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Editor's Note

It gives me great pleasure to present to you the 2014 issue of Miller's Dream. Miller's



Dream is a student-led initiative to provide a platform for budding philosophers at Forman Christian College (FCC) to present, highlight and publish their research papers relevant to the discipline of Philosophy. It aims to promote the talent at FCC and interest in Philosophy.

This year's issue present papers on a wide array of topics; from epistemology to the philosophical influences on Islamic Mysticism to the non-rational aspects of Platonic thought. Plato and St. Augustine are the two main thinkers whose concepts are discussed at length in this issue. The issues discussed here are not only relevant for students of Philosophy, but also the casual observer. Thus whether you are interested in how to live a happy life or the Problem of Evil, you will surely find something of interest in this issue.

I would like to thank Dr. Myron Miller and Dr. Mark Boone for all their help and support in helping us review and select the best possible papers to present to you today. I would also like to thank the students who helped us with the peer review of the manuscripts.

Ommay Aiman Safi

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The Problem of Evil and the Devil

Ahsan Cheema

There is a commonly held belief that good exists. Then, there is another commonly held belief that evil exists. We also have another commonly held belief that we have a choice between good and evil-right and wrong. This does not seem to be a problem but if we consider the theological perspective of this notion and revise these sentences, a problem emerges. On one hand we have a commonly held belief that good exists; on the other, a commonly held belief that evil exists. We also know that everything is created by God, and God is the ultimate Good. If God is the ultimate good, then whatever God creates is also good. God created this world; that means that the world is good. This is consistent with the first commonsense belief, i.e. good exists. If everything is good, this contradicts with the commonsense belief that evil exists. Thus we have a problem, and the problem is known as the problem of evil. Many philosophers have responded to this problem; however this paper will be focusing specifically on the response by Saint Augustine.

This paper will be divided in two parts: the first part will be a brief introduction of Saint Augustine and the Manichean notion of evil and good; the second part of the paper will explain Augustine's reply to the Manicheans and his response to the problem of evil and the role of the Devil in this response. This will lead to the main thesis of this paper: Saint Augustine's response to this problem leads us to another conclusion, i.e. the Devil has more good in itself than man and has more potential good than man.

To understand Saint Augustine we first have to understand what influenced him which included both influences from philosophy and the Christian religion. He was born in Tagaste, Numidia, North Africa in the 4th Century A.D., to a pious, though not educated, Christian woman named Monica. Later in his life, he studied Cicero, which raised many questions in the mind of

young Augustine which later led him to join the Manicheans, because the Manicheans promised him answers to all these questions. Dissatisfaction from the Manicheans and his passion to become a teacher of Rhetoric led him to Rome, and later Milan, where he met Saint Ambrose. Ambrose was well versed in both the Christian tradition and the philosophical tradition. At the same time Augustine read Plotinus and neo-Platonism. During these years he became a Christian and started criticizing the Manicheans and the academics (mainly the skeptics).

The previous paragraph indicates how Augustine was exposed to both paradigms- the Christian and the philosophical. Augustine comments that Platonism and Christianity are not that different (William, 2001). On the contrary, he establishes that neo-Platonism and Plotinus have Christian insights in their philosophy. This is evident in his early writings like, *The Cassiciacum Dialogues*, *On the Morals of the Christian Church*, *On the Nature of Good* etc., and in his later writings like *Confessions* and *The City of God*. In this series of writing, he also responds to many problems including the problem of evil, by saying that evil does not exist, as evil is not a thing but is rather, a lack of a thing- a lack of a thing which is good. This response to the problem will be explained further on in the paper.

To begin addressing the problem of evil, we must to look at the reason which led Augustine to this problem and his response to it- the Manicheans. Augustine turned to the Manicheans after facing disappointment and dissatisfaction with the biblical text in his early age. In his words, "in reaction to this disappointment I fell among a set of proud madmen, exceedingly carnal and talkative people in whose mouth were diabolical snares..." (Augustine, "Confessions" 80).

The Manicheans were a group of people, who were the followers of Mani, who they claimed was the incarnation of the third person of the holy trinity i.e. the Holy Spirit. The Manicheans had a ditheistic

concept of Christianity, i.e. the view that there are two equal, powerful forces that are in constant conflict with each other. One of them is God and the other one is the Evil counterpart of God. Since there are two equal powers, there have to be domains of these equal powers where they reside. The Manicheans explain this notion by saying that the physical world is the domain of the evil counterpart of God, whereas the heavens are the domain of the God. Now if the physical world is the domain of evil, and human beings exist in the physical world; does this mean that humans were made by the evil counterpart of God? If so, then why do we look up to, and pray to the good God? To answer this notion, the Manicheans said that Evil and God were at constant battle with each other and when God got injured, parts of God fell in this world and they were trapped in the physical bodies that are a part of the evil's domain. By this notion, the problem of evil does not even arise, since evil exists and so does good and they are both equal forces.

If we analyze this notion, then some problems arise that are not consistent with the image and concept of God. For example, if Evil and God are two equal forces, and humans are in the domain of the evil counter part of the God, then Evil can be considered partially good, and good can be considered partially evil. This also leads to the question that, if God gets injured, and parts of God fall in the domain of evil, then are there parts of good in evil? In the same way to balance out, Evil must get injured and parts of Evil should fall in the domain of God. Due to this, the notion seems to be flawed, because neither side is purely good or evil.

Let us illustrate this with simple arithmetic:

If, $10=10$
 $1-10=1-10$
Then, $1+10=1+10$

To explain this example, if ten is equal to ten, and if one is subtracted from one side and added to the other side, it is

necessary for the other side to undergo the same process so as to keep the equation balanced. Hence, the problem of evil still holds, or at least a problem with God and Evil still does.

Augustine rebuts and refutes the Manicheans, and their understanding of good and evil using Plotinus and later his own account. This paper will now progress towards first describing Plotinus's metaphysics and then that of Augustine.

Plotinus was a Greek philosopher, around 3rd century. Since this paper is dealing with the problem of evil, we have to briefly examine and explain Plotinus's metaphysics (Mendelson, "Plotinus"). Plotinus, in short, states that, evil does not exist (Mendelson, "Plotinus") - this is the same as the idea presented later by Augustine (illustrating the influence of Plotinus on Augustine). However Plotinus' philosophy is different from that of Augustine. Plotinus follows the metaphysics of Plato and further elaborates on his own metaphysics (Menelson, "Plotinus"). In order to understand Plotinus' metaphysics, imagine there are five circles, all within each other. The fifth circle is made of a non-continuous dotted line which denotes prime matter. The innermost circle represents "the good" or "the one". The second circle denotes higher intellect; the third circle represents the Forms; the fourth circle, the soul; and the fifth circle is the physical world.

Evil for Plotinus is distance from 'the Good', and for him pure evil does not exist. Let us take an example of a cricket stadium to elaborate the metaphysics of Plotinus. A cricket stadium is an oval structure, with a pitch, the field, the boundary, the V. I. P. enclosure and the common enclosure. The pitch is the Good, the one; the field is the higher intellect, the boundary denotes the Forms; the V. I. P. enclosure is where the souls are; the general enclosure is the physical world and the boundary wall of the stadium is the prime matter. When the batsman hits a shot, the ball travels some distance from the pitch, and the ball remains

in the game, as long as the ball is within the premises of the stadium. If the ball goes out of the stadium, then the ball would cease to exist for that particular game. The further the ball goes away from the pitch the more evil it is, until it stops existing completely. Thus Plotinus counters the Manichean metaphysics, which says that evil exists. (Mendelson, "Plotinus").

Augustine happens to have the same view as Plotinus, i.e. that evil does not exist, but the way he describes evil is different from Plotinus, which will be explained later. Let us first discuss how Augustine refutes and rebuts the Manicheans.

According to the Manicheans, the soul, which is a part of God, is trapped in the physical evil world and the only happiness that can be attained by humans, is by freeing those parts of God. Since we are trapped in the evil world, happiness cannot be attained in the physical world. Augustine primarily refutes the Manicheans on the basis that the evil does not exist, just as Plotinus does, but on different grounds. Firstly, since evil does not exist, and everything is created by God, and since the physical world is also made by God, the physical world is also good. Hence, happiness can be attained in the physical world i.e. by desiring God. Secondly, the Manicheans considered the physical world an evil place, while the immaterial world was considered good. Augustine on the contrary uses the Devil, an immaterial, non-physical being, having the most evil in it, to refute the notion of Manicheans that only the physical world is evil.

