



# Virtue Based Essay

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# What is virtue?

- ▶ According to Aristotle Virtues are **Moral principles discovered by reason, acquired By practice, In a community of character** (Family, Friends, Society, Church, School etc.).
- ▶ Plato identifies four “cardinal virtues” that are necessary for a happy individual and that are necessary for a good society. The four cardinal virtues are **prudence, justice, temperance and fortitude {or Courage}**.
- ▶ **Prudence** literally means right reason in action. Prudence is called the charioteer of the other virtues & is the footprint of Wisdom. Prudence plays a vital role in terms of guiding and regulating all the other virtues.
- ▶ **Justice** is the flawless order by which every human being do their own business, the right man in the right place, i.e. the class and division of citizens.
- ▶ **Temperance** is a strength that protects against excess; and consists self-regulation, Self-Control and obedience to authority.
- ▶ **Courage** is bravery based on justice. Courage is fortitude, forbearance, strength, endurance, and the ability to confront fear, uncertainty, and intimidation. It removes obstacles that come in the way of justice.

# What is Unity of Virtues?

- ▶ To many philosophers, a person could not possess one of the cardinal virtues without possessing them all.
- ▶ How could a person who cannot control his or her appetites (thus is intemperate) be just or prudent? Socrates believed that virtue was a matter of understanding, and that once a person understood good and evil; he or she would naturally be prudent, temperate, courageous, and just. The example of the unity of the virtues, is that a politician who cheats on his wife is not someone who can be trusted with the public's business either. True virtue is that where all parts of the soul are pulling in the same direction i.e. toward the good.
- ▶ For Aristotle, virtue is an all-or-nothing affair. We cannot pick and choose our virtues. Though Aristotle lists a number of virtues, he sees them all as coming from the same source. A virtuous person is someone who is naturally disposed to exhibit all the virtues, and a naturally virtuous disposition exhibits all the virtues equally.

# Aristotle's Concept of the teleology of nature.

- ▶ According to Aristotle, nature works toward a *telos*, or end goal. His biological work aims constantly at the question of what purpose different aspects of plants and animals serve. He classifies humans as “rational animals,” meaning that our *telos* is rational. In other words, our function in life is to realize our full potential as rational beings. If we are not fully rational, we are falling short of our true nature.
- ▶ Our goal in life is to achieve our true nature, and this true nature consists essentially of rationality. The purpose of a moral education, then, is to teach us how we may become perfectly rational and immune to the temptations of our lower animalistic parts.

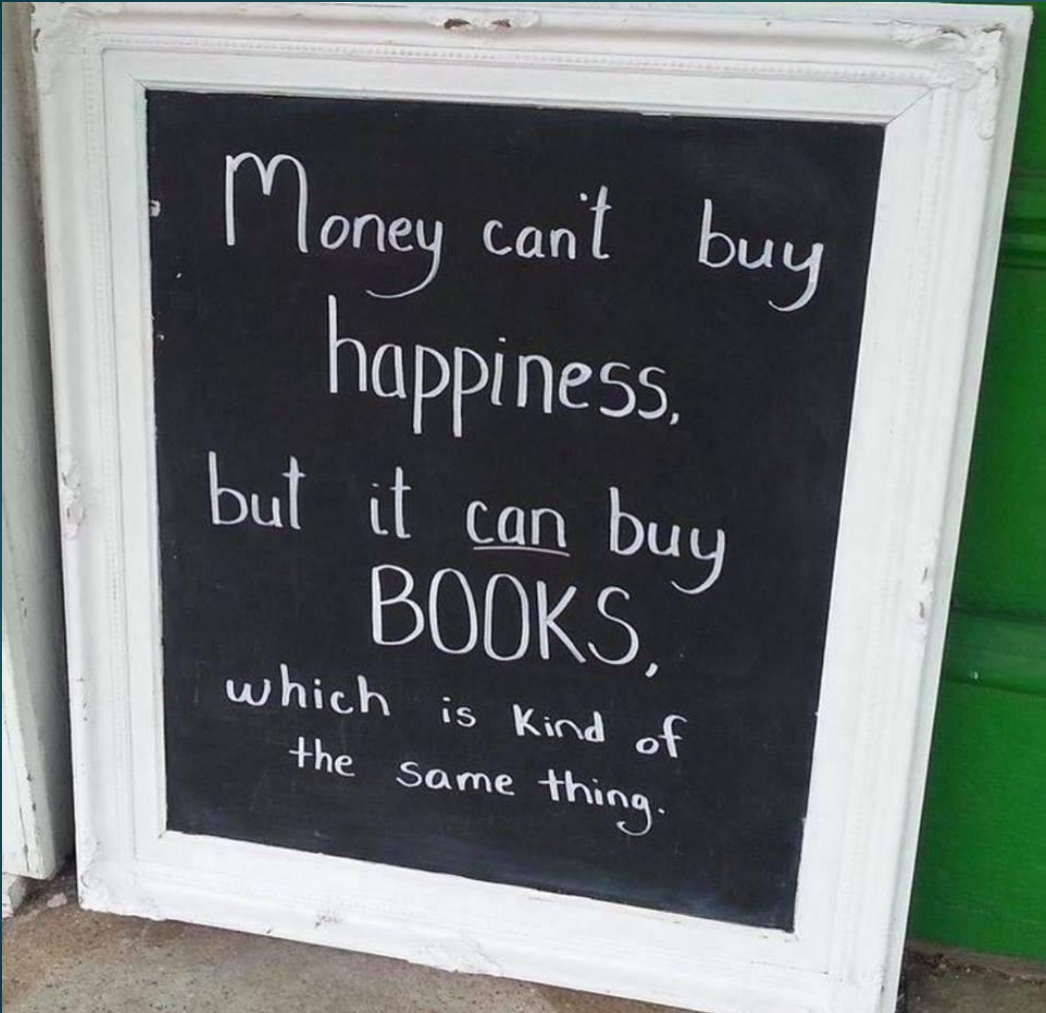
# Moral Education & Concept Of Habituation:

