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A Response to Glaucon's Challenge: The Sachs Problem and the Account of the Tyrannical Man

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Responding to Glaucon's Challenge: The Sachs Problem and the Account of the Tyrannical Soul

## Introduction

Few, if any, texts in philosophy have been more widely read and written on than Plato's *Republic*. For many reasons philosophers have found this particular book to be extremely interesting. Of the many issues and arguments that appear in the *Republic*, Glaucon's challenge is the most essential. Noticing the complexity and seriousness of the challenge, Socrates uses the entirety of the *Republic* to respond. The challenge deals with a very real and troublesome issue—whether one is happier when pursuing a life of justice or injustice.

Philosophers have struggled with Glaucon's challenge and Socrates' response for a variety of reasons, but perhaps the most serious criticism is that Socrates does not completely answer the challenges posed by Glaucon and Adeimantus. David Sachs, professor of philosophy at Johns Hopkins and author of "A Fallacy in Plato's Republic," contends that Socrates' response using the account of the Platonic soul is not relevant to the challenges due to its failure to meet multiple requirements. This well-known controversy is known as "The Sachs Problem."

The purpose of this paper will be to explore Glaucon's Challenge and Socrates' response in order to discover if, in fact, Socrates does truly answer the challenge. In order to do this, I will focus on Socrates' response in Book IV, in which Socrates provides his account of the harmonious soul and on "The Sachs Problem," which is intended to show that Socrates is unsuccessful in his attempt to dismiss the challenge. Finally, I plan to focus on Book IX, in which I believe Socrates provides his true response to the challenge that was issued by Glaucon and Adeimantus. Here, Socrates gives his account of the tyrannical soul and of his moral psychology. Ultimately, my aim is to discover if Sachs is successful in arguing that Socrates' response to Glaucon's Challenge is irrelevant or, on the other hand, if Sachs is mistaken and Socrates does provide a valid response to the challenge.

### **Glaucon's Challenge**

Having heard Socrates' earlier discussion with Thrasymachus, Glaucon is not truly convinced that justice pays more than injustice. This leads Glaucon to begin his famous challenge by asking Socrates what type of good justice really is and presents Socrates with three types: 1. A thing which is good in itself; 2. A thing which is good both in itself and for its consequences; and 3. A thing which is good only for its consequences (Pappas 52).

Having laid out the three possible categories, Socrates argues that justice belongs in the "best" category—that is, the second category, a thing that is good both in itself and for its consequences (White 75). Knowing that Socrates believes that justice belongs in the category with the best sorts of goods, Glaucon and Adeimantus want to be shown that this is actually the case: if justice does not truly belong in the second category of goods, then it cannot be of the greatest value.

Glaucon begins the argument by explaining how he wants Socrates to address the challenge that he plans to issue. Glaucon explains "For I desire to hear what each is and what power it has all alone by itself when it is in the soul—dismissing its wages and its consequences" (Plato 357 b). In other words, Glaucon desires to hear what makes the just life the better life when "seeming" is removed. For as far as Glaucon can tell, all of the benefits of the just life lie in seeming to be just; however, one can still seem to be just while actually being the opposite. Ultimately, what is the point of pursuing a life of justice if you can pursue injustice and still have the same benefits?

Glaucon expands on this challenge first by telling of the Ring of Gyges—a ring which allows its wearer to become invisible. According to Glaucon, if anyone—just or unjust—possessed the ring, then one would be compelled to ruthlessly seek power. In the story Glaucon

provides, the instant that the man realized that he could do as he pleased without fear of being caught, he slept with the king's wife and murdered the king (Plato 360 a). The purpose of the example of the Ring of Gyges is this: according to Glaucon, justice is practiced by the weak, while injustice is practiced by the strong. Glaucon concludes that if the just man and unjust man were both given the same ring "one would act no differently from the other, but both would go the same way. And yet, someone could say that this is great proof that no one is willingly just but only when compelled to be so" (Plato 360 c). Furthermore, this claim leads Glaucon to the belief that "all men suppose injustice is far more to their private profit than justice" (Plato 360 d).

The discussion of Gyge's ring also allows for individuals to ask themselves a critical question: would people still pursue justice if they knew they would never be punished? If individuals are pursuing justice purely out of fear of punishment, then how can justice be a good that belongs in a category with things that are good for its own sake (Shields 74)?

