

⇒ Political Science (=↳ Plato)

Q: Discuss Plato's theory of Justice? (20)

① Introduction.

Ans: Justice plays a vital role in the development of every society. Justice is a fundamental right of every individual in the society. Due to rule of ignorant people in the Athenian society and the rise of political selfishness, Plato laid a theory of an ideal state in his book, "The Republic". This book is a dialogue between Plato himself and other philosophers. He expressed his opinion in the development of an ideal state where every one will be given its due share and opportunity irrespective of class and gender.

② The dogma of Justice laid by Plato in Republic.

The book republic defines justice as a core vital of every society though Plato also discusses how justice is a product of class division and specialization among masses. This aspect would be discussed

later in the answer below. In his book
(50) The Republic, Plato converges into a dialogue : 5
dialogue with his mentor Socrates
calling it dialectical method of ideology. : 10
During this dialogue other political philosophers
: Cephalus, Polymarchus, Thrasymachus
and Glaucon were also present.

a) Cephalus

With start of republic, Cephalus started
the debate calling justice a notion of
returning borrowed thing, in which Socrates
argued how giving back something harmful
would be injustice, even if the thing
belongs to the individual, as for example
we can take police role in catching
unauthorised weapons, which is indeed
purchased by the individual, but such thing
being returned would cause major harm.

b) Polymarchus

Then, Polymarchus gave another idea of
helping the friend and to do wrong with
enemies this shows a complete divergence
from the actual theory of justice, hence rejected

by Socrates.

c) Thrasymachus

According to Thrasymachus, justice is in the interest of the strongest state or individual. Whomever holds power, the justice will be in his/her hand. However, his idea was rejected leaving him in disgrace and humiliation, that when Glaucon steps in.

d) Glaucon

Glaucon lays three forms of goods.

- ① Goods that are desirable for their own sake
- ② Goods that are desirable not for themselves but for the consequences
- ③ Goods that are desirable for their sake and consequences.

Socrates argued how a society is the third type of good claiming to be the end result of an ideal state in which there are three classes: Reason, Courage and Appetite.

Plato at this point thinks of this as

an ideal state and concludes to the role of each individual being separate establishing the concept of separation of power way before Montesquieu.

③ The Segregation of Population by Plato in Ideal State Theory.

Plato defined three types of classes in his society claiming the following: as a human body in nature:

(a) Appetite (abdomen);

He draws the part of population as artisans/labours working for fulfilling their needs of food, therefore, thinking from their abdomen point of view.

(b) Spirit/Courage (chest);

In this class he defines them as auxiliary or soldiers in nature who tend to fight for their homeland and mostly are courageous.

(c) Reason/Wisdom (Head);

This class is considered to be the upper ruling class establishing rule over others.

In this concept Plato introduced the idea of Philosopher King. The Philosopher King should be unmarried till death.

④ Features of Theory of Justice

(a) Separation of roles/Powers:

The theory of justice is based on non-interference between masses in a society, hence laying the formula of separation of power.

(b) Service to humanity:

Plato defines in his ideal state theory the role of every individual to serve humanity.

(c) Unity and opposition to individuality:

He also defines how the society should not act selfishly as it creates an imbalanced society, and therefore an individual standing for himself should stand for the whole mass.

⑤ Criticism

There are several criticisms to Plato's theory of justice. With a comparison to modern world, Plato's theory is not applicable as it being a mere myth.

Other than this, The wide light difference between classes is not possible in real life and rule of Philosophy is an unnatural phenomena. This theory focuses on the rule of king rather than focusing on rule of law. As also criticized by Aristotle the segregation in class creates further disunity in the society which represents a unjustified rule of elite.

⑥ Analysis

Plato's theory of state and justice is a mythical ideology. Many philosophers have argued and criticized this ideology as also mentioned by Will Durant in his book "The Story of Philosophy". If comparing to modern society, Plato's theory becomes unrealistic. The ideal state theory focuses on monarchy and dictatorship which as seen in history has only been a pathway to disaster. The modern society is craving for democracy and such ideology would become a significant hurdle in between them.

⑦

Conclusion

Plato's theory of justice was a form of structure in the Athenian society. The segregation of class from being one equal to Appetite, Courage and Philosopher King was also to disintegrate each one from each other. The purpose of this was also to establish the concept of separation of power between the three, however, this separation of power is done among equals and such tight differentiation of class would be only unjust and impossible.