

Q. Discuss Plato's concept of justice in detail?

Justice has been a fundamental focus of debate throughout the political history of the world, often interpreted as fair treatment of all or paying one's dues. However, for Plato, justice meant ~~was~~ the application of justice was not narrow; rather was directly proportional to the harmony and stability in the society. Because he regards justice of paramount importance, it ^{remained} is urgent for Plato to search the essence of justice, discover its application in a society, and establish a system to preserve it. Eventually, he came to the establishment of a just society, and jot it down in his writing "Republic".

(A) Motivations Behinds Plato's Search for Justice

The "Republic", written by Plato in 380 B.C is a reflection of his concept of justice. However, what motivated his discovery of truth, which Plato calls justice, lies in the historical context of the Peloponnesian wars. During this time, Athens were made militarily weak by successive naval defeats, for which Plato primarily blames the ineffective governance, fueled by majority-led democracy. Moreover, the

Subsequent execution of Socrates followed by Thirty Tyranny made Plato further detestable of the political culture of ancient Greece. Hence, the attacks in his writings, on the tactless rulers imposing ineffective decision-making and overemphasized individualism, seem - aims apparent. Making these arguments the foundation of his criticism, Plato proposed his concepts of justice. According to him, there are certain goods in human nature, implementing which can ensure a good life in a good state, and the establishment of such a society is equivalent to justice.

(B) Discovery of Justice via Dialectic Dialogue

The discovery of justice for Plato begins with a fictional dialectical dialogue among infamous scholars of that time, Socrates being the main character. The dialogue starts with Socrates provoking Cephalus of his concept of justice. Plato describes Cephalus a rich old merchant who has returned to his home to comfort his old age.

(a) According to Cephalus, Justice is doing good and paying your dues.

(b) Polyarchus, the son of Cephalus, seconds his father, and further adds, that justice is what seems proper to you. ~~Socrates~~ Upon Socrates inquiry, he further explains that, to him, justice is doing good with friends

the basis that doing evil with adversary will only turn him against you.

(c) Thraschatus another discussant, representing the widely spread Sophist school in ancient Greece, abhorred by Plato, defines justice as the interest of the powerful; right is right.

(d) Socrates objects this notion. He responds by drawing the physician-patient analogy. Just as the physician employs best interest of his patient, a society can only succeed when the ruler realises that his interests are not isolated from that of his community.

(e) Another discussant, Glaucon, also demurs Thraschatus and mentions that justice is an outcome of fear and that fear impells the many weaks to draw a social contract with a few strongers.

(c) Justice for Plato

Upon introspection, Plato is still not satisfied with all these propositions, as they are treating justice as external, selfish, and particularistic. Hence, after an extensive event of thoughtfulness, Plato finds justice in human nature.

(a) In a Human Being

Plato proposes that any individual has three inherent traits: reason, will, and appetite; yet one

of them dominates the other two. He proposes that harmony of these forces, practiced by temperance, produces justice in a being. For instance, the will or spirit subordinates to the reason. Followed by this, synchronization of both reason and spirit achieved by physical and mental training rules the appetite in an individual. Subsequently, the internal harmony caused by temperance is irrespective of good or interference by a single dominant force.

(b) In a social Being

Similarly, he draws a parallel of these three forces in a social organism: appetite ruling desires, will ruling the courage, and reason ruling the wisdom, working on the similar principle. Based on these forces, Plato proposed his concept of Republic, an ideal state run on the principles of justice.

(D) Pursuing Justice in Republic-The Ideal State

Plato's ideal state is broadly inspired by Socrates' principle, "virtue is knowledge". Hence, in this state, the rule of wise men is evident. Aside from this, the fundamental characteristics of Republic promoting justice are as follows.

(a) Justice is a Product of Class Division and Specialization

Plato's Republic consist of three classes: Artisan led by desires, auxiliary led by courage, and ruler led by reason.

The artisan class, being the biggest in Republic, would be responsible for the provision of material things for consumption. Similarly, auxiliaries, the middle class, would defend the borders, followed by philosopher-kings, who despite being the smallest, would be the most significant. They would diligently search for truth, imply justice, and preserve this justice in the society.