Glaucon expands on the idea that justice is practiced by the weak when he discusses the origin of justice. His understanding is that justice only exists because those who are unable to perform injustice—the weak and the old—bonded together to create laws which deemed unjust acts illegal. However, with that said, Glaucon believes that the example provided by Gyges' ring still provides compelling evidence that those who have set forth the laws pertaining to justice would still act unjustly if they were able, but due to weakness or age, they are not able to do so (White 77). Glaucon's discussion of the origin of justice and Gyge's ring also makes a critical claim about the rationality of pursuing a life of injustice. He wants to make it clear that, as far as he can tell, it would be completely irrational to pursue a life of justice when all of the many pleasures that humans desire are only attainable through unjust practices. The claim that all those who were able to perform unjust acts prior to the societal creation of justice did just that, and the

claim that if anyone possessed the powers that Gyge's ring gave to him, that that individual would act unjustly, as well, is meant to convey the rationality behind acting unjustly. As far as Glaucon can tell, any reasonable human being would pursue injustice because whatever allows for the greatest good for the individual will be the most rational pursuit. Thus, Glaucon believes that injustice allows for the greatest good and is therefore the more rational life to pursue.

At this point, Glaucon moves on to the next section of his challenge in which he presents the perfectly just and the perfectly unjust man. Here, Glaucon aims to present Socrates with what the life of the unjust and just man would look like if the common reputation attached to each was completely removed. He begins by explaining what the perfectly unjust man would look like. Glaucon asserts "the extreme of injustice is to seem to be just when one is not. So the perfectly unjust man must be given the most perfect injustice, and nothing must be taken away; he must be allowed to do the greatest injustices while having provided himself with the greatest reputation for justice" (Plato 361 a). In other words, the perfectly unjust man will still have a reputation for justice while being able to pursue any injustice he chooses.

On the other hand, for the perfectly just man—one who chooses to truly be just rather than to seem to be so—the reputation of justice must be completely removed. Glaucon explains "For if he should seem just, there would be honors and gifts for him for seeming to be such. Then it wouldn't be plain whether he is such for the sake of the just or for the sake of the gifts and honors" (Plato 361 c). Further, the only thing left to the perfectly just man will be his desire and ability to act in a just manner. However, in order to test whether or not justice alone allows for happiness, he must be provided with a reputation for injustice. According to Glaucon, the just man who lives the perfectly just life while lacking the reputation for justice will be exposed to many great tortures and pains, and he will soon come to realize that the reputation attached to

justice is far more valuable than truly possessing the trait itself (Plato 362 a). Ultimately, Glaucon and Adeimantus want to be shown that even if all other goods were stripped from an individual, that individual would still be better off having only justice. Furthermore, they want to be shown that even though the perfectly unjust man has every good imaginable aside from justice, those goods cannot compensate for the loss of justice. Put another way, Glaucon and Adeimantus want to be shown that justice is so valuable that it outweighs any other good that could possibly be obtained, even if it was the only good that one had.

According to White, Glaucon's speech rests on two main ideas. The first is that justice is harmful to the individual while injustice is beneficial. This is the case, according to Glaucon, because anyone would choose the unjust life if they knew that they would not be punished by society for their actions. The second main point that Glaucon aims to make is that justice is only beneficial because society, driven by weaker individuals, has agreed to create laws which punish the unjust (White 77). In other words, Glaucon holds the belief that justice is merely a societal invention, and that "it is only in virtue of violating these conventions that one can be called unjust" (White 81).

The final part of the challenge is issued both by Glaucon and his brother, Adeimantus. Adeimantus enters the discussion to point out one more major issue—that even the gods look more favorably upon the unjust man. They make it known that since the unjust man is capable of having money, food, and other things which are pleasing to the gods as sacrifices, that the gods will look more favorably upon them. Here, Adeimantus argues that "If he himself or his ancestors, has committed some injustice, they can heal it with pleasures and feasts... They, as they say, persuade the gods to serve them" (Plato 364 c). Essentially, Adeimantus is arguing that if one is in pursuit of justice because that individual feels that it is what the gods desire, then that

individual is mistaken—the gods look favorably upon those who seem to be just, not those who truly are. According to Annas, this part of the challenge is meant to further drive home the value of seeming and the idea that even in the case of the gods, seeming is more powerful than actually being. Furthermore, she asserts that Adeimantus' speech makes the point that “while the gods do not positively approve of injustice, they can be bought off” (Annas 65). Therefore, if one is pursuing a life of justice due to some feeling of religious duty, then they have no need to continue along that path.

Finally, Adeimantus concludes “For the things said indicate that there is no advantage in my being just, if I don't also seem to be... Therefore, since as the wise make plain to me, ‘the seeming overpowers the truth and is the master of happiness, one must turn wholly to it’” (Plato 365c). Here, it is made clear that Adeimantus and Glaucon believe that being truly just is not the happiest life because of the many sufferings the just man must endure. Also, the unjust man can more easily obtain all the good things associated with justice, meanwhile he can do whatever he chooses.

