(4-5 Lines Each)

1. What did Glaucon (a character in Plato’s dialogue the Republic) take to be the main lesson of the story of the ring of Gyges?

Glaucon's interpretation of the story of the ring of Gyges challenges the traditional idea that people behave justly because it is the right thing to do. Instead, he argues that people only act justly because of the fear of punishment. His view implies that people's morality is not rooted in any intrinsic desire to do what is right, but rather in external factors. The story of Gyges thus serves as a cautionary tale that reminds us of the potential consequences of unchecked power and how it can corrupt even the most well-intentioned individuals.

2. Do you agree with Glaucon’s view of the relationship between justice and injustice (right and wrong)?

While Glaucon's view on justice challenges traditional notions of morality, I tend to agree with his perspective. Human nature often prioritizes self-interest over the well-being of others, and fear of punishment is a powerful motivator for many individuals. However, the relationship between justice and injustice is not always straightforward and can vary depending on the situation. Some may argue that justice is rooted in an innate sense of morality, while others may believe that it is simply a social construct. Ultimately, it is up to each individual to determine their own views on justice and how it relates to right and wrong.

3. Can there be any basis to morality if, as Hobbes thought, human beings are fundamentally self-interested?

Hobbes believed that human beings are fundamentally self-interested, but also recognized the importance of social contracts and laws that promote the common good. From this perspective, morality is based on self-interest because people have an interest in living in a stable, peaceful society. However, there are other moral theories that provide a basis for morality even if humans are self-interested. For example, utilitarianism focuses on promoting the greatest good for the greatest number of people. While the relationship between self-interest and morality is complex, it is important for individuals to critically evaluate and consider different perspectives when forming their own beliefs.

I completely agree with your point that morality has a basis and is not just a concept that exists without any ties or connections. Hobbes' idea that people agree to be moral in their own self-interest is an interesting concept that definitely has some truth to it. I also believe that the basis of morality lies in the idea of mutual benefit, as Hobbes points out. It is important to note that while self-interest may play a role in shaping morality, it is not the only factor at play. I think that our innate sense of empathy and compassion also play a role in shaping our moral code. These qualities allow us to recognize the inherent value of other individuals and the importance of treating them with respect and dignity. Overall, I agree that there is a basis to morality, and while self-interest may play a role in shaping it, it is not the sole determining factor.

I respectfully disagree with your perspective that people can act justly out of self-interest and their own morals. While it is true that some individuals may genuinely want to do good for society and act justly, I believe that the underlying motivation for these actions is not self-interest, but rather a sense of duty or obligation towards others. Justice, in my view, is not a means to achieve happiness or personal gain, but rather an end in itself.

Thank you for sharing your thoughts on Glaucon's view of the relationship between justice and injustice. I appreciate your perspective that some people act according to justice and for the betterment of society out of genuine interest and concern, not just due to fear of consequences. It's important to recognize that morality can be based on personal beliefs and self-morals, and that acting justly can lead to happiness through the satisfaction of contributing to the common good. I agree with your point that acting for the betterment of society and justice can be a form of self-interest and that individuals can act according to their own morals. Additionally, I think that the positive impact one has on society through just actions can lead to a positive response from society, which can contribute to one's happiness. Overall, I believe that acting justly can come from a variety of motivations, and that promoting the common good is a valuable pursuit in and of itself.

What is a ‘virtue’, according to Aristotle?

As Aristotle himself describes in Book II of Nicomachean Ethics, Virtue is the state of a character concerned with choice. Of which he describes it as being of 2 types: intellectual and moral. Intellectual virtue is the choices determined by birth and your growth. While moral virtue are the choices determined by your habits. Both types of virtues work in combination along with each person's desires to guide one's life with a decision. Virtue acts as the decision making process informed by every aspect of an individual including one's actions, passions. Informed virtue lies in a middle between what is best and what is right for the individual.

What did Aristotle take to be the main virtues of character? Do you agree with Aristotle’s list? If not, why not?