Evil does not exist, as has been repeated so many times in this paper. Plotinus says it is the distance from God (Mendelson, "Plotinus"), so then does God have limits? Or does God have boundaries? This seems to create, if not of the same, then somewhat similar problem with the concept of God as almighty. So, Augustine had to come up with a better solution to resolve this problem than Plotinus, while somehow also agreeing with him that evil does not exist.

Let us look at Augustinian metaphysics to understand better how reality works in Augustine's perspective. According to Augustine, God created everything; hence, everything was created good. Does this mean that everything was created equally good? Does a tree have the same amount of good in it as a human being? Or does a human being have the same amount of good in it as an angel or a rock? Augustine would obviously say that everything altogether is good, but good comes in degrees as well. Due to this a human has more good than a rock. But why do humans have more good than a rock? Augustine would reply by saying that it is because a human being is both in the non-physical reality, as well as the physical reality. This means that the non-physical reality has more good than the physical reality. If this is the case, then, angels have more good than humans and the good has been distributed in the creation, the cosmos. Since the good has been established, perhaps the next most suitable progression would be to define and explain what evil is according to St. Augustine.

According to Augustine, evil is not a thing but rather, a lack of something. In other words, Augustine says that evil does not exist on its own. Since God created everything, and God is the ultimate good, whatever God creates is good. Since God created everything, the existence of everything that has been created by God comes from God. If God is all good, then all things in existence come from good. Conversely evil is the opposite of God, and pure evil is opposite to pure good. If God is pure Good, then pure evil is opposite of God. If God is all Existence, then Evil is the opposite of existence. Therefore, pure evil does not exist (*City of God*, Book XII).

It is not nature, therefore, but vice, which is contrary to God. For that which is evil is contrary to the good. And who will deny that God is the supreme good? Vice, therefore, is contrary to God, as evil to good. Further, the nature it

vitiates is a good, and therefore to this good also it is contrary. (*City of God*, Book XII, ch. 3).

The argument establishes that evil is non-existent, which is consistent with Plotinus' metaphysics (Mendelson, "Plotinus"). If God created everything, and everything is good, then it is not logically possible for something to be distant from God. Due to this, Augustine defines evil as the lack of good rather than distance from it. For Plotinus, evil is a lack of good *and* a distance *from God*; for Augustine, evil is a lack of good and a distance *from where God created us to be*. Augustine establishes that evil itself cannot be there, but evil is there because in some being there is lack of good. Let us illustrate this view with an example: why do people get hungry? The most appropriate answer would be that there is lack of food, or what is required is the balance of food and nutrition. Does hunger exist by itself? Hunger does not exist by itself; on the contrary hunger is just something that denotes the lack of food. If there is no body that lacks food, then hunger would not exist as well. On the other hand if hunger is not fulfilled, then it will cause misery to the body, or eventually death, i.e., non-existence. Evil can be explained by this very analogy as well. But then, the question arises: what causes evil? Even if we establish that evil does not exist, we still need to answer the question: "what causes this lack of good"?

If God is all good, then how can God cause the lack of good? Saying that food itself causes lack of food, or health itself causes lack of health, is absurd. In the same way saying that God can cause lack of good, is just as absurd as health causing lack of health. Thus, this question still remains: what causes the lack of good? If God created everything good, then can a good thing cause evil to another good thing? On the contrary, a good thing can cause to another good thing, empowerment, rather than lack of good (Burns 13). If something is bound to be good and it can inflict evil on something that is also bound to be good, then it is absurd to suggest that such things

do not have free will. This only reduces to one conclusion: things that have free will can inflict evil on themselves. This can be further reduced to another conclusion that free will is the uncaused cause of evil, or the lack of good. Since existence is from God and God is the pure good, and if everything is made by God, those that have free will have to derive goodness from God in order to maintain their good. Even though everything is good, it is not good in itself because God is the ultimate source of good.

God gave free will to some of his creations so they can choose for themselves. How does this then, give rise to lack of good or evil? If the thing can choose between itself and God, and if that specific creation chooses itself, for example the devil, then evil will rise by itself. Let us illustrate this with the help of an example: everything in this world draws heat and energy from the sun, and if we have a choice to shut down sun and try to depend on ourselves, then even if we burn different power sources in the world, there will still be a lack of heat on an optimum level. Wherever the fossil fuels will lack, the things will stop drawing heat and will cease to exist. The devil was the first person to defy what God said and started desiring himself-the creation of God. Even if the creation of God is good, it is not as good as the God himself; hence there is a lack of good in the devil, or humans, or anything that has free will. The devil still exists because it has good in itself: the good that God made him to be (*City of God*, Book XII; *Confessions*, ch. 3 & 7; Burns 9-27).

This was the account of Augustine on the problem of evil. Now let us come back to the second component of the thesis i.e. due to this account on the issue that the devil has more evil than man, he also has more good or potential good than man. Now, how do we draw this conclusion? For that we would have to give a Christian account of the Devil as the first sinner, filled with pride and the most evil creature that exists. Further elaborating, no man in the world, or nothing in the world can be as evil as the Devil that exists. If the Devil exists,

then, according to Augustine, it is not possible that the devil is an absolute evil; on the contrary, it also means that the Devil has some good in him. If evil is the lack of good, evil is to good as disease is to health and no man can ever have as much evil as the Devil, then it is evident that the Devil has more good than man, and has the potential of more good than man. Let us illustrate this with a few examples, the first example being of two buckets - one being a bigger bucket, in terms of height, depth and diameter and the other bucket being smaller in height and diameter. Let us suppose one bucket has double the volume then of the other bucket. For convenience's sake, let us name the bigger bucket 'A' and the smaller bucket as 'B'. Now let us fill these buckets with water with the volume of the bucket representing the potential goodness of the two buckets. Suppose water denotes goodness and taking out the water denotes evil. If A has fifty percent evil in it and B has ninety nine percent evil in it, A has more evil relative to B and almost as much good as the potential good of B, whereas B cannot have as much evil as A because then it will be empty and will cease to exist.

In a second scenario, let us decrease the diameter of A to seventy-five percent of its original diameter while the diameter of B remains the same as before. In this case if A has as much evil as the total potential of B, and B again has 99% of evil in it, A will still have as much good as fifty percent of the potential good of B. Even if B is fully filled, A will have more potential good than B.

The same is the relationship between the good of man and the good of the Devil, leading us to the conclusion that the Devil has more good than man. The Augustinian approach to the problem of evil, solves the problem of evil, but raises another problem in the Abrahamic Religions, that is, how can the Devil have more good than man or more potential good than man?

An Augustinian answer to this question would be easy and simple- the good can be of two types: the Moral good and the good in general. Moral good is the good that

comes out of when a creation that possesses free will, by its own will chooses good over evil. This can be done by following Jesus Christ and church fathers, like, Ambrose. The good in general is the goodness that a thing or a creation possesses at its initial or natural pure state. The Devil contains more good than man in this natural and purest state, but he contains far less moral good than man. This is because he does not willingly do good, especially by following the Christ. Men on the other hand possess the ability to do good where good is following Jesus Christ.

By this, the problem of evil that arises in this paper can be resolved. However, the real question, that underlies this problem, may be: is the Devil determined by the actions that he willingly chose, which also was the cause of his fall?

