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Socrates and the Pursuit of Wisdom

**Introduction**

Philosophy is usually defined as a “pursuit of wisdom", also termed as "love of knowledge." Socrates one of the famous Greek philosophers is well known for his concepts and work that inferred the idea of wisdom, in fact an account of “real pursuit of wisdom”. Addressing wise people, Socrates dug out actual definition of wisdom stressing that wisdom is an acceptance and acknowledgment of what one don’t know. He defined wisdom as a quest for good life. Socrates used a method of “reasoning” to look ahead for seeking wisdom. Socrates questioned all wise people he knew such as, politicians, craftsmen, and poets. As everyone failed to answer Socrates’s question, he introduced Socrates method to seek wisdom. The method infers to question until a statement is reached, valid enough to address scrutiny. Socrates asserted an undeniable fact that pursuit of wisdom is an understanding of limit of knowledge, taking into account theory or treatise.

**Discussion**

Socrates is one of the most intelligent philosophers; he wrote no major works of his own but his teachings and life can be understood through his friends and students. "The Apology," written by Plato is one of the significant writings on Socrates. The great philosopher inferred a concept known as, "Socratic wisdom." (Peterson, et, al. 2017, pp. 273-287). It refers to the understanding of limits of knowledge, taking into account that man knows nothing and makes no assumption of knowing anything that is less or more. The derivation of Socrates understanding of wisdom can be traced from Plato’s writings. Apology is a detailed account that describes trials of Socrates that influenced understanding of the truest aspect of Socratic wisdom. (Plato, et, al. 2018).

Although a famous quotation is attributed to Socrates, “I know that I know nothing” refers to a complete account of Socrates’s understanding of life and wisdom. Socrates definition of wisdom distinguishes him from other people, taking into account his status as a divine example. He infers that man is obliged to live a life of philosophical examination. In a nutshell, Apology is one of the fundamentals to understand the concept of human wisdom. Socrates introduces the idea of “human wisdom” in the context of “historical charges." (Peterson, et, al. 2017, pp. 273-287). Human wisdom unfolds into two components; one of the components adheres to ‘divine wisdom". Divine wisdom refers to the belief that people don’t know anything. In a simplified form, wisdom is to know that one is not wise. Other aspect of quotation infers that "human wisdom is an account of false beliefs." (Peterson, et, al. 2017, pp. 273-287). It would not be wrong to say that Socrates does not infer an expression of skepticism, in fact, he imparted dogmatism.

According to him, wisdom lies in the realization of the fact that man knows nothing. In a nutshell, "Socrates definition of wisdom” unfolds two aspects of understanding. One aspect highlights the fact that Socrates knows nothing while the other aspect infers that he does not claim he doesn't know anything, in fact, he is aware of ignorance and the phenomena of "ignorance" also called Socratic Ignorance. (Peterson, et, al. 2017, pp. 273-287). The quest for knowledge directed Socrates to a method that can act as a guide in search of wisdom. The practical implication of this method can be found in the philosopher's search for knowledge and wisdom. Socrates tried to reach out to all the educated and literate people in Athens to know their wisdom and seek answers to his questions. He used a method of "cross-examination”, "discussion" and “rationalism" to know the validity of knowledge politicians had. Socrates realized that people with greatest reputations were deficient in knowledge while others who were supposed to be less intelligent were more knowledgeable and intelligent. (Apology 5). Socrates gave up asking politicians and shifted toward poets. The poets in ancient time inferred that they had a direct line to truth and described a deep understanding of the wisdom of customs and traditions. Even the poets were unable to clarify Socrates, and it made him realize that "it is not wisdom that enables a poet to write poet, it is an instinct and an inspiration." (Apology 51). Socrates turned towards architects and craftsmen, he observed the same mistake thus he came to know that obsession of knowing everything makes people stay in ignorance.

Socrates claims, it is not true wisdom to stress that human wisdom can be justified as an acknowledgment or an acceptance that one cannot know everything, nor is one capable of knowing everything. This idea of true wisdom does not infer that people should not strive for wisdom, in fact it stressed that it is vital for every human being to strive for attainment of a good life and it should be an ultimate goal of mankind. A famous quote by Socrates is, "An unexamined life is not worth living." (Peterson, et, al. 2017, pp. 273-287). The quotation highlights that the aim of life is to grow spiritually and philosophically, where life is meant to undergo an analysis of values and beliefs. Socrates used a method called, "elenchus," also known as the Socratic Method that can enable people to become more aware of their lack of knowledge and ignorance leading to modesty and humility. (Peterson, et, al. 2017, pp. 273-287). It is important to note that Socrates method is not only concerned with what is actually true, in fact, it also adhered to "what is actually not true." Socrates is of the view that ignorance is better than knowledge because the only true and valuable knowledge is the knowledge of good, an authoritative knowledge that can advise us correctly when to use other goods and skills in our possessions.” (Plato, et, al. 2018).

“The unexamined life is not worth living for human beings" (Apology 38). The quotation is an insistence that humanity is called for self-analysis, taking into account that one should live in accordance with a meaningful and well-lived life. It would not be wrong to say that it is an emphasis to the “passage of pain and pleasure”; Socrates calls for an examined life that can reject the obsessions of power, reputation and wealth. (Peterson, et, al. 2017, pp. 273-287). The aim of an examined life is to infer a reflection that can appraise true worth of a human soul. Socrates imparts a conception of “well-lived life" that differs from the context of contemporary philosophers. Although many of the philosophers adhere to a moral life but it is not based on discussions. In a nutshell, Socratic meaning highlights the importance of cross-examination, a dialogue and a conversation with others rather than with oneself. Unexamined life refers to unwillingness and inability to opt for inquiry with cogent reasoning. (Peterson, et, al. 2017, pp. 273-287). Socrates choice of death over anything else affirms his stress on the analysis of unexamined life. In a nutshell, it is a code of conduct with two features. On one side, lust of life conquers everything, on the other hand, an unexamined life is not worth living, highlighting that "examined life is devoted to quest for wisdom." Uncontroversially, whatever is the outcome of wisdom; one must observe the right doing. To know wisdom is to seek discussion and it will lead to an analysis of life.

**Conclusion**

Socrates, a man of wisdom, has brought into insight a circle where seeking wisdom is a start as well as an eventual end of human being. Wisdom invites examination, and an unexamined life is worthless. So, in order to live a worth living life, one must adhere to seek wisdom, analyze action in the light of right and wrong taking into account that actual knowledge is to believe that one knows nothing.

Work Cited

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