Ultimately, Glaucon and Adeimantus are arguing that the many see acting in accordance with justice as worthless without the reputation for justice. For if the just man lacks the reputation for justice, then he will not be favored by the people of the city or by the gods; instead, he will be exposed to much torment and unhappiness. On the other hand, the unjust man can do as he pleases, gain a reputation for justice, be viewed favorably by the gods, and live a much happier life. In other words, according to Glaucon and Adeimantus, the reputation for something is what is valuable, not the actual possession of justice or injustice. Adeimantus sums up the challenge to Socrates by saying “So, don't only show us by the argument that justice is stronger than injustice, but show us what each in itself does to the who has it—whether it is

noticed by gods and human beings or not—that makes the one good and the other bad” (Plato 367 e). In other words, they want Socrates to show them that justice is good in itself—that is, that justice allows one to be happy in private and that it is what is truly good for the soul, with or without the reputation for being just.

### **Plato’s Basic Strategy**

Having become aware of the strength and complexity of Glaucon’s Challenge, Socrates realizes that successfully refuting it will require a long, intricate process. The first step of which is truly identifying justice. Here, Socrates outlines the strategy which he will follow throughout the *Republic*. Socrates explains that in order to identify justice, it is wise to start by examining the city. According to White, “He therefore thinks that there will be clearer justification for his use of the term in application to individuals if he first exhibits the parallel use in application to cities” (82). In other words, Socrates plans show that justice in the city and justice in the individual are similar in many respects, and by examining the city first, it will become easier to discover justice in the individual at a later time.

Socrates, aware that his plan more than likely appears odd, gives his rationale by providing what is known as “the letter analogy.” In this analogy, Socrates asks that Glaucon and Adeimantus imagine a man with subpar vision be ordered to read tiny letters from a significant distance. Naturally, this would be very difficult for such a man. However, he asks that they further imagine that the same letters were placed in some other location, only this time, they are much larger. Now it is likely that the individual will be able to successfully identify the letters in their larger state. Assuming the large letters and the small letters are the same, it is far more likely that when the man returns to viewing the smaller ones, he will correctly identify them as

well (Plato 368d). This analogy does not imply that the man will simply assume that the larger letters and the smaller letters are, in fact, the same; instead, it is making the point that once the man has successfully observed the characteristics belonging to the large letters, he can more easily observe them in the smaller letters as well (White 83). Essentially, the point that “the letter analogy” is illustrating is this: Once we are able to successfully identify the characteristics of justice in the city--which is larger and presumably easier to view justice in-- then it will be easier to tackle the smaller, more difficult task of identifying justice in the individual. This idea operates under the assumption that the structure which allows for justice in the city is the same as the structure which allows for justice in one’s soul. He further assumes that if justice can be found in the city by following the structure that will be established, then it can be found in the soul through in parts as well.

### **The One Function Principle**

With Glaucon and Adeimantus in agreement with Socrates in how they will begin their search for justice, Socrates introduces the origin of the city. Each man, he says, is unable to provide for all of his needs and therefore requires the assistance that can only be provided by the city. The city provides for the many things that an individual cannot provide for on his own by applying the idea that one man will serve one specific function-- for example: one man may act as a shoemaker, one as a farmer, another as a doctor and so on. In doing this, each man will be able to hone his own skill, while having all of his other needs met through exchange with others. Furthermore, Socrates asks, “Who would do a finer job, one man practicing many arts, or one man one art” (Plato 370b)? Adeimantus asserts that one man one art would certainly be the best option. In conclusion, Socrates asserts “So, on this basis each thing becomes more plentiful,

finer, and easier when one man, exempt from other tasks, does one thing according to nature and at the crucial moment” (Plato 370c).

With that said, it is clear that Socrates is arguing that each man possessing one function will make the city better, but the idea that each man does his task “according to nature” is especially valuable to the conversation. This structure of the city is parallel to the later construction of the soul. According to White, this passage “provides the underpinnings for almost all of the rest of Plato’s description of his city. No understanding of the *Republic* is possible without an awareness of the role that this principle plays” (85).

### **The Three Parts of the City and the Soul**

In the city, Socrates explains that there are three necessary parts, or classes: the producers, the auxiliary class, and the guardian class. Of these parts, the guardian class will be the ruling class within the city where they will be responsible for assuring that the two classes below them perform their proper duties and practice moderation. Socrates asks “Aren’t these the most important elements of moderation for the multitude: being obedient to the rulers, and being themselves rulers of the pleasures of drink, sex, and eating” (Plato 389e)? In other words, it is vital that the producer and auxiliary classes obey the guardian class and do not attempt to perform the duties of the guardians. This is also made explicitly clear by the one function principle previously mentioned.

