

1. There is a natural progression from Plato's Forms to his philosophy of ethics for if we can be deceived by appearances in natural, physical realm, one can equally be deceived by appearance in moral realm. 2. The kind of knowledge that will help us to distinguish between shadows, reflections, & real objects in this visible world is just the kind of knowledge we need to discriminate between shadows & reflections of the genuinely good life. 3. Just as there could be no science of physics if our knowledge were limited to visible things, so also there could be no knowledge of a universal Idea of Good if we were limited to the experiences we have of particular cultures.

**SOPHISTS' VIEW OF MORALITY:**

A. Moral rules are fashioned deliberately by each community & have relevance & authority only for the people in that place.

B. Moral rules are unnatural, that people obey them only because of the pressure of public opinion, & if that if their acts could be done in private, even the "good" among us would not follow the rules of morality;

C. Essence of justice is power, or that "might is right";

D. "What is the good life?" The life of pleasure.

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**It is against this backdrop & the Forms that Plato brings forth the Socratic notion that "Knowledge is virtue" & supplied it with a philosophical elaboration with the following two major ideas:**

- (a) certain concept of the soul;**
- (b) theory of virtue as function.**

**PLATO'S CONCEPT OF THE SOUL:**

**A. In *Republic*, Plato describes the soul as being tripartite: reason, spirit, & appetite.**

1. This is drawn from the common experience of internal confusion & conflict that we humans share. He discovered that there are three different kinds of activity going on in a person (ascribed to the soul): a. **Reason:** The awareness of a goal; b. **Spirit:** Drive toward action; c. **Appetites:** Desire for things of the body.
2. They are ascribed to the soul because the soul is the **principle of life & movement** whereas the body by itself is inanimate. Thus, when it acts or moves, it must be moved by the soul, the principle of life.
3. The soul has 3 parts because **people's internal conflict indicated different springs of action at work.** a. **Reason** could suggest a goal for behavior only to be overturned by the appetite, and the power of the spirit could be pulled in either direction by these appetites. b. Plato's illustration of the human condition is striking in the *Phaedrus* where he pictures a charioteer driving 2 horses: One horse is good; it needs no touch of the whip; it is guided by word & admonition only, whereas the other horse is one of pride & insolence, hardly yielding to whip & spur. Though the charioteer has a clear vision of where to go, & the good horse is on track, the bad horse "*plunges and runs away, giving all manner of trouble to his companion and the charioteer.*" c. The breakdown of order! Likewise, the rational part of the soul has the right to rule the spirited & the appetitive parts; one can't get anywhere without the 2 other parts; these 3 are linked together & must work together to achieve their goals. d. Thus, the rational part of the soul has a relationship to the other parts, for the powers of the appetite & spirit are indispensable to life itself. e. Reason, works with & upon spirit & appetite, & these 2 also move & affect the reason. f. But the relation of reason to spirit & appetite is determined by what reason is: a goal-seeking & measuring faculty. While passions may be involved, they are incapable of distinguishing between objects that provide higher & longer-lasting pleasure & those that only appear to provide pleasures.
4. Peculiar function of the rational part of the soul is to seek the true good of the human life by evaluating things according to their true nature; it is the role of reason to penetrate world of fantasy, to discover the true world \* therefore direct the passions to objects of love that are capable of producing true happiness.
5. Unhappiness & disorder of the soul are result of one's confusing appearance with reality. This confusion occurs chiefly when the passions override the reason. This is why Plato argued, as Socrates did before him, that moral evil is the result of ignorance. Just as there can be order between the charioteer and the horse only if the charioteer is in control, so also with the human soul-it can achieve order & peace only if the rational part is in control of the spirit & appetites.

**B. The Cause of Evil: Ignorance & Forgetfulness:**

1. Evil is discovered in the very nature of the soul & in relation of the soul to the body.
2. Before soul enters the body, the soul has a prior existence.
3. Soul has two parts: rational & irrational.
3. rational part of soul is created by the Demiurge out of the same receptacle as the WORLD SOUL whereas the irrational part is created by celestial gods, who also form the body.
4. Thus, in the soul's prior existence, the rational part has a clear vision of the Forms whereas the spirit & appetites have a tendency to descend. It is the tendency of the irrational part the soul (since it is not perfect) to be unruly & pull the soul toward the earth: Plato states, "*when perfect and fully winged she [the soul] soars upward... whereas the imperfect soul, losing her wings & drooping in her flight at last settles on the composition of soul & body is called a living and mortal creation.*"
5. Soul has an unruly & evil nature in its irrational parts even before it enters the body. So in a sense, the cause of evil is present even in the soul's preexistent state.
6. The soul has the inherent possibility of disorder, so that when in fact disorder does occur, the cause of evil is located within the soul itself, being the product of ignorance & forgetfulness of the vision of reality.
7. Evil is a characteristic of the soul wherein the soul is "capable of forgetfulness, & it is those souls, then, is perfect by nature, but one aspect of its nature is the possibility to lapse into disorder, for the soul also contains the principle of imperfect as do other parts of creation. Upon its entrance into the body, the difficulties of the soul are greatly increased.
8. The body stimulates the irrational part of the soul to overcome the rulership of reason. Thus, the souls' entrance into a body brings further disorder & breakdown of the harmony.
9. When the soul left the realm of the Forms & entered the body, it moved from the realm of the One to the realm of the many. Now the soul is adrift in the bewildering sea of the multiplicity of things & subject to all sorts of errors because of the deceptive nature of these things.
10. The soul is stimulated by activities in the irrational part of the soul (e.g., indiscriminate search for pleasure).

Soul has two parts: rational & irrational. Rational created by Demiurge whereas the irrational part was created by celestial gods who also created body. Rational part had clear vision of soul but irrational soul has tendency to pull the soul toward earth. The body & its stimulants add to the further chaos; the soul is adrift in the imitations of the many.