

The Allegory of the Cave

Human is confined in Chain rope. No one can see here and there even we do not have awareness about outside. Behind us there is fire. Under the light of fire few persons are creating shadows, for example through hands, we consider that only shadows are more ideas of reality and nothing else. One of us gets rid of the confinement and went outside from the cave. After getting outside, he firstly sees the things under the light of sun where each and everything is blossoming. That person, who is outside, wants to tell to those persons, who are inside the cave, about the real world. But, they deny. Why? because from the birth, they only know about those shadows which are looking under cave.

What was the purpose of Plato by giving this example?

Answer

Plato argues what we see in this world only that is relying on sense perception. Due to self-perception, we are unable to see the world rationally. Moreover, Plato argues that relying on sense perception is similar to living in a cave where men mistakes shadows for substance.

Similarly, we cannot distinguish between right and wrong, reality and illusion, until and unless we see things rationally through knowledge. Without knowledge, we cannot reach to rationality, and right and wrong things. So, knowledge is indispensable for living in this world rationally.

Plato's Ethics

Plato presented his theory on ethics by this metaphor (Allegory of the cave)

What he says in Ethics that what is the good?

“The good is like light of the sun, the good is the light of understanding” through knowledge. We can be reached to right and wrong through understanding this world rationally and logically. When one can see the virtue and evil in logical sense then one can identify the reality in true manner. Plato says only those can identify the reality who get out from the cave and understand the world through knowledge.

The Republic

On the basis of whole knowledge (theory of knowledge and ethics), Plato established the opinion of the Republic. This is Plato's politics views that how state should be? His political views are summarized in this book, The Republic. The republic is the first book of Political Science.

What Plato writes in this book?

He says Politics should be connected with theory of knowledge and theory of ethics. Without this that cannot be a true politics. Plato drives new theory of human nature from theory of right and wrong, Ethical theory.

He argues that there are certain rules and regulations in human nature which are governed through three different powers which lie in human nature.

1. Spirited element (no need to whipping that it will lead to right direction.
2. The Bodily appetites (need to be controlled through whipping)
3. Reason (Charioteer which controls the two horses)

In Harmonious Society, reason controlled spirited element and bodily appetites.

So reason is very important that is driving force of the society. Plato gives the concept of harmonious society.

Body	Soul	Virtue	State
Head	Reason	Wisdom	Philosophers/Guardian/Rulers
Chest	Will	Courage	Warriors/Soldiers
Abdomen	Appetites	Temperament	Laborers

State can only be established on the basis of bodily nature. According to bodily structure, society can only be harmonious when soul, virtue, and state are associated with each other .

The perfect Republic would exist when the social structure lies in harmony with the characteristic of body soul and virtue. People who work consciously through reason those should be rulers.

People who work through chest should be made soldiers.

People who work through abdomen should be laborers.

State of republic includes three factors guardians, soldiers, and laborers. Guardians for running states matters, soldiers for defending, and laborers for living.

Plato's harmonious society is divided into three classes according to the characteristic of head, chest, and abdomen.

Now, Plato proposed a Republic which is bigger than Sparta and Athens.

In Republic, the important category is guardians.

Guardians/Rulers have to rule the Republic. These guardians are ruling intelligential who run the society/republic through reasons.

These guardians should be made of those who are most intelligent in the society.

Plato also proposed that separate system of training should be launched for these intelligential (who are rulers)

Plato suggests that these rulers should be gone through training for 35 years so that these rulers could be reached at that level where they can run the state.

What would be included in that training? They would be imparted the knowledge of Mathematics, Philosophy, Physiology, Social Studies, Music, Art, Physical training, Gymnastic, Biology and Medicine, and Literature.

Plato argues that there are two reasons due to which people leave the virtue/good and keep on wrong number.

1 Property

2 Women/ Marriage

When someone marries then babies are born. It makes family. Due to family, one's attention from the society divert because before marriage one has full attention on the well-being of society, but after marry he always thinks about his babies which ultimately leads to diversion.

Similarly, when someone owns property then he will think for his property rather to think about society.

So, Plato wants that guardians should have no family, children, and property.

If they get children then republic or state will take care of those children even they do not have knowledge that where their children went.

In this guardian class women will also be included because Plato was much progressive regarding women's status in the society. Women also have power of reason, logic, and rationality. Women should also be given training. In this regard,

Plato gives example that if state train only man then it means that a physical training only doing exercise of one arm. So, for the betterment of society, state should train the women.

By giving rules and regulations regarding guardians Plato proposed censorship. He argued that those who are wasted their time by sharing their poems we do not need their poems. Plato also suggested that those guardians should speak a lie for the betterment of society. Plato names it a Noble lie.

Plato's Communism

Plato's idea of guardian's intellectual ruling class was existed in Plato's Communism.

The rule of Plato's communism was only applied on guardians. Plato's Communism was nearer to the Pythagoras communism. It was different from the Karl Marx's communism.

In Plato's communism, the aristocratic would be free from any property. That aristocratic class would be free from any implications.

The aristocratic class will be trained under the rules and regulations because their children were to take responsibilities of guardians in future. Those children would not be allowed to go to their parents. Plato's republic was based on Sparta principles totalitarian views where only intellectual can only be rulers. Plato's oligarchy was not democracy that is why Plato's was against democracy.

He, that is why, considered that Sparta was the best because only intellectual and hard work were to be uplifted in society.

Why he dislikes democracy because he argued that Socrates was killed in democracy. What democracy had given to Socrates? Why Socrates or Philosophers were equal to a lay man? So how democracy is best system of government? Only Sparta model was the best model because only that people of the society can be at best position of the society those who work enthusiastically. Plato was criticized due to his thinking. People considered that Plato was philosopher that was why he wanted to impose his philosophy of oligarchy.

Unfortunately, Plato faced defeat while implementing his political thought in Sicilia. Plato tried to implement his system of Republic but, not only that system was defeated but also he survived himself difficulty and left Sicilia and reached Athens.

Plato's wrote his last book. Plato argued that if republic could not be established then the best option is establishment of constitutional state that we obey the laws, rule of law. Argument of the rule of law is 2500 years old.

Subject: Social Thought

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