In viewing these three classes in the city, Socrates comes to realize what justice is. He argues “the money-making, auxiliary, and guardian classes doing what’s appropriate, each of them minding its own business in a city—would be justice and would make the city just” (Plato 434c). Thus, justice is when each class performs its duty without encroaching on the other classes. Furthermore, injustice is the exact opposite—one class imposing on another. Socrates

argues “Meddling among the classes, of which there are three, and exchange with one another is the greatest harm for the city and would most correctly be called extreme evil -doing” (Plato 434c).

Furthermore, just as Socrates assured us earlier through the use of the letter analogy, the city and soul are formed in the same fashion, and by looking at the city first we will more easily see the characteristics in the soul. In Book IV Socrates begins to explain the layout of the soul—three classes, with the most rational ruling over the other parts. He begins to lay these parts out with a series of questions. First, he makes it clear that men are susceptible to their appetites—sex, alcohol, overeating, and the like—yet some are still successful in controlling these appetites and practicing them in moderation. This reveals two parts of the soul. The first is the part where the appetites themselves exist, while the second is the rational part which aims to the rule appetitive part. Socrates asks “Isn’t there something in their soul bidding them to drink and something forbidding them to do so, something different that masters that which bids” (Plato 439c)? Here, Socrates uses this example to highlight the appetitive and rational parts of the soul in action. This makes is clear that the two parts do, in fact, exist. Continuing on in his explanation of the parts of the soul, Socrates introduces a third part: spiritedness. He explains that this part of the soul is similar to the appetitive part, but not the same. The spirited part of the soul is typically associated with the likes of emotions such as anger and fear, while the appetitive part deals with desires for food, drink, and sex.

Having come to an understanding of the three parts of the soul, it is left for Socrates to examine whether or not justice in the soul is understood to be the same as justice in the city. Here, he reaches the same conclusion. Socrates asserts, “Then we must remember that, for each of us too, the one within whom each of the parts minds its own business will be just and mind his

own business” (Plato 441e). Furthermore, just as the rational guardian class rules within the city, the rational part of the soul will be the ruling part, as well.

Likewise, injustice in the soul is a disorganization of the parts within it. Socrates asks “Mustn’t it, in its turn, be a certain faction among those three—a meddling, interference, and rebellion of a part of the soul against the whole? The purpose of the rebellious part is to rule in the soul although this is not proper, since by nature it is fit to be a slave to that which belongs to the ruling class” (Plato 444b). Ultimately, injustice in the city and the soul are the same—parts of one attempting to encroach on another part which it is not suited for; thus, leaving the entire city or soul in disarray.

This explanation of the disorganized soul leads Socrates to ask Glaucon whether or not he still believes that a life of injustice leaves one better off than that of justice. Glaucon’s response is that he views his earlier belief to be absurd. He responds “If life doesn’t seem livable with the body’s nature corrupted, not even with every sort of food and drink and every sort of wealth and sort of rule, will it then be livable when the nature of that very thing by which we live is confused and corrupted, even if a man does whatever else he might want except that which will rid him of vice and injustice and will enable him to acquire justice and virtue” (Plato 445a)? This makes it clear that Glaucon has been persuaded by Socrates’ argument and now believes that the unjust life is not worth pursuing because it would necessarily require the soul being in disarray. With that said, while Glaucon and Socrates may find this response to Glaucon’s challenge to be sufficient, not all scholars agree. The account of the disorganization of the soul as a response to Glaucon’s challenge has proven to be very problematic to many scholars and has prompted many interesting responses, including a powerful response from David Sachs.

### **The Sachs Problem**

Socrates' account of justice in book IV is very problematic, according to David Sachs. In his essay, "A Fallacy in Plato's Republic," Sachs argues that Socrates' response to Glaucon's Challenge using the account of the properly ordered soul is not relevant to the challenge at hand. This is the case due to two understandings of justice between the brothers, Glaucon and Adeimantus, and Socrates.

Sachs argues that there are two conceptions of Justice discussed in the *Republic*: vulgar justice and platonic justice. Vulgar justice is the understanding of justice that most individuals seem to exhibit. This understanding of justice essentially claims that justice is the lack of performance of immoral deeds. Sachs claims "the vulgar criteria for justice consist in the nonperformance of acts of certain kinds; and, of course, injustice, according to the vulgar conception, consists in performing such acts" (Sachs 143). Some examples of these immoral acts that one must avoid in order to be considered just are: murder, rape, theft, etc. On the other hand, those who perform said acts are therefore unjust. The second conception of justice is the account that Socrates provides in book IV—the proper organization of the soul, with each part doing the task for which it was intended.