- ▶ Aristotle is quite clear that he does not think virtue can be taught in a classroom or by means of argument.
- ▶ According to Aristotle, virtue is something learned through constant practice that begins at a young age. For Ex a good horseman can exhibit arête (Excellence) in horsemanship not simply by reading about horsemanship and hearing reasoned arguments for how best to handle a horse.
- ▶ Becoming a good horseman requires steady practice: one learns to handle a horse by spending a lot of time riding horses. For Aristotle, there is no essential distinction between the kind of excellence that marks a good horseman and the kind of excellence that marks a good person generally. Both kinds of excellence require practice first and theoretical study second, so the teaching of virtue can be only of secondary importance after the actual practice of it.
- ▶ Thus 'Habituation' is key to unlocking Nichomachean Ethics.

# The Life of Contemplation by Aristotle:

- ▶ Aristotle ultimately concludes that contemplation is the highest human activity. This is largely a consequence of his teleological view of nature, according to which the *telos*, or goal, of human life is the exercise of our rational powers.
- ▶ In discussing the various intellectual virtues, **Aristotle extols wisdom as the highest**, since it deals only with unchanging, universal truths and rests on a synthesis of scientific investigation and the intuitive understanding of the first principles of nature. **The activity of wisdom is contemplation, so contemplation must be the highest activity of human life.**



A photograph of a white-framed chalkboard leaning against a green wall. The chalkboard has a black surface with white chalk writing. The text is arranged in several lines, with 'BOOKS' in all caps and 'which is kind of the same thing.' in a smaller, more casual script.

Money can't buy  
happiness,  
but it can buy  
BOOKS,  
which is kind of  
the same thing.

A graphic element consisting of a yellow rectangular frame with a hand-drawn, slightly irregular border. Inside the frame, the text 'Knowledge Is Virtue!!' is written in a bold, yellow, sans-serif font. Below this, the name 'Socrates' is written in the same font and color. The entire graphic is set against a dark teal background. A small red rectangular shape is visible in the top right corner of the background.

Knowledge  
Is  
Virtue!!  
Socrates

# What is Virtue according to Socrates?

Socrates equated knowledge with virtue, which ultimately leads to ethical conduct. He believed that the only life worth living was one that was rigorously examined. Socrates firmly believed that knowledge and understanding of virtue, or "the good," was sufficient for someone to be happy. To him, **knowledge of the good was almost akin to an enlightened state**. He believed that no person could willingly choose to do something harmful or negative if they were fully aware of the value of life.

Socrates was put on trial and found guilty of "corrupting the youth" of Athens by asking them to question authority. Socrates believed deeply that people should inquire and ask questions, even about - or perhaps especially about - those things that everyone takes for granted.



# Plato's Cardinal Virtue: Prudence, Justice, Courage, Temperance

- ▶ The cardinal virtues are the four principal moral virtues. The English word *cardinal* comes from the Latin word *cardo*, which means "hinge." All other virtues hinge on these four: prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance. Plato first discussed the cardinal virtues in the *Republic*, and they entered into Christian teaching by way of Plato's disciple Aristotle. Unlike the theological virtues (Faith, Hope & Charity), which are the gifts of God through grace, the four cardinal virtues can be practiced by anyone; thus, they represent the foundation of natural morality.
- ▶ **Prudence: The First Cardinal Virtue:** Aristotle defined prudence as *recta ratio agibilium*, "right reason applied to practice." It is the virtue that allows us to judge correctly what is right and what is wrong in any given situation. When we mistake the evil for the good, we are not exercising prudence — in fact, we are showing our lack of it. Because it is so easy to fall into error, prudence requires us to seek the counsel of others, particularly those we know to be sound judges of morality. Disregarding the advice or warnings of others whose judgment does not coincide with ours is a sign of imprudence.