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**Augustine's account on the happy life:
Compared and contrasted with that of
Aristotle's**

Talha Minhas

One of the challenges for philosophers today is to compare the aspects of classical Greek accounts of reality and ethics with those of the Medieval's. One comparison that is particularly interesting is of Aristotle and St. Augustine. The themes of these philosophers overlap at times, while at others they are completely exclusive of each other. Nonetheless, the influence of Greek philosophy on St. Augustine is apparent on many levels. Ethics and metaphysics are two of the branches of philosophy that have many overlapping shades in these two philosophers' tradition. This paper is to contrast Aristotle's conception of a happy life with that of St. Augustine's. After a brief introduction to Aristotelian metaphysics, his reasons for the necessity of a virtuous and ethical life will be put forward, along with what constitutes such a life. It is necessary to introduce Aristotelian metaphysics here for two reasons: the fundamental concept of 'forms', and his argument from the tripartite nature of Soul, which further sets the stage for the 'happy life'. In the following section, Augustine's arguments for a happy life will be put forward. Furthermore, this paper would cover themes like 'the goal of philosophy' and 'how to live a happy life'

I

The main topics in Aristotelian philosophy are metaphysics, logic and ethics. Some of the major themes of metaphysics are discussed in his *Metaphysics* that explores topics like material constitution, realism, the Theory of Universals and so forth. Unlike Plato, the ideas regarding physical reality and the mind are closely worked up in the Theory of Universals such as the substance/essence distinction and the notion of Potential and Actual state of being, and causality. The main thesis of *Metaphysics* is to closely study the relations of substance and

essence - what it is that the physical world is constituted of, and develop a worldview that includes realism, materialism and rationalism.

The *Metaphysics* starts with the analysis of Plato's Theory of Forms, mainly discussing how it is incomplete and inconsistent in showing a conspicuous relation of the Higher Reality with the physical world. The Forms fail to have a direct relation with the material objects with which they partake, arguably due to the fact that there is an apparent infinite regression of relations between them. This is named as the 'Third Man argument' in popular philosophical literature. Aristotle successfully resolves the flaw in Plato's Forms by arguing that the forms actually reside *inside* the objects in the physical world. This leads to the question regarding the relation of Universals with matter, and how matter takes its form as objects in the physical world. The explanation that Aristotle provides for this includes the division of causality into four stages that facilitates the 'potentiality' of matter into 'actuality'. Briefly, the four stages of cause are: Material cause (the content itself out of which things are made); Efficient cause (the way objects are made); Formal cause (the manifestation of the object) and the Final cause (the purpose of the object itself) ("Aristotle", section 4).

Later, he discusses the concept of Soul, which is central to the understanding of the distinction between the rational and the animal part of the human nature. There is a relation of the Soul with sense perception of human beings. This function is one of the strongest relations of the physical body with the immaterial reality. Reason is the most important function of the Soul, and it provides insights for human beings regarding the immaterial reality, which includes the knowledge of the Universals. One of the functions that the Soul carries out intrinsically is an ethical balance. The rational and the appetitive must be in harmony within the Soul for a good life. This brings Aristotle into his ethics.

Aristotle's ethics is a widely discussed

and influential work, and its implications are sketched on many levels. There are many central concepts in Aristotelian ethics, such as the Tripartite argument (the three levels of virtues of the human soul) and the Good, but the most important of all is Happiness. Happiness, according to Aristotle, is one of the greatest goods in human life. He argues for the happy life by virtue of a mean in human desires of virtue.

In Book I of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle points out that all human struggles involve the search of the supreme good in a human life. The most valuable thing is happiness, which is beyond praise (949-950). It follows that everything that is virtuous is praise-worthy, but the nature of happiness as a virtue is complete and perfect, therefore, it is beyond praise.

Later, he develops the distinction of Intellectual virtues into two kinds, namely Intellectual and Moral virtues. The importance of this thesis is the relation among different faculties in human virtue. There is a sub-division of virtues in the irrational faculty, namely the appetitive or the nutritional virtues. These are the types of virtues that are derived from animals and plants, respectively (951-952).

In Book II, the Moral virtue is expressed in terms of functions of the "mean" and "extreme" between many virtues; the thesis states that a mean in all moral virtues is the goal that leads to one of the most necessary conditions for happiness. This is not explicit in this particular book, but the ascent of the discussion is progressing towards the main thesis of the *Nicomachean Ethics*.

In Book VI of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle discusses about the Intellectual virtue as being constituted of two categories, namely the contemplative and the calculative (1022-1023). The next few chapters in the Book VI explore the necessity of these two virtues of which the objective of the first regards truth, while the second regards desiring the moral action. Later, he describes a few of the sub-

categorical virtues of the Intellect, namely science, art, practical wisdom etc. (ch. 3-8).

The analysis of the Moral and the Intellectual virtue is part of the effort to explicitly announce the thesis that a "mean" among the three major virtues are the major constituents of happiness. This leads the present discussion into Book X, where Aristotle contrasts happiness with pleasure and argues how happiness is the greatest good of all.

In the initial chapters, Eudoxus argues that pleasure is the greatest good since everything desires it or that everything seems to have a goal that leads to pleasure, ultimately (Aristotle 1094-1095). It is shown in later chapters that pleasure is of different kinds, and they are chosen as an activity to fulfill the desire to be content. In contrast to that, Aristotle introduces the goal of Happiness and what it aims.

Happiness, according to Aristotle, is to be desired for itself as an end and not merely as a means. The nature of happiness is self-sufficient and complete. The happy life is one that is virtuous and has a balance among the virtues themselves. It is this goal that fulfills the capacity of human beings to be happy. As suggested earlier, the 'mean' among the virtues involve moderation of desires and pleasures, which makes it possible for human beings to choose acts that are desired for themselves that brings one to happiness.

In chapter 6 of Book X, Aristotle argues that the happy life is in accordance with the contemplative virtue. The relation of happiness with that of reason is deeply rooted and supports one another. The goal of contemplation is philosophic wisdom, and it leads to happiness (1104-1106).

Conclusively, I would like to state the final thesis of Aristotle to be as follows: Human souls comprise of many virtues, which include two basic kinds of virtues, namely the Rational and the Irrational. These two kinds of virtues are further categorized (while overlapping) as the

Intellectual virtues, the Moral virtues and the Nutritional virtues. Our basic instinct or objective of action is to attain maximum pleasure to keep a balance between the virtues and the vices. Pleasure is somewhat inferior in character, since it lasts only momentarily and cannot be continuous. Happiness, in contrast, is a self-sufficient end, which every rational and virtuous being desires for itself. It is the greatest good that can be achieved and is therefore desirable intrinsically. The thesis is very profound in its nature, as explained in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, and there is always room for more insights to be discovered.

The next section of the paper is to explore the themes in St. Augustine regarding the concept of the good and happiness. The major questions that will be discussed are: 'what is the nature of the good and happiness?' and 'how is happiness attained?' These questions are central in many of Augustine's early and later writings.

II

Augustine's early life, as depicted in his *Confessions*, is a happy accident upon his intellectual development into a fine theologian and a pious thinker. His mother's influence is highlighted in many of his texts, though she is not as enlightened as Augustine becomes in his early adulthood. His life has many episodes of an ascent into Christian theology; he revised many critical debates in Christian thought, namely nurturing of the soul and the meaning of the Bible.

His influences in philosophy are widespread, ranging from Platonism to Cicero; from traditional Greek philosophy to Christian thinkers before and during his period. He has been influenced by Platonic metaphysics, which was incorporated and improved upon in his metaphysics; these views are chiefly his refutations to Manichaeism. Augustine had been a part of the Manichaen heresy for a brief period. In his metaphysics, he has emphatically revised concepts such as the Forms and the physical reality; his major contribution is the idea

that God is not to be understood in material or physical terms, and that there is a higher reality that physical reality conforms to.

In an *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* article on Augustine, his moral deterioration during his idle years in adolescence are summarized in a concise manner and we are told how Augustine responds to these years in his *Confessions* ("Augustine", section). Most of Augustine's influential works are written after his conversion and fellowship at the Church in Rome. It was during this time that he wrote immensely on theological perspectives in Christianity, such as in the *City of God*.

The basic idea in Augustine's philosophy regarding the concept of happiness involves two basic topics: God and the Soul. The nature of these two topics concerns the notion of the knowledge of the former and the healing of the latter. The nature of Augustine's discourse involves literary significance, which implicitly introduces concepts within the framework of ordinary lives of Christians. After his conversion, Augustine's insights into the human life suggest that the Soul has descended from the Heavens into the created world due to the Original Sin of man. The Soul needs healing from the Original Sin and from various other sins that are acquired during the life on Earth, which are directed by our desires and actions (Augustine, ch. 2-8).