The problem that Sachs observes is that Glaucon and Adeimantus challenge Socrates to show that both conceptions of justice are vital to proving that the just man is happier than the unjust man. In other words, the brothers want Socrates to show them that the man who does not perform vulgarly unjust acts is better off than the man who does, and that the man with the Platonic soul—where justice proves to be a good "in itself"—is happier than the man with the disorganized soul. With that said, Sachs argues that Socrates responds to the challenge by arguing that the platonically just man is happier than "any men whose souls are not thus ordered" (Sachs 152). In order for this to be relevant, however, Sachs argues that Socrates must meet two

requirements—he must prove that the platonically “just man also conforms to the ordinary or vulgar canons of justice” and that “his conception of the just man applies to... every man who is just according to the vulgar conception” (Sachs 153). In other words, Sachs believes that for Socrates to prove that one is happier when they fall into his category of just man and to successfully answer Glaucon and Adeimantus’ challenges, he must show that platonic and vulgar justice agree with one another, and that those who are vulgarly just are also platonically just and vice versa. He sums up this belief by stating “It seems incontrovertible that when they ask to be shown how justice, because of its power, constitutes the greatest good of the soul, Glaucon and Adeimantus are taking for granted that the souls of vulgarly just men will enjoy the effects of justice” (Sachs 156).

With that said, however, Sachs argues that Socrates does not satisfy those two requirements; and furthermore, to satisfy them would be impossible. He points out “Plato merely assumes that having the one involves having the other. The assumption, moreover is implausible” (Sachs 154). This leads Sachs’s to argue that Socrates’ account of the platonically just man is not relevant to the challenge posed by Glaucon and Adeimantus. He concludes,

Had Plato succeeded in showing the happiest or most blessed of men are those who are just according to his conception of justice, and that the farther a man is from exemplifying Platonic justice the more unhappy he will be, Plato still would not have shown either that Platonic justice entails vulgar justice or the converse. That is, he would still have to relate his conclusions to the controversy which, plainly, they are intended to settle (Sachs 157).

It is for this reason—Socrates’ inability to satisfy the two requirements mentioned above—that Sachs considers Socrates’ response in book IV concerning the Platonic soul to be irrelevant to the challenges presented by Glaucon and Adeimantus in book II.

### **Response to Glaucon’s Challenge: The Tyrannical Man**

Having reviewed Socrates' response to Glaucon's Challenge in Book IV and the critique offered by David Sachs, one final piece remains. Contrary to what Sachs seems to think, the most compelling response to Glaucon's Challenge is not found in Book IV; instead, it is found in Book IX, where Socrates gives his account of the tyrannical man and of the three types of pleasures. In book IX, Socrates provides an account of how the tyrannical man comes to be, what his life looks like, and how he perceives the different pleasures.

Socrates begins by explaining how one comes to have a tyrannic soul. When one allows the appetites to rule over reason, it starts one down a very dangerous path, which is often hard to recover from. Socrates explains this process with the following: "Now this leader of the soul takes madness for its armed guard and is stung to frenzy. And if it finds in the man any opinions or desires accounted good and still admitting of shame, it slays them and pushes them out of him until it purges him of moderation and fills him with madness brought in from abroad" (Plato 573b). With this claim, Socrates makes his opinion clear—when appetites control the soul, one loses his ability to act in moderation and descends into madness.

The kind of life that one can expect when their soul is ruled by the appetites is a very unpleasant one. The need to satisfy appetites will lead the tyrannical man to take any means necessary to fulfill his needs—he will lie, cheat, steal, or perform any other deed that is required to meet his goals (Plato 575b). Yet, what is unknown to the tyrannical man is that through his many bad deeds, he only serves to make his situation worse.

The tyrannic man, through his many wretched deeds, has done virtually nothing to benefit those around him; thus, all of his relationships are essentially worthless. Each action he takes with another human being is only taken with the hope that it may lead to some more pleasant outcome—the satisfaction of a desire. Socrates describes the tyrannical man's

interactions with others by explaining “either they have intercourse with their flatterers, who are ready to serve them in everything, or, if they have need of anything from anyone, they themselves cringe and dare to assume any posture” (Plato 576a). In other words, every interaction that the tyrannical man has with another individual is meant only to advance them toward their goal. Thus, if every interaction is only meant to act as a means to an end, then the tyrannical man will never know a true relationship with another human being. Socrates argues “they live their whole life without ever being friends of anyone, always one man’s master or another man’s slave. The tyrannic nature never has a taste of freedom or true friendship” (Plato 576a). With that said, it is clear that the tyrannical man will never know what it is like to truly care, or be cared for, by another person. Additionally, they will never know what it is like to be their own master.

