

Q Discuss in detail the Plato's concept of Justice.

## I) Introduction:

Plato (427-347 B.C.)

was an ancient Greek philosopher. His theory of justice provides the basis to his ideal state. Plato considers a 'good life' and a 'good citizenship' mandatory for each other — one cannot exist without the other. For this, according to Plato, justice must be done while shaping the society. He is of the view that justice is placing the naturally-suitable man to on a position. He believe that evil exists because of the lack of knowledge about the 'evil' being wrong as he says,

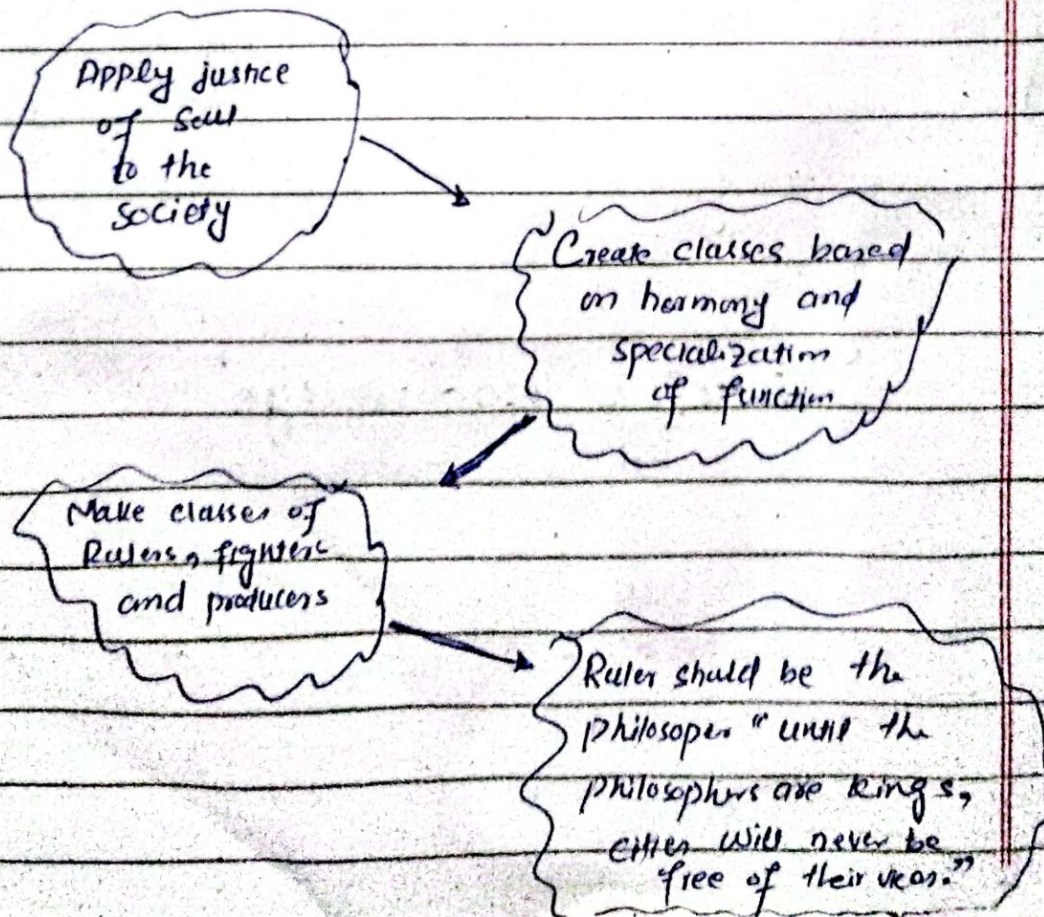
**"Virtue is knowledge"**

It means that moral excellence or goodness (virtue) comes from knowledge. People do wrong because they lack knowledge of what is ~~the~~ right, not because they intentionally choose evil.