In *On the Happy Life*, Augustine presents an analogy of the "port of philosophy". In this analogy, every human being is on a journey over the sea, which is the everyday life; there is a mountain just before a port. The port symbolizes philosophy and beyond the port is the land of happy life (Foley, ch. 1-3). Later, in the text, he is shown to be at the dinner table with his family and students when a discussion starts regarding the nature of what the Soul desires; fulfillment of these desires means the restoration of its health. The significance of this claim is illustrated in the debate when Augustine compares the Soul's need for desire-fulfillment to the

desire of having fulfilled the purpose of desiring itself and being content. The illustration shows how one desires to be happy and content by desiring something that is achievable. Later, it is shown that having achieved something desirable is not the same as fulfillment of it; to fulfill a desire is to continuously have the desire to desire it, for if the desire is fulfilled, it is not the purpose of the desire to be desired anymore. This is what is meant by 'having God' (Foley, ch. 19-21).

The discussion moves further when the question arises regarding the importance of having God. It is, then, showed that to have God is equivalent to having a consistent desire for something that never lasts. This implies that to have a constant desire of an infinite nature leads one to happiness of the supreme kind (Foley, ch. 28-36).

From reading *On the Happy Life*, one is capable of inferring two crucial understandings regarding Augustine's concept of Happiness: that what we adhere to in everyday life is nothing but distractions and we need to free ourselves by reason and contemplation; and the only way to heal and nurture the Soul is to have the constant desire for God; finally, to love God with the love that is due to Him.

Finally, I will briefly repeat the arguments Aristotle and Augustine have provided for a happy life. For Aristotle, happiness constitutes supreme good and wisdom; it is with a balance among human virtues that they achieve such a sublime state of mind. The crucial point in Aristotelian ethics is knowledge of the higher reality, which is central to contemporary Greek philosophy with respect to Aristotle. The higher reality is perfect and knowledge of it brings a balance among moral and intellectual virtues. In Augustine, happiness is a far more internal matter; the soul that is most dear to a human body needs proper nourishment. Augustine's argument involves healing of the soul. Another important aspect of this argument is the desire for having God. The desire of an infinite being that is outside of time and

spatial bounds is always sufficient for every human being.

It is clear that in both cases, Aristotle and Augustine place happiness on a higher level than any other human virtue. For this reason, the thesis that happiness is central to all human desires is affirmed and conclusively accepted by Aristotelian and Augustinian traditions.

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Platonic Philosophy as a Way of Life and Mysticism as Seen in the *Phaedo* Dialogue

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Plato and Socrates are usually associated with rational dialectic and the contribution it has made to the world. The dialectic of Socrates has inspired innumerable individuals. Socrates through Plato is the archetype of those who wish to know, and know that they know, rationally. It is this for which he is known. Yet there are parts to Plato and Socrates that are not rational. Not only are they not rational, but even mystical, which to rationalists seems antithetical. Some of these mystical elements appear in the *Phaedo* dialogue, before the final moments of Socrates (in this world). That Socrates would give time to mysticism along with dialectic in his last address well indicates that rationality is not all- there is more to philosophy. Philosophy has to be a way of living. Platonic philosophy *is* such a philosophy.

First an overview of the *Phaedo* dialogue will be given and then Platonic philosophy as a way of life will be discussed. As such a philosophy is as practical and experiential as it is reasonable, and as the proof of mysticism is said to be in experience, this will be followed by evidence for mystical elements in such a philosophy.

In the *Phaedo*, Socrates' claim of life after death stems from his remark that philosophers should not be afraid of death. When asked why or how a philosopher should be unafraid, Socrates points out that death comes only to the body and the immortal soul survives. The body being a poor and error ridden source of knowledge should not be feared to be lost. Philosophers should live for the soul which, if purified by virtue, will after the death of the body go to a higher and better immaterial world where other good men will also be found residing. Socrates is willing to concede that this might ultimately be untrue. However if one lives for the soul- and one ought to,- then courage being a virtue, a philosopher should

be unafraid of death.

Simmius and Cebes are the main characters who interact with Socrates on the matter of life after death in the dialogue. An objection is raised as to whether and how the soul is immortal and how it will survive the death of the body.

In response to this objection Socrates replies that the soul once existed without the body before birth, and can therefore do so again after death. That this was once so is shown by Socrates through evidence for the recollection that individuals experience if prompted properly without being told the answer of questions asked (Plato 63-67). This knowledge can only come from them if they already had it. Therefore they are remembering, or recollecting, after coming into contact with physical reality shaped by immaterial form. So Socrates shows both that an immaterial world exists for the soul to go to after death, and that the soul is not dependent on the body.

To this Simmius and Cebes raise objections. Simmius puts forward an argument of his own, for the mortality of the soul, comparing the soul and the body to the harmony produced by musical instruments. The harmony is no longer possible if the instrument is destroyed. Then how can the soul, which is a harmony of the body's elements, exist after the body ceases to exist (78)? Cebes points out that so far what Socrates has shown is only that the soul is not dependent on physical reality, and not that though it is not dissolved at the time of death, it continues to exist forever after (79).

To Simmius, Socrates answers, the soul does not need the body to survive and asks him to recall recollection, and the existence of the soul before birth. He also says that virtue is a harmony and wickedness, disharmony. If souls were harmonies, then wickedness would not exist, which it obviously does. He answers Simmius' objection in a third manner by stating that the soul cannot be a harmony of the elements of the body, as it so clearly

opposes the wants of the body so often - there is something more to the soul.

To Cebes, after going into his own biography a bit, Socrates tells of how he came to philosophize. Then he attempts to show, by giving various examples, that whatever gives a thing to another, cannot partake of that thing's opposite (e.g. absolute beauty which gives beauty to beautiful things cannot partake in ugliness). Similarly, souls, which give life to the body, cannot partake of death. Having answered their queries he asks them not to become misologists, i.e., haters of reasonable discourse, but to be ready to recognize and seek truth in it whenever and wherever possible, and to repeat it to themselves and imbue themselves with it.

Socrates' actions also illustrate his belief in life after death and just as much, how completely one ought to live for the soul, rather than the body. When asked where and how he should be buried or handled after death, he shows no concern, restating that he will not be buried, but only his body. He does not delay drinking the hemlock when this is suggested by someone present and even makes a libation of it and asks the gods to grant him a successful journey to the immaterial world. Even in his last moments, he shows virtue by asking Crito to pay his debt for him, living for the soul up to the very end.

As this paper is mostly concerned with non-rational parts of Platonic philosophy (despite their need to be supplemented by reason) as seen in *Phaedo*, let us move on to them. As described in this paper, they are twofold: practical on the one hand, and mystical on the other. As for the practice of philosophy (which will be considered next), it entails in summary of severing the links of the soul to the body so that it may contemplate higher reality (which is the highest aim), unimpeded by the body's passions.

Through the dialogue, by using the words that he does, Plato, and in giving his reasons for thinking as he does and

convincing his interlocutors, Socrates, together paint a picture of the true philosopher as he/she should be. Very early in the dialogue, Echechrates, to whom Phaedo is narrating the story, inquires after the "manner of death" (46) of Socrates. Indeed the whole text is concerned with the death of Socrates. Yet in it is also well described the manner of life which a philosopher ought to live. Actually, that philosophy is concerned with the manner of life and death, in addition to argumentation and rationality, has already been illustrated. The interlocutors are chiefly Simmias and Cebes, both of them *Mathematikoi* Pythagoreans, concerned with the internal validity of claims (Boone). The person to whom the dialogue is being narrated is Echechrates, an *Akousmatoi*, concerned with religion and ethics (Boone).

Philosophy as a way of life is a matter concerning our practices. What sort of practices should they be?

Also early in the dialogue, before in fact, any real philosophic conversation has begun, Phaedo says that all present "were laughing and weeping by turns" (Plato 46), and that Xanthippe, the wife of Socrates, is "led...away, crying and beating herself" (47). In Xanthippe, the emotion expressed is one of sorrow without any delight, delight of which at least the others are able to partake through philosophy. Soon, Socrates remarks how pain follows pleasure, and pleasure follows pain in a cyclical manner, and how odd it is that this is so. To follow one is to follow the other. In other words, such a pursuit is without end and without aim.