From here, Socrates continues to advance his argument that the tyrannic man is, in fact, a slave. First, however, it is important for Socrates to make it clear that the worst sort of man resembles the worst kind of city. Socrates and Glaucon then agree that the worst city and the worst man are both tyrannic. Glaucon clarifies their stance by stating “And it’s plain to everyone that there is no city more wretched than one under a tyranny and none happier than one under a kingship” (Plato 576e).

Knowing that the tyrannical man will resemble the tyrannical city, Socrates and Glaucon begin putting together what the tyrannical man’s soul will look like. Socrates asks “If, then... a man is like his city, isn’t it also necessary that the same arrangement be in him and that his soul be filled with much slavery and illiberality, and that, further, those parts of it that are most decent be slaves while a small part, the most depraved and maddest, be master” (Plato 577d)? With Glaucon’s agreement, Socrates continues and the two further agree that the soul of the tyrannical

man is a slave soul. Having come to these agreements, Socrates concludes “And therefore, the soul that is under a tyranny will least do what it wants—speaking of the soul as a whole” (Plato 577d). In other words, the tyrannical man has no control over himself, especially over his soul—he is merely a slave to his own desires.

Additionally, the tyrannical soul, like the city, is poor and fearful. Socrates explains that the tyrannical man is “necessarily poverty ridden and insatiable” and incredibly fearful, which leads him to ask whether he can imagine a city with “more complaining, sighing, lamenting or suffering” (Plato 578a). Realizing the horrible conditions of the soul of the tyrannical man, Glaucon comes to the position that the tyrannical soul is the worst possible; however, Socrates points out that the soul they had been discussing exists in the private life of the tyrannical man—the worst possible soul is that of the tyrannical man whom actually succeeds in being a tyrant.

The true tyrant, according to Socrates “while not having control of himself attempts to rule others, just as if a man with a body that is sick and without control itself were compelled to spend his life not in a private station but contesting and fighting with other bodies” (Plato 579c). In other words, the tyrant attempts to rule others when he cannot even properly rule himself. This, according to Socrates and Glaucon, is the worst life possible.

Having reached this conclusion, Socrates sums up the many characteristics that can be attributed to the tyrannic man. He explains that the tyrannic man is nothing more than a slave, both to his desires and to the many other individuals that he must always use for some end. He also makes it clear that while he is always wanting for more, he is actually the poorest man of all. All of these claims become clear “if one knows how to look at a soul as a whole” (Plato 579e). Socrates also argues that the tyrant will be “envious, faithless, unjust, friendless, impious, and a

host and nurse for all vice” (Plato 580a). Finally, with the many characteristics of the tyrant known, Socrates makes it clear that the tyrant lives the worst life possible.

Socrates concludes “the best and most just man is happiest, and he is that man who is kingliest and is king of himself; while the worst and most unjust man is most wretched and he, in his turn, happens to be the one who, being most tyrannic, is most tyrant of himself and of the city” and “whether or not in being such they escape the notice of all human beings and gods” (Plato 580c). Thus, the conclusion is that the life of the tyrant is the worst possible life, even if no one, including the gods, knows that he is so.

### **Book IX: Three Types of Pleasures**

The last issue discussed in Book IX, which serves to complete the refutation of Glaucon’s Challenge is the discussion of the three types of pleasure that exist. Socrates begins by explaining that there are three types of people, also—the lover of wisdom, the lover of gain, and the lover of victory (Plato 381c). Socrates and Glaucon then agree that the greatest judge of what the truest pleasures would be is the wisdom lover. This conclusion comes from the fact that they believed that the greatest judge would use arguments to persuade them, and “arguments are especially the instrument of the philosopher;” thus, the philosopher must be the best judge of the truest pleasures (Plato 582d).

Following this realization, Socrates and Glaucon add “of the three pleasures, the most pleasant would belong to that part of the soul with which we learn; and the man among us in whom this part rules has the most pleasant life” (Plato 583a). Additionally, the lover of gain has the most miserable life. But why is this the case?

The discussion then shifts to an explanation of the pleasures themselves and why the greatest amount of pleasure belongs to the lover of wisdom and least amount to the lover of gain. Socrates explains that pleasure is not a set standard; instead, it is measured relative to other instances of pleasure and pain. He asserts “when it is next to the painful, repose looks pleasant and next to the pleasant, painful; and in these appearances there is nothing sound, so far as truth of pleasure goes, only a certain wizardry” (Plato 584a). With that said, Socrates does add that the most common and the greatest pleasures are those that act as a relief from pain and suffering (Plato 584c).