## ii) In-context:

→ Era	497 - 347 BC
→ Political Ideology	Ideal State
→ Focus	Justice
→ Influenced by	Socrates
→ Influenced	Al-Farabi, Hobbes, Karl Popper
→ Key Works	"The Republic", "Apology"

## iii) Concept of Justice in the Ideal State:



## IV) Theory of Justice

According to Plato,

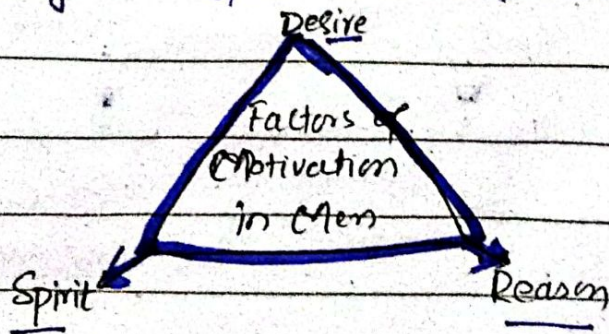
"Justice is the product of  
Class division and  
Specialization of function."

Plato divides the society into classes  
based on innate abilities and  
assign each class a specific function.

According to him, justice is the integral  
part of human soul and style of  
justice can be used to develop  
a just society.

a) Justice on individual level:

Plato argue that  
man is motivated by three things: Desire  
or hunger, Spirit, and reason.



Desire: With this, man seeks for material needs

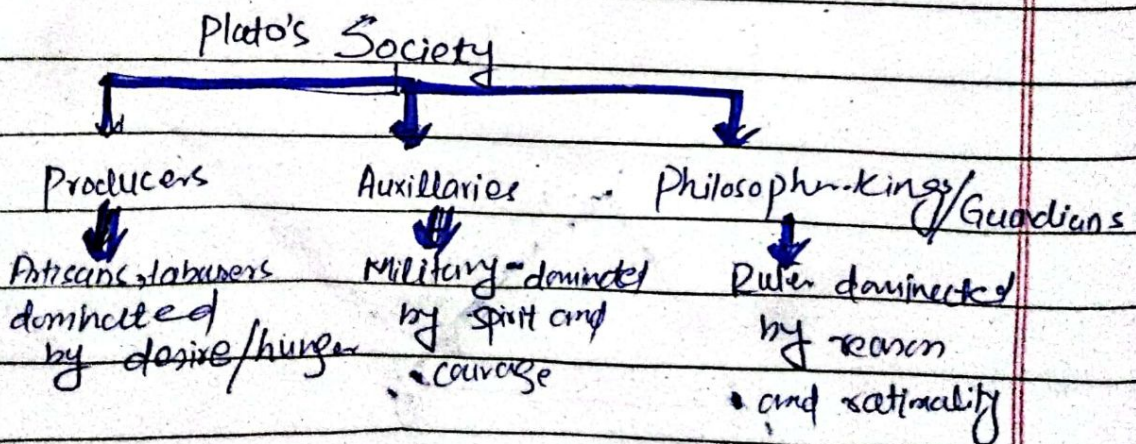
and pleasure

Spirit: This is responsible for the courage and bravery

Reason: This ability is used to think rationally and see the thing logically

All humans have these three types in various amount. As these things work in harmony and do not interfere in each other's task, similarly, using these factors, a society can be classified where each class have specialized task and no other classes interfere in their class.

b) Justice in Society:



Just like at the individual level, Plato divides the people in society into

three parts: Guardians, Auxiliaries and producers. each dominated by one particular component of their soul.

③ Justice will be achieved when:

→ Guardians, who are dominated by the reason become rulers.

→ Auxiliaries dominated by spirit are tasked with defense.

→ Producers, dominated by desires, will be producing the needs for life.

→ None of these classes interfere in each other businesses.

## V. Criticism:

① No check and Balance on the Rulers.

In this classification there is a system of no check and balance on the 'Guardian' class. This may lead to the power abuse and corruption.

of by the ruler as:

**Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely."**

[Lord Acton]

② It Compromises Individual Freedom:

This system compromises individual freedom for the sake of harmony in society. However, human nature is cannot remain happy in a restricted environment and ultimately that system collapse. For instance, Nazi Germany of Hitler, who can tried to control every aspect of individual life and there collapsed.

③ Unrealistic Society:

In Plato's society, everyone is given specific role based on innate abilities; however this is very unrealistic. It is because human abilities and interests change and may change over time and there is no mechanism for social or economic mobility here.

## VI) Conclusion:

It can be said that despite the utopian nature of the Plato's theory of justice, it still provides the base for the political philosophy. Plato, along with Aristotle, is known as the 'Fathers of the Western Pol Political Philosophy'.