What then ought to be our aim? Plato soon answers us, though Socrates does not directly say so, "... and indeed, as I am going to another place, I ought to be thinking and talking of the nature of the pilgrimage which I am about to make. What can I do better in the interval between this and the setting of the sun?" (49). Thinking and talking about the nature of the pilgrimage *we* are making is what *we* ought to be doing, before *our own* deaths. Not doing so, and pursuing pleasures and

consequently pains, is foolish. Epictetus gives an analogy of a festival in which some are the animals on show, some the participants, and some the observers of the festival (Epictetus 141). Plato is asking us to be neither of the former two, but rather the lattermost. We can be doubly sure that Socrates is speaking not only of himself, but of others as well, as shortly after this statement Socrates says that "the true disciple of philosophy...is ever pursuing death and dying" (Plato 52).

In general, true philosophers ought to be concerned with two main things. One is obvious: the contemplation of truth and higher reality. Though this is mentioned in the text, the emphasis of what a philosopher ought to do, in this particular dialogue, is the second of the two, which is the weakening of the link of the soul to the body, so that the philosopher becomes more receptive of the truth on encounter. "He would like, as far as he can, to be quit of the body and turn to the soul" (53). Meanwhile, one ought to seek understanding for one's beliefs (52).

Thoughts are best when our souls are free of the passions of the body, and so are actions. Virtues are only true virtues if they have as their goal the pursuit of higher knowledge, and not, as the case often is, pleasures. An easy illustration is that of temperance. A man who restricts his diet for six days a week, so that he may eat as much as he desires on the seventh day, does not *really* possess the virtue of temperance. His aim must be worthy if he is to attain actual virtues. The attainment of the virtues is necessarily a time consuming process.

The power of the body over the soul in guiding its impressions is again stressed:

"Why, because each pleasure and pain is a sort of nail which nails and rivets the soul to the body, and engrosses her and makes her believe that to be true which the body affirms to be true; and from agreeing with the body and

having the same delights she is obliged to have the same habits and ways, and is not likely ever to be pure at her departure to the world below, but is always saturated with the body;..." (76)

An aid in the practice of quitting the body and turning to the soul is someone to charm away irrational fears, of whom Socrates says, "And you must not forget to seek for him among yourselves too; for he is nowhere more likely to be found" (69). Socrates is just such an aid for the men of Athens, in word as much as in deed. Near the end of the dialogue, Socrates counsels his interlocutors not to only agree with what he has convinced them of in words, but also to do so by action, as he himself does shortly afterward by not delaying the drinking of the hemlock when prompted by Crito to do so and indulge in "sensual delights" (112).

Speaking of the soul that dwells on higher realities, the text says:

"But when returning into herself she reflects; then she passes into the realm of purity, and eternity, and immortality, and unchangeableness, which are her kindred, and with them she ever lives, when she is by herself and is not let or hindered; then she ceases from her erring ways, and being in communion with the unchanging is unchanging. And this state of the soul is called wisdom?

That is well and truly said, Socrates, he replied." (71)

This unchangeableness is illustrated by Plato in the form of Socrates, who, at the end of the dialogue, in the final moments preceding his death, is the only one of the philosophers present who is able to keep his composure. These instances well show the role of Platonic philosophy as a way of life.

Before moving on to the mystical

elements of philosophy as seen in *Phaedo*, let us first say what is meant by *mystical elements*. It means for our purposes, the assumption and even proclamation of stances the truth of which is not self-evident, nor are arguments for them offered, but the stances themselves believed. It refers to those statements or areas of knowledge around which there is mystery. These are often claimed to be spiritual truths, evidence for which are usually such experiences which are either difficult to put into words, or of which the meaning is often misinterpreted when put into words. What are the instances in *Phaedo* which correspond to such a meaning of mystical elements?

If there are any, it seems as if they are themselves bound to be half hidden, such that their presence is difficult to detect in a cursory reading. Thus they must be few in number, and are, as far as I can tell. They are, chiefly, the importance given to dreams, some hints at secrecy and secret authority, inability of rationality to explain Socrates' claims, and the comparison of philosophers to mystics.

The first of these is Socrates' stance on the dream which he has had repeatedly instructing him to compose music. He allows the possibility that perhaps the dreams mean 'philosophy' where they say 'music' and also that maybe they literally ask him to compose music, which he has now done in some small manner. What is mystical about this is that Socrates should heed the messages of dreams at all. If the truth of what is seen or heard with waking eyes is given so little importance by Socrates, surely the truth of what is seen or heard while asleep ought to be given even less importance. As I see it, there are two ways of interpreting this. The first would be that this just hasn't occurred to Socrates (and Plato). This seems unlikely. The other way of interpreting it is that Socrates obviously has some reason to do so, although we can be sure that he hasn't shared such a view with us (at least in this text). This seems more likely, especially after taking some other parts of the text into account.

One of these is the curious choice of wording used upon describing the notion that men ought not to kill themselves, as they are the property of the gods. It is as follows: "There is a doctrine uttered in secret that man is a prisoner who has no right to open the door of his prison and run away; this is a great mystery which I do not understand" (50). Here mystery, lack of understanding, and secrecy are admitted. Later in the text, when describing the geography of the earth which includes metaphysical elements, Socrates says: "Now the earth has diverse wonderful regions, and is indeed in nature and extent very unlike the notions of geographers, as I believe on the authority of one who shall remain nameless" (104). Again we encounter secrecy. Here authority is admitted (unlike the case of the reliance on dreams, in which it is never brought up in the text) but not named.

Also, mystical are the natures of absolute justice, beauty, and good. Arguments for their *existence* exist, but none for their natures. Again the wording implies that some of the knowledge through recollection is not exactly rational.

"...and all experience shows that if we would have pure knowledge of anything we must be quit of the body, and the soul in herself must behold all things in themselves: then I suppose we shall attain that which we desire, and of which we say that we are lovers, and that is wisdom, not while we live, but after death, as the argument shows" (55).

It is worth emphasizing here is the imagery of the soul's own experience, rather than *a priori* rational knowledge, that these words evoke. It is also worth remembering here that earlier Socrates remarked that true philosophers are always dying.

Can argumentation and rationality take us all the way to the truth? Evidence suggests otherwise. "For I deem that the

true disciple of philosophy is likely to be misunderstood by other men..." (52). Why should this be the case if the argumentation and rationality are the way to truth? Whatever truth a philosopher has attained, can he not using words convey it to others, and have them understand? It seems there must be some secret knowledge which simply cannot be conveyed to those whose souls are not ready to receive it. If the soul needs to be in a certain state to receive the knowledge of the Forms, then such knowledge is spiritual. Whatever interpretation may be applied to the evidence about to be presented next, it must be admitted that it is surely not an insignificant chance occurrence. The following words are spoken by Socrates: "For "many," as they say in the mysteries, "are the thyrsus bearers, but few are the mystics," –meaning, as I interpret the words, the true philosophers" (58). Here we have a direct comparison of mysticism and true philosophy by Plato.

And what of the unchanging nature of the true philosopher that is brought about through dwelling with the unchanging forms? Is there anything mystical about it? Stella Lange thinks so, and compares it to the experiences of "Paul, Plotinus, and all the great mystics" (Franklin 298). This recollection of the forms is a "sophisticated interpretation" that comes about after having been initiated as a philosopher, rather than the "ordinary interpretation" that everyone experiences (Franklin 290-291).

There is also "close parallel between philosophic and religious enlightenment...in the *Phaedo*:

"And I fancy that those men who established the mysteries were not unenlightened, but in reality had a hidden meaning when they said long ago that whoever goes uninitiated and unsanctified to the other world will lie in the mire, but he who arrives there initiated and purified will dwell with the gods. For as they say in the mysteries, 'the thyrsus-bearers are many, but

the mystics few'; and these mystics [Bacchoi] are, I believe, those who have been true philosophers. And I in my life have, so far as I could, left nothing undone, and have striven in every way to make myself one of them." (Seeskin 580)

Rui Zhu points out some other non-rational elements in the dialogue: namely, the composition of poetry and Socrates' mythological account (444), and dismisses the mention of the non-rational elements in the dialogue as merely ironic (458). Instead, "If Socrates' words are to be taken seriously, there must be a common ground between philosophy and myth despite their rivalry such that a eulogy of one does not automatically imply a recrimination against the other" (458).

