three.

### **Commentary and Questions 13-19. Sections 434d-445e.**

Plato will not combine his theory of justice in the state with justice in the individual, the two are very similar. Like the city the person has three parts, appetites, spirit and reason, with the appetites corresponding to the iron and bronze class, the spirit, will or emotions to the silver class and reason to the gold class. Justice in the individual is like justice in the city, the spirited element is an alliance with reason, our emotions assist our thinking in controlling the appetites.

The body, the appetites, like the craftsman, workers and merchants in the city keeps the whole system supplied but not supplied to excess. The body does not attempt to lead in decision making, it like the rest of the three elements of the person and does one job. We thus have three elements that compose our moral psychology, reason: the ability to think and reflect. Spirit or emotion: our feelings and our deep feelings, our force of will in the face adversity. Appetite: our desires for bodily fulfillment, things like food, drink, sex, sleep.

If these three are in the proper arrangement then reason, the part best designed for decision making, will do our deciding and we should make good decisions. If our force of will, our spirit is behind our reason we will have the courage to move our decisions forward even in the face of troubles. If our appetites agree to be controlled and follow the other two parts of the mind we will should be in good health and not get ourselves into trouble by letting our appetites get out of control.

We are now in a position to start discussing the answer to why one should throw the ring of invisibility, Gyges' ring, into the sea rather than wear it and let our appetites or emotions have full sway. This is really the offer of the ring, would you like to have full access to whatever your heart, belly and eye found catching? At first this might sound very attractive but for Plato it is path to mental imbalance. Alexander the Great, in a drunken rage, kills one of his generals and a companion from his early days, was this act proper or just or did it make him happy when his reason was no longer crowded? If one is being lead about by your what grabs your senses and what excites your passions then one's reason, the best play on your team for making determinations of conduct, is now in the service of the not so reliable guides. If this continues long enough for Plato the result in a mental imbalance, a type of moral insanity which is the antithesis of justice or proper conduct.

### **The Three Essay Questions for this Week**

Please select one of the following three questions to answer for this week's essay assignment.

- 1) According to Plato justice is something like minding your own business, what does this mean? How does this give us justice or ethics?
- 2) Where and why does Plato think temperance, courage, wisdom and hence justice is to be found in his city?
- 3) What is difference between the mind of just and unjust person according to Plato?

Answers to the multiple choice are below



1 A  
2 D  
3 B  
4 D  
5 B  
6 C  
7 B  
8 A  
9 D  
10 C  
11 D  
12 A  
13 B  
14 A  
15 B  
16 D  
17 C  
18 A