

2022

Q2

Discuss in detail the

Plato's concept of

'justice'.
~~Plato's concept of justice~~

PLATO

1. Introduction:

Plato is one of the greatest philosophers of Ancient Greece. He discussed a lot about justice in his well-known book "The Republic". In this book, which is written as a conversation mainly involving Socrates, Plato tries to figure out what justice really means and why it is important in life. According to him, justice is not just about following laws, but a balance between society and individual.

Refutation of Traditional Definitions:

In the first part of the book "Republic", Socrates talks with different people about what justice means:

i- Cephalus Justice:

Cephalus says justice means,

"Telling the truth and paying back what you owe"

ii- Polemarchus Justice:

He believes that,

"Justice is helping friends and hurting enemies"

OR

"Justice is giving everyman his due."

iii- Thrasymachus:

He states that

"Justice is the interest of the stronger.
Might is Right."

iv- Socrates View:

Socrates cannot accept such explanation because they are in many cases wrong, because they view justice is something apart from man's soul.

"Justice is an integral part of the Soul."

i) Plato's Justice in city:

Plato creates an ideal city in his books. In this city people are divided into three groups.

- (1) Rulers: Wise and make decision for good
- (2) Soldiers: They protect city
- (3) Workers / Producers: They grow food, make things, & run businesses.

Each is present every man in varying amounts, but one is always predominant.

Plato suggested their roles,

(i) Role of Rulers:

- They are wise and make decision for the good of everyone.
- They are considered as the Brain of the state.
- Rulers have an absolute authority. What they said is Law and what they understand is the Constitution.
- This class is small in number.

(ii) Role of Soldiers:

- They are also known as Auxiliaries.
- They have courage and brave.
- They provide defence and enforce rules in city.
- They are considered as the Heart of the State.

iii- Role of Producers:

- Dominating force of producers is Hunger, Desire, Appetite.
- They are larger in number
- They grow food, make things, run industries and businesses
- They are considered as "The stomach of the state"
They just follow desires.

"Hungry man is an angry man"

"Revolution is two meals away."

According to Prophet (S.A.W):

"Hunger is very close to Kuffar."

Plato's Opinion:

Plato mentioned in his book: Justice happens when each group does its own job and does not intervene in someone else's work.

"Justice is doing one's own work and not meddling with what isn't one's own."
—(Republic)

Terence Irwin, stated in his book
Plato's Ethics,

"The idea of each person doing their own job is at the heart of Plato's Political Theory."

2) Plato's Justice in the Individual:

Plato says that just like the city has different parts,
—the human soul also has three parts

- (1) Reason : Think and makes wise choices
- (2) Spirit : Feels emotions like courage or anger.
- (3) Desires : Wants food, pleasure, money etc

Richard Kraut stated in his book The Cambridge Companion to Plato,

"Plato sees justice as inner harmony that helps a person live a good life."

Plato's opinion about individual justice in Republic.

"Justice in the individual is like justice in the city : each part of the soul doing its proper function."

3) Ideal form of Justice:

Plato holds that justice in its purest form exist as an abstract and eternal.

Form - a perfect ideal beyond physical reality.

The just itself... is what gives justice to all just things.
- Republic.

Every just action we see in the world reflects this perfect form. Plato also believes that justice exist as a perfect, unchanging idea, which he calls a Form. mention in Plato's Theory of Forms.

4) Justice and Happy Life:

Plato says that a person who is just will be happier than someone who is unjust.

(2)

- Just soul is peaceful and well-ordered. In his book he explains that justice leads to a happy life, which he calls Eudaimonia (well-being or flourishing).

"The just man is happy, and the unjust man is miserable."
(- Republic)

"Plato connects justice with living a fulfilling and happy life"

(- Allan Bloom, The Republic of Plato.)

Conclusion.

For Plato, justice is not just about laws or doing what others say. It is about having a balance and harmony in society and individual. Justice means everyone and every part doing what they are best at, and this brings peace and happiness. As Plato shows in "The Republic, Justice is an important part of a good life and a strong society."