Dodds also says something similar, that non-rational does not mean irrational:

"I would add that the term 'Platonic (or Socratic) mysticism,' if we use it at all, should be applied not to the theory of *εὐθουσιασμῶς* ["inspiration"... "of seers or poets" which Plato does not take seriously (22)] but to the practice of mental withdrawal and concentration which is recommended in the *Phaedo*. Neither this practice nor the Plotinian mysticism which derives from it can, I think, fairly be called irrational." (22)

To summarize, Platonic philosophy, as seen in at least the *Phaedo*, is more than just rational dialectic. A crucial part of it is philosophic practice, which is synonymous with searching for the truth. The ways to do this are mainly two, and to do the first is to help the other to be done. The first is to sever the links of the soul to the body by denying the body its passions. The other is contemplating truth with the soul. According to Socrates, this can only be done purely after death when the soul is completely free from the body, but the true philosopher, who

can also be said to be a mystic and is always dying, begins to know truth in some incomplete form even before death.

That true philosophers (according to Plato) are mystics is evident to some degree from the choice and content of words Plato gives to Socrates in the *Phaedo* dialogue. The search is for truth, and non-rational avenues ought not to be dismissed incorrectly as being irrational. Philosophy should be seen as a way of practicing life itself. Why we should do so is answered by Socrates in the dialogue.

"Wherefore Simmias, seeing all these things, what ought not we to do in order to obtain virtue and wisdom in this life? Fair is the prize, and the hope great" (Plato 109).

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How Knowledge is Possible in Plato's Republic

Muhammad Safi Aslam

This paper analyzes Plato's theory about epistemology-knowledge- and will try to trace how knowledge becomes possible in Plato's *Republic*. For this purpose, different concepts given by Plato such as Recollection, the Divided Line, etc. will be discussed. The content of part of a famous dialogue of Plato, the *Meno*, will also be analyzed. Plato's explanation as to how knowledge is possible in this world of *Shadows*, as he claims, will also be given. The source of his theory of knowledge will also be elaborated upon and the significance of his theory of knowledge in the history of philosophy will be portrayed. To conclude the paper, a short critical analysis of Plato's theory of knowledge will be given. This paper comprises of comprehensive research upon how knowledge is achievable according to Plato's philosophy. A detailed account of Plato's epistemology will be mentioned and the relation between his metaphysics and epistemology will be discussed.

Socrates was accused, and later convicted, of the charge of corrupting the youth of Athens. He used to talk with young adults and ask them questions about which they thought they already knew the answers to (*Dialogues* 47). The discussion used to go for a long time and Socrates would use the former premises of his partner to help the discussion progress further. I think that through these discussions two things were proved: first, that the answers which adults claimed that they knew were not actually the true or complete answers. Secondly, the true method of chasing the complete answers was the method which Socrates applied in his discussions, the Dialectic method. Dialectic was the method used by Socrates for acquiring knowledge.

Dialectic, as defined by the Oxford dictionary, is 'the art of discussing the truth of opinions' (*Oxford*). To understand what it

meant in the Platonic sense can be done by looking at how Mitchell has explained it. She says, "Dialectic, in the higher sense of the word, is the science of true Being, the inquiry into Ideas." (Mitchell, 212). As the name of method itself suggests, this method in order to be exercised, requires at least 'di', meaning two individuals. Thus, in this method at least two individuals engage in discussion and help it proceed by first, determining the right kind of questions and then finding the answers to them. This was the strategy used by Socrates, for which he eventually had to lose his life.

Why was this method so important to Socrates that he was not bothered about losing his life for it? The answer to this can be sought in one of the dialogues of Plato, *The Apology*, in which he claims, "the unexamined life is not worth living." (*Dialogues* 24). It reveals two things: first, that we should seek knowledge and thus 'examine' life in our lifetime. Moreover, it claims that Socrates was examining life, without which he did not want to live, and the method which Socrates was using was the right method for this purpose. Therefore it is only the dialectic method which can lead us to true knowledge.

Dialectic is not only a method but it is also the highest category in Plato's analogy of the divided line (*Republic* 236). The actual word used in Greek for this purpose is 'noesis', which is also translated as 'Intelligence'. Thus, the highest place of intelligence or where 'true knowledge' can be obtained is Dialectic. This reveals why Socrates put a lot of importance on this method. Thilly points out the value of Dialectic in this way, "the highest segment of the line represents rational insight, the object of which are the form or ideas; the method by which such knowledge is achieved is dialectic" (79). The divided line also contains three other categories but those will be elaborated upon later in this paper. We must first understand Plato's metaphysics in which he explains 'Forms' or 'Ideas', as all of his other theories are based upon his metaphysical ideas.

Plato was of the view that the world in which we live is not the real world but an imitation of the real world. The things we see in the world are the *copies* of that real world, which is composed of Forms or ideas, and exists in the world of Universals; as Thilly puts it, "He conceives them as existing in and for themselves, as having the character of substantiality." (80). Thus what we see in this world are the particulars, the imitations of the Real, Universal world. These particulars, therefore, are the imperfect copies of the Real world. That world consists of ideas or Forms and thus whatever we are able to conceive of in this world is because of that preexisting world of Forms. For example, if five things that are blue in color are put together, we will say that all of these are of same color. Why? Because Blueness is the feature which is common to all and that blueness exists as a separate entity in the shape of Form or idea, due to which we are able to conceive the blue color present in this world. Trilling explains Plato's theory of Ideas in this way, "The things which we know and use them in daily practical life are but imitations of eternal Ideas of things - any object, a bed, a table, a jar, is but the imperfect representation or imitation of the abstract and perfect Idea of the bed, table, jar just as the circle we draw on the blackboard in a geometry lesson is but the imperfect representation or imitation of the Idea of the circle" (Trilling 6). Thus, this world consists of the imitations of the Universal world of Forms, and we are only able to make sense of these particulars because of the preexisting world of Ideas.

The Divided Line gets its name because of its division into four categories. As Wallace puts it, "these conceptual constructions have cognitive, even if not literal or exhaustive, value" (Wallace, 326). These are not merely divisions of a line but a representation of how our cognitive abilities start to perceive the world and where it ends. The four categories are named in Greek as: *eikasia*, *pistis*, *dianoia* and *noesis*, meaning Illusion, Belief, Mathematical reasoning and Intelligence or Dialectic respectively (*Republic* 236). Plato

further divides Belief and Illusion into the category of Opinion (*doxa*) or Visible (physical realm), and Mathematical Reasoning and Intelligence into Knowledge (*episteme*) or Intelligible realm. As it can be observed, Plato makes a clear division between the Intelligible realm and the Physical realm, which certainly means that they are two distinct worlds. For further clarification, we can also rename the Intelligible world as the world of ideas and the Physical world as the world of perceptions. The physical world is what we see through our eyes and the world of ideas helps or enables us to conceive, or make sense of what we see, similar to the concept discussed earlier in his metaphysics.

Plato claims in the *Republic*, "So please take it that there are, corresponding to the four sections of the line, these four states of mind; to the top section intelligence, to the second reason, to the third belief and to the last illusion." (236). Thus, these are not merely the divisions of the world, but also of the world inside of us- the mind. Here we shall examine what Plato actually meant when he named different categories with such words: Intelligence, Mathematical reasoning, Belief and Illusion. By Illusion (*eikasia*) he meant the shadows, images, reflections and dreams present in the world of perception (Thilly and Wood 78). It means that what our eyes observe in this world is not the *true* reality but a mere *copy* of what is real: the shadow of that reality. These are what the chained people saw on the wall of the cave, in the *Republic's* famous passage, the Allegory of the Cave. When the light of the sun fell upon what was happening at the door of the cave, they people of the cave saw the shadows of it on the opposite side of the cave, right in front of their eyes, when they were chained and their back was facing towards the door (Silverman). Plato meant a similar thing when he named the perceptions of this world as shadows or as translated earlier, illusion, which explains that something is not true itself but just an imitation.