When each class will be restricted to interfere in others' matter and strictly practice temperance, the eventual outcome would be justice. To Plato, justice is a product of class division and specialization. Hence, the principle of specialization dictates that both, in human or state, one force must not meddle in the work of other, which was ^{ancient} apparently widespread in Greece and attacked by Plato recursively. Artisans not taking interest in the soldier's matters concerning social and ruling class and vice versa subsequently progress the society towards internal harmony.

(b) Justice - Absolute Authority of Intelligence

Plato believes staunchly in his mentor's ^{Politics is art} and principle, "virtue is knowledge." Hence, to him, like any art's successful implementation is only possible with a few experts, politics also demands a few experts guided by reasoning, intelligence, and knowledge. So,

in the Republic, you would find a few wise men exercising absolute authority. These few will undergo extensive education and training to carry out the following tasks: search for truth, implementing justice in the society, and preserving it. (a)

These people from the guardian class wouldn't do legislation, rather practice their knowledge to find intelligent solutions to individual cases, and carry out administrative tasks. Because laws are generalistic and offer scope to misinterpretation and biases, Plato's guardian class is superior in regards to justice and promoting harmony in the entire society.

(c) Justice for Women

Justice for women in Plato's Republic holds an unusual status; regardless of any juristic connotations. It is equality of duties instead of rights. Women, Plato believes, are equal to men, aside from physical characteristics. Hence, they are liable to the equal and shared duties in the ideal state. Applying this logic, owing to their education and training, women can also be rulers or soldiers.

(E) Establishment and Preservation of Justice

Considering establishment and maintenance of justice remains grave for Plato, he must employ a system to ensure this. Consequently, to determine the

capacity of needs with regards to each force and ways to preserve the established system, Plato introduced education and communism.

(a) Via Extensive Education

Plato's Republic is built on extensive education. Unlike the education of ancient Greece, which was privately administered, the education in Plato's ideal society would be state-regulated, providing equal opportunity to all. The education would be divided into two phases, elementary (inclusive of all three classes) and advanced (the top classes with a more individualistic approach). By the end, individuals who undergo strict training up till fifty years of age would make the ruler, guardian class. This class would have absolute authority over states matters, owing to their broader knowledge and accumen.

(b) Via Communism

To sustain the system and prevent it from degeneration, Plato propose communism. In contrast to communism presented by Marx and other modern social, Plato's communism prioritize a citizen's individual life, specifically moral and political rather than economic. Two broader principles of this communism include,

- (i) No right to private property
- (ii) No right to family life

The top two classes in the state, auxiliaries and philosopher-kings, won't have the freedom to pursue a family life or property, as both have the tendency to provoke selfishness in men that could impel them to economic advantage. Additionally, because they have the inherent temperance to overcome desires, soldiers and guardians' adopting communism is absolutely essential ^{potential} to avoid dangerous adventures.

(F) ^{is} Criticism: Plato's Justice Unrealistic?

While Plato's Republic is regarded as a signature text for the foundation of western political thought, application of his proposed ideal state might be irrelevant in contemporary times, partially because the isolation of religion and morality from state infrastructure has long been established. Moreover, Plato goes far extreme in his oversimplification of human psychology, ~~as it is~~ challenging as it remains challenging to evaluate reason and courage in an individual and assessing them relatively. Similarly, as Aristotle later points out, experiences are another differential in counting a person's loyalty and contributions. Hence, a relative examination of experiences with knowledge and education seems ambiguous.

While Plato is correct in his prioritization of collective interests over individual gains, he follows

one-directional path. Plato does not learn, even from Socrates' sacrifice, that freedom and liberty are of high regards for an individual. Surrendering it and being strictly forbidden from tasks, which might have been of inquisition, for an individual might result in a chaotic situation rather than achieving harmony in the society. Moreover, the absolute authority of the guardian class with no overarching checks-and-balance allows for corruption of justice and degeneration of society.

F: Conclusion

While some perceive Plato's concept of justice as unrealistic, impractical, and utopian, the ideas behind his philosophy remains relevant in modern day. The need of meritocracy, meritocracy, role-based justice, ethical leadership, and temperance in contemporary politics are significant virtues, crucial for progression of societies. His work ^{further} also influenced future western philosophers, such as Aristotle and Descartes, who later leverage their interpretation of human psychology in