The main virtues of character where the 5 means Aristotle outlined: liberality, inirascibility, praise-worthy, truthfulness and friendliness. Personally I disagree with Aristotle’s list as it overlooks many important aspects of one's character. Two important virtues not mentioned in any of the means that come straight to mind are courage and fairness. While any action should not be completed for the sake of competing against fear, courage is an important quality to have to work as a bulwark for any type of frigenting situation. Allowing someone's other virtues of character to remain present. Secondally is fairness, once again although completing an inserting action for the sake of being fair isn’t virtues, being fair provides a baseline for all other virtues to stand on without loss of integrity.

What are the main features of Aristotle’s account of justice?

Aristotle describes justice as multiple different entities. As in once again in Book II “with regard to justice, since it has not one simple meaning”. That it has 2 kinds being the political idea and the ethical ideal that are both a mean and a rational virtue. The political idea of justice relates to the physical interpretation of the ideal helmed by the state. It acts as a means as it is a physical set of laws, while it also acts as a rational virtue of choices that should not be made. However the more important ethical ideal of justice relates much more to the rest of the discussion. The mean is the influence that just choices have on an individual. Where the rational virtue of ideal justice is the golden chief virtue that one aspires to follow however can very be obtained by our very biases.

1) What is a 'virtue', according to Aristotle?

To Aristotle, virtues are desirable character traits that allow a person to feel appropriate emotions after certain situations, and to act in a right way during the duration of ones life. Virtues allow a person to be generous, feel empathy, and properly interact with the world and people around them. He claims that there are "two kinds [of virtues], intellectual and moral intellectual excellence," which means that some virtues are rooted in logistics and facts while others are based more on a persons ethics and beliefs. Aristotle also goes on to say that these moral virtues owe their "birth and growth mainly to instruction, and so require time and experience;" he argues that ethical virtues, such as generosity and responsibility, are not born integrated into a person but must be learned and acquired through education and training. A person becomes virtuous by continually doing and practicing virtuous actions; virtues are characteristics that are gathered by the repeated practice of acting virtuously.

2) What did Aristotle take to be the main virtues of character? Do you agree with Aristotle's list? If not, why not?

Aristotle heavily emphasized the importance of virtues of character such as courage, temperance, gentleness, agreeableness, and truthfulness. He discusses each of these virtues in length, describing how living by these characteristics will allow a person to live a fulfilling, successful, and happy life. However, Aristotle does instruct that actions led by these virtues must be voluntary, for "if the doing and likewise the not doing of noble or base deeds lies with us, and if this is, as we found, identical with being good or bad, then it follows that it lies with us to be worthy or worthless men." If a person chooses to act in a virtuous nature for any other reason than his own beliefs and ethics, he is not doing this action for his own reason, and thus the doing does not lie in him and takes away from his virtuous character. This includes all of the virtues Aristotle lists as main virtues of character. I do find myself agreeing with Aristotle's list; I believe he lists many characteristics people should always live by, such as temperance and truthfulness. The truth is always better than a lie, for this only brings about dishonesty and anger, and temperance allows a person to act rationally, be slow to anger, and accept situations with a calm mind instead of immediately reaching towards the familiar feeling of rage and anger.

3) What are the main features of Aristotle's account of justice?

While Aristotle places emphasis on the fact that all virtues are important, he does make the claim that justice is chief among the ethical virtues. This is because "Justice, then, in this sense of the word, is not a part of virtue, but the whole of it;" Justice, or the act of getting what one deserves in light of fairness and reasonableness, is essentially virtue in itself, for you cannot have one without the other. Aristotle also claims another main feature of justice is that there is no mean between two distinct vices like the other virtues on his list; justice is broad and different in many circumstances, so it is fact that the term "unjustness" cannot solely represent the opposite of "justice." He compares this notion to the law; sometimes, laws are not morally correct. Does this mean then, that the man who acts according to the unjust law is just, for he is acting as the law states to, which is just? Or is the man that follows his morals and goes against the law the just one, for he is being virtuous and following his ethics? In both cases, the men can be said to be both just and unjust; hence, justice is a complex virtue that Aristotle emphasizes is the chief ethical virtue.