Beliefs are the 'knowledge of sensible objects, whether material objects or human

artifacts' (Thilly and Wood 78). The knowledge of these beliefs comes to us through our sense perceptions. Beliefs and Illusion are the two categories that represent the visible world. Wood describes this category more precisely as, "Any visible object is a particular thing, appearing under the limitations of a biologically conditioned perception, at a particular region in space and at a particular moment of time." (Wood, 531). This shows that Plato did not discard the value of the physical world completely and accepted its existence. He admitted that material things exist in time and space and therefore Plato cannot be regarded as an extreme idealist, thinking only of the world of ideas. Thus the physical or material world exists and it is a part of knowledge. Here, Plato makes a clear distinction; although he accepts the existence of the physical world, it is not a source of complete knowledge. It helps a person seek knowledge, but it is only 'half knowledge'; the other half being in the Intelligible world. Plato actually names that world as *episteme*, which literally means 'knowledge', and it can be claimed that he was of the view that the intelligible world is *the* knowledge. Nevertheless, he also admires the importance of the physical world and thinks of it as part of acquiring knowledge, as discussed earlier.

Plato talks about the physical world in this way: "If we rely solely on sense perception and opinion, then the Sophists are quite right in their contention that there can be no genuine knowledge. Sense perception does not reveal the true reality of things, but gives us mere appearance. Genuine knowledge on the other hand, which is based on reason, can authenticate itself." (Thilly and Wood 76). Thus, the visible world is just an appearance of the real world. The world whose knowledge is *the* true knowledge is the world of Forms. The intelligible world consists of two categories, i.e., Mathematical Reasoning and Dialectic. Here Reasoning refers to a method of applying rationality and seeking Intelligence. Plato uses the analogy of geometry and calculations in the *Republic* to explain this reasoning. He demonstrates that mathematics assumes some basic

assumptions in the form of even numbers, odd numbers etc., and then 'proceed[s] through a series of consistent steps to the conclusion which they set out to find', *dianoia* or reasoning works the same way (238). Thus it is a method which, after making some basic assumptions, goes on to discover real truths.

The following analogy further elaborates the role of each category in seeking knowledge. In any type of industry, the first thing that is brought in is raw material. Here raw material represents illusions and beliefs. This raw material is then processed which results in a final, finished product. We can say that this process is Mathematical reasoning, which is applied on raw material brought from the visible world, and the final product that comes out of it is Intelligence or Dialectic—the fruit for which all labor is made.

Intelligence is the highest form of knowledge; it can also be said that it is *the* knowledge and other steps are just done in order to achieve it. As Thilly explains it, "Dialectic is the art of thinking in concepts; concepts and not sensations or images, constitute the essential object of thought." (78). Now, when we have understood what dialectic is, we are at a better position to understand what method Socrates applied while interacting with the youth of Athens and how he made his journey via the dialectic method to Intelligence. The questions he asked the youth, for example why they believe the way they believe, were the raw materials of their discussion. These questions consisted of their experience of the world, just as illusions and beliefs were. He then used logic for the purpose of reasoning and processing the 'raw material' he had, and thus we can understand what his destination was and what he was seeking: the knowledge of true and perfect reality. More analogies will be used to explain how this knowledge occurs, but before that we need to understand another crucial concept in order to understand Plato's epistemology.

If one has to reply in one word to the question as to how exactly knowledge occurs according to Plato, a fair reply will be: Recollection. This is the main concept of Plato's epistemology and Socrates himself talks about it in his famous dialogue, *Meno*. He first raises a critical problem in acquiring knowledge and then gives solutions to that problem which in turn carves out the whole of the Plato's theory of knowledge. The problem is: "A man cannot inquire either about that which he knows, or about that which he does not know; for if he knows, he has no need to inquire; and if not, he cannot; for he does not know the very subject about which he is to inquire." (*Dialogues* 230). This means that if a person already knows a thing then he does not need to seek knowledge of it, for he already knows about it! Moreover, if it is the case that he does not know a thing and tries to seek it, the problem occurs again: how can he start his journey when he doesn't know where he is headed? How can he seek for a thing about which he doesn't know anything at all? Thus, there must be some way in between these two extreme situations which would give refuge to the person and make learning possible. Socrates himself gives a reply to it. He says, "...for all inquiry and all learning is but recollection" (231).

Recollection, as the word itself suggests, is something like gathering something which is lost, reassembling something which has spread, or re-remembering something which is forgotten. Sayre explains it this way: "But there is another sense of knowing that falls between the two cases - the sense of having something in mind that is not known explicitly but that can be recovered from its dormant state by the right kind of prompting." He further elaborates:

"The thing into which we inquire were once known by the soul before it entered the body and were forgotten with the onset of bodily experience, but they are capable of being reinstated as explicit

knowledge when the misconceptions engendered are removed through a process of refutation. To finish of the story, this return to explicit cognition is given a special label – "recollection" (*anamnesis*) – and is identified with the learning (*mathesis*) that the inquiry in question is supposed to be capable of producing." (Sayre 67)

Thus the process, happening when Socrates indulged in questioning his young pupils, was recollection. This is a process of taking knowledge from a 'dormant' to an 'explicit' state. Furthermore, whatever a man learns, his soul has prior knowledge of it, but that knowledge had been forgotten when it came into this world. When sense-perceptions observe the shadows or imitations of the real world, the soul *recollects* that knowledge and hence learning occurs.

This explains how knowledge is possible according to Plato. The physical world makes us remember, or more precisely, enables us to *recollect* what was earlier known by our souls. This world is imperfect. The true world, the world of Ideas, is perfect and true knowledge can only be something which partakes in that which is perfect. We draw a circle on a page in our notebook, but no matter whatever we do, it will still be left with some sort of imperfection. Even if the imperfection is not observable with the naked eye it will still be observable with the help of sophisticated tools. What is perfect, however, is the Idea of that circle. Similarly, when our eyes look upon a triangle, it is actually the *concept* of the triangle which enables us conceive those three lines together as a triangle. Therefore all those things which our sense-perceptions report to us are only sensible to us because an Idea is present for them, which is known by our soul, and our soul recollects it as soon as it sees the imitation of that Idea. As Wood claims, "Even if no one ever thought of them and even if everyone were to forget

them once they are thought of, the relations would still hold." (Wood, 531).

Plato's theory presents a comprehensive approach of his stance on knowledge, but it also raises a problem. This problem is commonly known as the 'mind-body problem' or Dualism, which states that if mind and body are two distinct things, then how do they interact then? (Robinson,). Plato also claims that the physical world and intelligible world are two distinct things but then the question again is raised: how and where does the information coming from these two distinct worlds interact? This seems to be a valid question as the world of Ideas and the visible world must be interacting somewhere in order for the process of recollection to happen. Plato doesn't seem to address this question, not at least in Book VI of the *Republic*, where he presented the concept of Divided Line. Dualism has always been a major hurdle not only for Plato, but for all those philosophers who made a distinction between bodily processes and mental processes, for example, Descartes (1596-1650).

To conclude, Plato's concepts of the Divided Line and Allegory of the Cave are one of the classic theories of Epistemology and metaphysics. He can be regarded as a pioneer who talked about the world of Forms or Ideas, and also told us how that world of Idea is important for us. He set the foundations for Idealism with this concept. However a number of questions can still be raised upon his theory such as, "Where does the world of Ideas exist?", "Who created the Forms?", "Why do we not live in the true world of Forms but in this world of imperfections?" and so on. Moreover, the rise of a new problem- Dualism- out of his theory can also be taken as a weakness of his theory. Nevertheless, a huge amount of research is still being conducted regarding Plato's theory of knowledge. Even after facing such allegations, Platonic thoughts are still are of a great importance in today's Philosophy and no historian can neglect their importance in framing and developing our mind, or world of Ideas!

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Neo-Platonism and Islamic Mysticism

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The course of history has revealed that all great religions are fascinated with specific philosophies over a course of time (Morewedge vii). For Islam, it was through Mysticism, which spread across Central Asia, South Asia and Africa; even Ottoman Turkey was moved by the philosophical esotericism contained in the much younger Islam (Danner 9). Sufism took a substantial place in the subcontinent through Ghazali, when he brought *Shariah* in close contact to mysticism, thereby, opposing the early Islam which was based on Hellenistic Philosophy. (Watt 11) Sufism, which was characterized by people who wore coarse wool, became symbolic of Islamic culture and tradition between the 13th and 16th centuries, but it is not only wearing of the wool that branded Sufism. Even before that, philosophical themes from Gnosticism, Christianity, neo-Platonism and Buddhism had been adopted, giving rise to the hub of Theo-sophical intellect in the Muslim culture (Nicholson 9). This blend of different schools of thought has made Sufism attractive for many theologians to this day. How much has Islamic doctrine been influenced by the neo-Platonic School of thought is the basic question of this paper. Moreover, what caused the Greek mystical ideas to become so persuasive for one stream of Islamic thought? Was the dogmatic Islam of the earlier period so inherent to the basic principles of neo-Platonism, or did Mohammedan Islam already have mystic tendencies? These are some of the vital questions that still have quivering answers.