Knowing that the greatest and most common pleasures are forms of relief from pain, Socrates then explains how it is that many are mistaken concerning what is truly the most pleasurable. He does this by asking Glaucon whether he believes that there exists a lower region, a middle region, and an upper region. With Glaucon answering that this is the case, Socrates continues to ask what one might think if one were to move from the lower region to the middle region—might they assume that they have reached the top? Again, Glaucon answers that this is the case. Thus, Socrates concludes the following: “Then would you be surprised if those who are inexperienced in truth, as they have unhealthy opinions about many things, so too they are disposed toward pleasure and pain...out of lack of experience they look from pain to painless and are deceived” (Plato 585a). In other words, when considering pleasures, one might easily make the same mistake as the individual moving from the bottom region to the middle—one might assume that because they have moved from pain to painless that they are therefore experiencing the greatest form of pleasure.

Additionally, Socrates asks Glaucon whether he believes that something that is eternal “is more” than something that is “never the same and mortal” (Plato 585c). Glaucon agrees that this

is the case and further agrees that the best example of that thing which is eternal is knowledge.

Socrates explains the difference in how one who does not recognize this acts, as opposed to one who does. He concludes

Therefore, those who have no experience of prudence and virtue but are always living with feasts and the like are, it seems brought down and then back again to the middle and throughout life wander in this way... they feed, fattening themselves, and copulating; and for the sake of getting more of these things, they kick and butt with horns and hoofs of iron, killing each other because they are insatiable; for they are not filling the part of themselves that is, or can contain anything, with things that *are* (Plato 586a).

Those who are not pursuing knowledge, but instead pursue various desires in an attempt to rid themselves of the pain caused by cravings, are not actually doing anything that can truly fill themselves and contribute to any long-term happiness; instead, they are simply satisfying desires in that moment. As a result, this individual will never truly be satisfied, and in an attempt to continuously satisfy their desires, they will do whatever it takes to try to fill the void.

On the other hand, the individual who has a properly ordered soul will not encounter such issues. Socrates explains, “when all the soul follows the philosophic and is not factious, the result is that each part may, so far as other things are concerned, mind its own business and be just and, in particular, enjoy its own pleasures, the best pleasures, and, to the greatest possible extent, the truest pleasures” (Plato 586e). Additionally, this also makes it clear that when the soul is in disarray, one will not be able to pursue the greatest possible pleasures.

This leads Glaucon and Socrates to their conclusions concerning the kingly and tyranic lives. They explain that the life that is most distant from the organized soul belongs to the tyranic man; thus, his life must be the worst. Socrates concludes “Then I suppose the tyrant will be most distant from a pleasure that is true and is properly his own, while the king is least distant... And therefore... the tyrant will live most unpleasantly and the king most pleasantly” (Plato 587b).

At this point, Socrates restates Glaucon's original challenge by saying, "It was, I believe, said that doing injustice is profitable for the man who is perfectly unjust but has the reputation of being just. Or isn't that the way it was said" (Plato 588b)? So, now it is clear that Socrates aim is to show that it is not profitable to do injustice, even if the individual seems to be just. He does so by providing an image of a many-headed beast. Socrates points out that the unjust man feeds all of the many heads except for the human head. On the other hand, the just man acts "like a farmer, nourishing and cultivating the tame heads, while hindering the growth of the savage ones—making the lion's nature an ally and, caring for all in common, making them friends with each other and himself" (Plato 589b). Furthermore, Socrates concludes that what is best for individuals is the same as what was best for the many-headed beast—to be ruled by the best part. He explains "its better for all to be ruled by what is divine and prudent, especially when one has it as his own within himself" (Plato 580d). Ultimately, this is meant to make it clear that it is best for the rational part of the soul to rule over the other two parts, for it is the most prudent and knows how to properly care for all of the parts, keeping them properly controlled.

Finally, Socrates and Glaucon use these points to reach the conclusion that it is not beneficial in any way to allow for one to do injustice without being caught and punished, even if the individual has obtained a great deal of wealth and power. He concludes, "doesn't the man who gets away with it become still worse; while, as for the man who doesn't get away with it and is punished, isn't the bestial part of him put to sleep and tamed, and the tame part freed" (Plato 591b)? Ultimately, to do injustice without being caught only serves to continue contributing to the individual's inability to satisfy their desires. If they were to be punished, however, their desires could be tamed and the individual could potentially reestablish a harmonious soul. To put it plainly—not being punished for doing injustice is one of the worst things that can happen to an

individual because it allows for one to continue with their soul in disarray, and only getting worse.

### Conclusion

At this point it is important to revisit Glaucon's initial challenge. In Book II, Glaucon challenges Socrates to show him that justice is a good in itself, that it allows one to be happy in private, and is more beneficial than doing injustice whether one has the reputation for justice or not, even among the gods. Additionally, the challenge requests that Socrates show that justice is so valuable that it outweighs any other good. Finally, Glaucon also implies that it is more rational for one to choose injustice over justice when one can successfully perform it.