## ► **Justice: The Second Cardinal Virtue**

Justice, is the second cardinal virtue, because it is concerned with the will. Justice is "the constant and permanent determination to give everyone his or her rightful due." We say that "justice is blind," because it should not matter what we think of a particular person. If we owe him a debt, we must repay exactly what we owe. Justice is connected to the idea of rights. While we often use justice in a negative sense ("He got what he deserved"), justice in its proper sense is positive. Injustice occurs when we as individuals or by law deprive someone of that which he is owed. Legal rights can never outweigh natural ones.

## ► **Fortitude: The Third Cardinal Virtue:**

While this virtue is commonly called *courage*, it is different from what much of what we think of as courage today. Fortitude allows us to overcome fear and to remain steady in our will in the face of obstacles, but it is always reasoned and reasonable; the person exercising fortitude does not seek danger for danger's sake. Prudence and justice are the virtues through which we decide what needs to be done; fortitude gives us the strength to do it.

शौर्य क्या है  
थरथराती इस धरती को रौंदती  
फौजियों की एक पलटन का शोर  
या सहमे से आसमां को चीरता हुआ  
बंदूको की सलामी का शोर  
शौर्य क्या है, हरी वर्दी पे चमकते हुए  
चंद पीतल के सितारे  
या शरहद का नाम देकर  
अनदेखी कुछ लकीरों की नुमाईश

शौर्य क्या है  
दूर उड़ते खामोश परिंदे को  
गोलियों से भून देने का एहसास  
या शोलो की बरसात से पल भर में  
एक शहर को शमशान बना देने का एहसास  
शौर्य, बहती बियास में किसी के  
गर्म खून का हौले से सुर्ख हो जाना  
या अनजानी किसी जन्नत की फिराक में  
पल पल का दोजक बनते जाना  
बारूदो से धुन्दलाये इस आसमां में  
शौर्य क्या है

वादियों में गूंजते किसी गाँव के मातम में  
शौर्य क्या है  
शौर्य, शायद एक हौंसला  
शायद एक हिम्मत, हमारे बहुत अन्दर  
मजहब के बनाए दायरे तोड़ कर  
किसी का हाथ थाम लेने की हिम्मत  
गोलियों के बेतहाशा शोर को  
अपनी खामोशी से चुनौती दे पाने की हिम्मत  
मरती मारती इस दुनिया में  
निहत्ते डटे रहने की हिम्मत

## ► **Temperance: The Fourth Cardinal Virtue :**

While fortitude is concerned with the restraint of fear so that we can act, temperance is the restraint of our desires or passions. Food, drink, and sex are all necessary for our survival, individually and as a species; yet a disordered desire for any of these goods can have disastrous consequences, physical and moral. Temperance is the virtue that attempts to keep us from excess, and, as such, requires the balancing of legitimate goods against our inordinate desire for them. Our legitimate use of such goods may be different at different times; temperance is the "golden mean" that helps us determine how far we can act on our desires.



# Stoicism

LET US MEET WITH BRAVERY  
WHATEVER MAY BEFALL US.  
LET US NEVER FEEL A SHUDDER  
AT THE THOUGHT OF BEING  
WOUNDED OR OF BEING MADE A PRISONER,  
OR OF POVERTY OR PERSECUTION.