Plotinus, who gave neo-Platonism a definite shape, took Plato's Theory of Ideas and portrayed it from the point of view of the Pythagoreans. For Plotinus, the One, that is, 'God', is the source of everything. From Him, everything emanates and to Him, everything would return. What we see in this world is only what is being produced by the One. Humans, since they have the ability to think, can trace back the steps to be united with the One. This is very similar

to what Hajwery says in his *Kashf-ul-Mahjoob* (7) about unveiling the mystery through different stations and revealing the truth in order to be united with God. Communion with God is the ultimate goal of life (Godelek 1); and the practical world is only an illusion. The Real world is the Other World which is equated by Muslim mystics with the kingdom of Heaven. The One is Eternal from which everything emerges as opposed to the illusionary world of appearance (Russell 294). Plotinus' God who is The Exalted, Supreme Power, and the Highest Spiritual Being seems to be Plato's the 'first mover'. Explained by Plotinus through an analogy, the Absolute Being is like the sun from which light radiates without loss to the sun. The further you are from light, the closer you are to darkness (Godelek 1); this implies to human soul. The imperfections in humans are due to the imperfections of the soul. The closer the soul is to the source of the light, the better qualities it has such as truth, beauty and goodness.

For most part of Sufism, if at all, is influenced by neo-Platonism. First, like the Absolute forms of Plotinus, the Muslim Mystics assume God to be Absolute Beauty. Human beings only share the essence of God. This is because humans have souls, rather, Divine Soul. These souls are a part of God and are kept in a body that is part of this world. Once the body dies and passes this world of appearance, the souls will unite with God, while his/her body would dissolve in Decay. As Rifa'I dervish points out:

"Seventy Thousand Veils separate Allah, the One Reality, from the world of matter and of sense. And every soul passes before his birth through these seventy thousand. The inner halves of these are veils of light: the outer halves, veils of darkness.....The child is born weeping, for the soul knows its separation from Allah, the One Reality. And when the child cries in its sleep, it is because the soul remembers something of what it has lost. The passage through the

veils has brought with it forgetfulness (*nisyān*): and for this reason man is called *Insan*. He is now, as it were, in prison in his body, separated by these thick curtains from Allah." (Nicholson 7)

Hence, to the Muslim mystics, the soul which was once part of God is now in this world separated from God. The only goal for the soul is to reunite with God. To reach this point, one should practice withdrawal, silence, self-examination, poverty, austerity, humility and discipline with love and faith, in order to achieve the sense of Communion with the Absolute (Godelek 1). Here we see that neo-Platonism and Sufism have similar views about the soul - that it is the Divine Essence. Unlike the body, which is temporary, mortal and not divine, the soul is immortal, permanent and divine.

Second, for both the neo-Platonists and the Sufis the universe is not an independent entity; it is a reflection of God Himself; hence, the universe and God are inseparable. Sufism also assumes the Oneness, not the Duality of humans and God. For them, humans and God do not exist separately; rather their reality lies in the Absolute Unity which can be achieved if we highly devote ourselves to the Love of God (Godelek 1). This too indicates that Sufism and neo-Platonism view the universe in similar ways, i.e., the universe is an emanation of God Himself.

The question then arises, how do neo-Platonism and Sufism have such similarity in their basic theological pattern? What made neo-Platonism, and no other discipline, the backbone of the inflexible doctrine of Islam? The answer to this question is not simple. One can only speculate to some extent and find relatively dissatisfying answers. Among those reasons for this inclination is the ascetic and quietist influences of Christianity, which itself has its roots in the neo-Platonist school of thought. St. Augustine, who takes much of his influence from neo-Platonic school of thought, lays the foundation of Medieval Christianity which has undoubtedly influenced Islamic

thought (Thilly and Wood 218). Vows of silence, *Dhiker* and even the woolen dress which is symbolic of Sufism are of Christian origin (Nicholson 5).

Another reason why neo-Platonism has had an influence on Sufism can be attributed to socio-cultural factors. Simply put, the great Greek mystical ideas were available to the Muslims in western Asia and Egypt where Sufi Philosophy first emerged (Nicholson 2). Immediately following the birth of Islam, it was the well-developed philosophy of neo-Platonism which was readily accessible in Arabic due to the Hellenistic scholars who took refuge in Persia after the Platonic Academy was closed in Athens in 529 A.D (Morwedge viii). We see much of the progress in Arabic philosophy during the 7th and 8th century when Arabic philosophers interpreted Aristotle in the spirit of neo-Platonism (Thilly and Wood 218). This was also the time when Western Europe first became acquainted with Aristotle in a very neo-Platonic way; such was the influence of neo-Platonism on Islamic philosophy. Moreover, neo-Platonism being a religious philosophy parallels much of the basic concepts of reality expressed in *Koran*. Hence, most of the people could relate to it. For this reason, neo-Platonism not only is similar in its religious connotation with Islam, but it is also consistent with the socio-cultural boundaries of Islam that prevailed in the medieval Islam.

The next question is, if neo-Platonism was so readily acknowledged, then why was Islam's unbending doctrine so weak to accept such radical views or did Mohammedan Islam already have mystical tendencies? The basic teaching of the *Koran* in terms of God, Allah the Creator is that of the Absolute power, The One, Eternal Being; far above from humans, He is Just. Allah is the Creator who created everything in this world. He alone is to be worshiped and humans should ask for His and only His Mercy and forgiveness. The God of fear rather than love is certainly the most prominent side of early Islamic teachings, but, later in the *Koran*, we find that the

teaching of Mohammed are deeper and connects the human soul to God. "If My servants ask thee about Me, lo, I am near" (Kor. 2.182) "We (God) are nearer to him than his own neck-vein" (50.15). These verses from the *Koran* not only provide traces of mysticism but also reveal that the concept of God in Islam could be thought of as both far and near, both immanent and transcendent. In addition to this, God, as the light of heaven and earth, a Being who is on earth and also in the Heavens, a God who is in and also the outside of the human soul are also self-evident of the mystical germ. "And in the earth are signs to those of real faith, and in yourselves. What! do ye not see?" (51.20-21). Again, we see that the followers of Islam are advised to have an insight as well as an outside perspective in order to look for "signs" that might reveal something about God, much similar to what we might call intuition in this point in time. On the whole, *Koran* may be thought of as non-mystical, but we do find instances where mysticism is dominant. It seems as if the Sufis had worked upon these indistinguishable clauses and made them the basis for their mystical interpretation of Islam.

The spread of Sufism worldwide to this day as opposed to the traditional orthodox Islam is still questionable. Why is it that Sufism prevailed much more strongly than the orthodox Islam? The only answer that seems logical here is that the orthodox party accepted the teachings of *Koran* as it is, without questioning faith (Thilly and Wood 219), which in turn made the divine religion firm in terms of its principles. The separation between the creator and the creation increased over time which did not allow any emotional bonding with the creator and the creation. However, Sufis catered to this problem by giving a way to the Mohammedan Muslims to form an emotional bond with their creator. The God of fear was now converted to the God of Love. This whole concept gave more freedom to the believers. Everything was expressed in terms of love, acceptance, and contentment as opposed to the traditional teachings. This not only had a spiritual

influence but also brought about a psychological, therapeutic effect upon the Muslim believers, which is partly why it was widely accepted.

Sufism has no explicit definition (Nicholson 11). It is an experience that is different for everyone. It neither has a doctrine nor a dogma. It is free in nature and provides an outlet to the believers in order to practice their faith. It is something that most people can relate to irrespective of religious creed. As professor D. B. Macdonald points out "...all thinking religious Muslims are mystics....all, too are pantheists, some do not know it" (Nicholson 10). This indeed is the beauty of the mysticism that has held Islam to this day.

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