Initially, Socrates attempts to respond to Glaucon's challenge by providing his account of Platonic justice—that there are three parts of the soul, each with one function, and that justice occurs when each part does its particular function without interfering with the other parts. This account, however, does not answer the entire challenge. As Sachs points out, Socrates fails to account for the parts of the challenge that require for a discussion of vulgar justice. In order for Socrates to successfully answer the challenge these issues must be accounted for. Thus, Sachs is correct to criticize Socrates' response through Book IV; however, Sachs does not account for the rest of the *Republic*.

The two requirements provided by Sachs—that Socrates show that if one is platonically just, he will therefore meet the requirements for vulgar justice, and that all who are platonically just are also vulgarly just and vice versa—are met in book IX. As it was mentioned in my account of the tyrannical soul, Socrates rightly argues that when one begins to give in to his appetites—thus allowing them to rule instead of reason—he is starting down the path to vulgar

injustice. Socrates makes it clear that it is never in one's best interest to perform vulgar injustice because the only reason to do so is to free oneself from the pain caused by appetites. In other words, the tyrannical man's lack of platonic justice is the cause of his vulgar injustice. This satisfies the first requirement presented by Sachs. Secondly, if one is truly ruled by his reason, then it is not possible for that individual's desires to overthrow his reason and lead him to an act of vulgar injustice. Obviously each individual case cannot be tested, but the existence of platonic justice in the individual guarantees vulgar justice; thus, one who is platonically just cannot be vulgarly unjust. This assures us that all who are platonically just are also vulgarly just. This account successfully refutes Sachs's claim that a fallacy occurs in the *Republic*.

Socrates' full response to the challenges presented by Glaucon and Adeimantus are found in Book IX. First, Socrates must show that justice is a good in itself, that it is a good within the soul and that injustice is the opposite. Socrates explains that justice is a good within itself and within the soul because a just soul is a free soul. If not for the just, properly organized soul, the individual's soul would not be in its most free state. As for the impact that injustice has by itself, within the soul, injustice creates a soul that is like that of the tyrant: enslaved and unable to do what it wants.

Furthermore, Glaucon and Adeimantus want to be shown that it is still better to be just even if one does not have the reputation for justice and that it is bad to be unjust even if one is believed to be just. If one is truly just, then they will have happiness regardless of their reputation. As Socrates explained in his discussion of the types of pleasures, the just man will experience the greatest type of pleasure, while the truly unjust man will never be able to satisfy himself. Since the just man will pursue knowledge, a type pleasure that "is," he will be satisfied and will not constantly need to satisfy his desires like the unjust man. Additionally, each part of

the soul will be able to pursue its own pleasures instead of the strongest desires taking over and one denying the other parts their pleasures.

With that said, Socrates was also challenged to show that justice outweighs all other goods. Without a just soul, one is not able to fully experience the pleasures that each part of the soul finds most appealing. Furthermore, the greatest possible pleasure is not obtainable unless one is just. As mentioned above, the just individual is concerned with knowledge and truth, things that are eternal. This means that these pleasures truly satisfy the individual. Put more plainly—justice outweighs all other goods because with a just soul and a focus on what “is,” one is truly satisfied. On the other hand, a soul that is unjust is insatiable, and any other good that one can possess will need to be continuously pursued in order to satisfy the desire for that good.

Finally, though Glaucon never explicitly states that he believes injustice to be more rational, his discussion of Gyges’ ring certainly implies this; thus, it is important for Socrates to show that the more rational pursuit is that of justice. He has explained that the just individual is able to seek the greatest pleasures and to become truly satisfied, while the unjust man will never know true satisfaction—he will always strive to feed his desires and fill the void within him. Also, Socrates argues that the soul of the just man is properly ordered therefore allowing him to have a free soul in which each part can pursue its own goods in moderation. Meanwhile, the unjust man will be led around by his desires as a slave, never pursuing those things which the soul finds most pleasurable. Furthermore, according to Socrates the unjust man will never know true friendship or love, even if all suppose that he is just, for his relationships will never be more than a means to some other end.

Thus, having given a relevant response to each part of Glaucon’s Challenge—how justice is beneficial in itself, why it is the more rational choice, why it is the greatest good, and why it is

superior to injustice even with reputation removed-- Socrates is not guilty of committing the logical fallacy that Sachs thinks was committed. The account of Platonic justice was not the end of Socrates' response to such a complex challenge-- it was the beginning. The account of Platonic justice was merely the first step in providing a complicated answer to a complicated question.

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