SENECA, LETTERS FROM A STOIC





# THE MANY EMOTIONS OF A STOIC



HAPPY



SAD



ANGRY



PRIDEFUL



ANNOYED



CURIOUS



FEARFUL



OFFENDED



HOPEFUL

fb: Philosopher Games

# Stoicism:

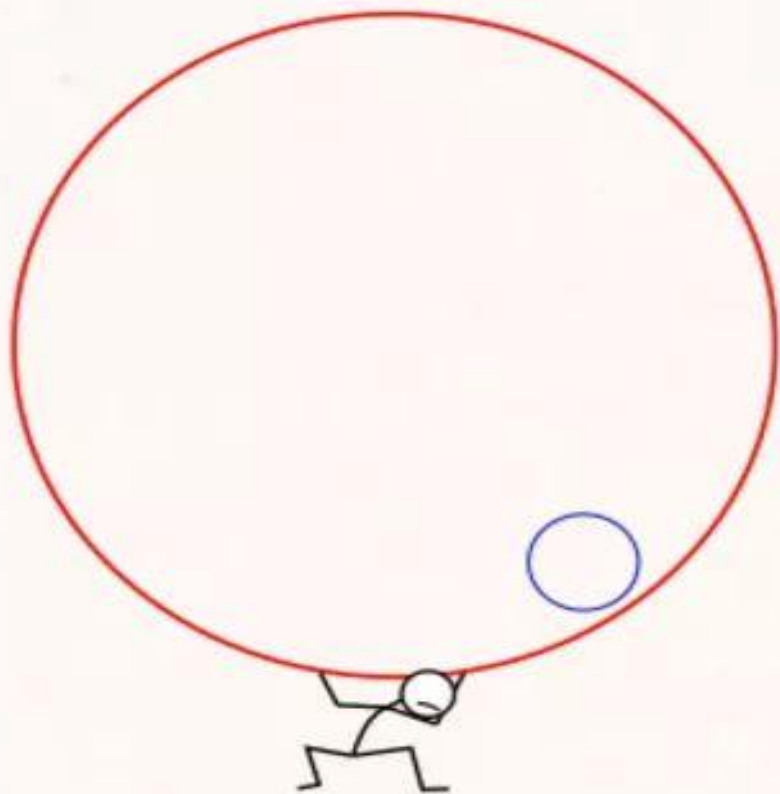
- ▶ It is an ancient Greek philosophy (developed by Zeno of Citium around 300 B.C. as a refinement of Cynicism). [Cynicism means an inclination to believe that people are motivated purely by self-interest; skepticism and Pessimism.] **Stoicism teaches the development of self-control and fortitude as a means of overcoming destructive emotions.** It does not seek to extinguish emotions completely, but rather seeks to transform them by a resolute Asceticism (a voluntary abstinence from worldly pleasures), which enables a person to develop clear judgment, inner calm and freedom from suffering (which it considers the ultimate goal). **Stoicism is not just a set of beliefs or ethical claims, but rather a way of life, involving constant practice and training.** In modern usage, the word refers to someone who **is unemotional or indifferent to pain, pleasure, grief or joy.**
- ▶ It is an ethical doctrine, the goal of Stoicism is freedom from passion (in the ancient sense of "anguish" or "suffering") through the pursuit of reason and "apatheia" (apathy, in its ancient sense of being objective, unemotional and having clear judgment).

# Stoicism:

- ▶ It teaches indifference and a "passive" reaction to external events (on the grounds that nothing external could be either good or evil) and equanimity in the face of life's highs and lows.
- ▶ The solution to evil and unhappiness can be achieved through the practice of Stoic philosophy (**the examination of one's own judgments and behaving in order to determine where they might have diverged from the universal reason of nature**). Hence the famous Stoic maxim: "Live according to nature", both in the sense of the laws of the universe and of man's own essential nature, reason.
- ▶ In many respects, it bears a remarkable similarity to the ethical teaching of Siddhartha Gautama (c. 563 - 483 B.C.) and **Buddhism, which is grounded in the four noble truths**: 1) all life has suffering; 2) suffering is rooted in passion and desire; 3) happiness is freedom from the passions; 4) moral restraint and self-discipline is the means by which one becomes free from suffering.

# Stoicism:

- ▶ An important aspect of Stoicism involves improving the individual's ethical and moral well-being by **having a will which is in agreement with Nature**. They **therefore promoted Egalitarianism**, and, unusually for their day, encouraged the acceptance of even slaves as equals on the grounds that all are the "sons of God", echoing Socrates' claim that "I am not an Athenian or a Greek, but a citizen of the world". They also denied the importance of external differences such as rank and wealth in social relationships.



Popular conception of Stoicism



What the Stoics probably  
had in mind





# Epicureanism

"DEATH IS NOTHING  
TO US, SINCE WHEN  
WE ARE, DEATH HAS  
NOT COME, AND  
WHEN DEATH HAS  
COME,  
WE ARE NOT."

- EPICURUS

# Epicureanism:

- ▶ Epicurus believed that what he called "pleasure" was the greatest good, but that the way to attain such pleasure was to live modestly, to gain knowledge of the workings of the world, and to limit one's desires. This would lead one to attain a state of tranquility (ataraxia) and freedom from fear as well as an absence of bodily pain (aponia). The combination of these two states constitutes happiness in its highest form.
- ▶ Epicureanism appears to be a form of hedonism as it declares pleasure to be its sole intrinsic goal. The concept that the absence of pain and fear constitutes the greatest pleasure, draws Epicureanism close to Hedonism; but it differs from hedonism as it advocates a simple life.

- ▶ Epicurus argued for moderation in all things, so that when eating, for example, one should not eat too richly, for it could lead to dissatisfaction later, such as indigestion or the grim realization that one could not afford such delicacies in the future. Likewise, sex could lead to increased lust and dissatisfaction with the sexual partner. Even learning, culture and civilization were discouraged, as they could result in disturbing one's peace of mind, except insofar as knowledge could help rid oneself of religious fears and superstitions, such as the fear of the gods and of death.