Reply Example:

The quote you mentioned in the third question is intriguing. People usually overlook the value of justice until they are in a moment where they need it. I think when justice is absent, individuals feel powerless and oppressed, which can lead to unrest and instability. Aristotle's definition of justice highlights its importance, and reminds us of the need to strive for fairness and balance in all aspects of life.

1:

You say in your first paragraph that in order to be virtuous you must do virtuous things and I believe that misses a large part of what virtue is about. That virtue is itself the decision making process not the goal for acting. As you say the different kinds of virtues are learned and grown into as a result everyone has different virtues making it unfair to define being virtuous as completing actions under one's own virtue. Meaning that someone with no virtue cannot be built up which is certainly not correct.

I disagree with the division of two of the cardinal virtues each being representative of the two types of virtues (intellectual and moral). I think that all four cardinal virtues contribute to both types of virtues while some contribute to one more than others. It is not a clear division between the two. In your paragraph you disregard the importance of wisdom and understanding under moral virtue as they allow greater changes in perspectives by people. As well as the contribution that liberality and temperance have on intellectual virtue being they both provide a person with the knowledge of how to properly be charitable and cautious respectively.

Although justice is a very complex virtue I believe that you are making it more complex and difficult on yourself by not breaking it down into smaller pieces as Aristotle did. Combining the Physical enactment of justice and its ever changing laws determined by an ever changing society with the Chief among virtues seems very difficult to keep straight. I suggest you divide the term into multiple parts that keep justice’s complexity however allowing it to be more easily understood by speaking on the relationship between the different parts.

**. What did Glaucon (a character in Plato’s dialogue the Republic) take to be the main lesson of the story of the ring of Gyges?**

Glaucon made the conclusion that there is no difference between the desires of “just” man and an “unjust” man in life. The difference occurs when there are consequences involved as "just" people would ignore their desires and interests in order to act according to the law as they do not want to be punished by society or authorities. However, if everyone had a ring just like Gyges that made them invisible and let them get away with all of their deeds, then no man would ignore their self-interests and would always be selfish as that is what would bring them happiness, "Then we shall discover in the very act the just and unjust man to be proceeding along the same road"(Plato). Glaucon also believed that anyone who did not use the ring to its full potential and actually decided to use their power for the good of society would eventually end up unhappier than the "unjust" man. He believed that people were better off acting towards their self-interests and desires instead of focusing on morals and justice as that would only bring them unhappiness. Overall, Glaucon believed that the main lesson of the story of The Ring of Gyges, was that "just" is not genuine as one would only act according to morals due to the fear of consequences, but if they had the power to avoid all types of consequences, everyone would be "unjust" and would focus on their own desires and interests in order to be happy.

**2. Do you agree with Glaucon’s view of the relationship between justice and injustice (right and wrong)?**

I do not agree with Glaucon's view of the relationship between justice and injustice because I do believe that some people act according to justice and for the betterment of society out of genuine interest and concern. I do not believe that all "just" acts are done due to fear of consequences but instead are done because of self-morals and beliefs. Glaucon believed that being "unjust" was the way to reach happiness as they were focusing on themselves, however, I truly think that people can be happy after doing a good deed not because of what could happen to them if they did not, but because of the genuine kindness they have. In other words, I think people could take the betterment of society and justice to be a form of self-interest and would act according to their own morals. I disagree with Glaucon's belief that people are better off acting out of self-interests instead of morality because I believe that if you give something positive to society out of genuine concern, society will give you something positive in return as well, also leading to one's happiness.

**3. Can there be any basis to morality if, as Hobbes thought, human beings are fundamentally self-interested?**

I think there can be a basis to morality even if human beings are fundamentally self-interested as I do think that acting towards the betterment of society can indeed be one's self-interest. Hobbes even mentions that while humans are selfish, they are also rational, meaning they do not act solely for themselves but in times for the people around them. Societies only run smoothly and work well because people value justice, morals, and a general good for the world around them. If people avoided all sense of morality, the world would be in ruckus as people would act however they wanted without thinking about the consequences of their actions and how their decisions could lead to horrible damage. I also believe that humans follow a give and take lifestyle, in which self-interest is something they might have to give up in certain situations but they will receive something that benefits not only them personally, but also the people around them.