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Editor Senoris — Marcus Audens

—APHRODISIAS—

The cult of Aphrodite, a Greek goddess of fertility, love, and nature was a popular goddess in antiquity, and there were many sanctuaries dedicated to her and her followers. One such was the city of *Aphrodisias* in Turkey. The city can be found to the southeast of the ancient city of Smyrna (modern Izmir). The city is located nearly 600 metres above sea level and occupies a place on a high plateau which is a part of the Baba Dag mountains.

The city was built on a plain which is nearby the Meander River, which provided a good source of water making the site one which could and did support a significant ancient population. This water source was one of the reasons for the success of the ancient city in later ages. The site is found on the border of the local regions known as Caria, Lydia, and Phrygia. It is a level area interrupted only by two mounds, one rising to a height of 24 metres and the other about 13 metres in height.

The cult of fertility was primarily responsible for the expansion of what was probably a minor city during Greek times. As the popularity of the Goddess Aphrodite increased so did the city increase in size and in significant and quite beautiful construction. This structure is located to the North within the site., and the archaeological remains in this area indicate that the temple was the central point of gathering and focus for the inhabitants as well as visitors to the city. The temple proper is fronted by a stand of eight pillars across the front or façade. With thirteen of these same columns along each side.

The city apparently benefitted greatly from Octavian (Augustus Caesar) who gave the city certain privileges. This was probably due to a former slave of Augustus (Gaius Julius Zoilos) who had originally lived in Aphrodisias.. As the years went on the cult of Aphrodite gained prominence in the Roman world and as a result visitors and pilgrims as well flocked into the city from every part of the Empire.

The large public market place (agora) was apparently the heart of Aphrodisias, and lay somewhat to the South of the Temple. It consisted of two long porticos (over 200 metres) which were laid out in an East-West line. Attached to the agora was a large Roman basilica, which obviously served as the city's administrative and legal center.

One of the best preserved theatres in the Western Asian area was discovered in Aphrodisias. The theatre was built into the Eastern side of one of the hills (prehistoric "acropolis" Hill) located within the city Site.

The Gate of Aphrodite is one of the best preserved structures in Aphrodisias, and probably the most beautiful. The style of the structural rendering known as a tetra=pylon and consist of four rows of columns set in such a way as to form a crossroads at the gateway. The central entrance was laid out in an East-West line and the columns are topped with lavishly carved lintels.

Again The one of the best preserved ruins of the period, and it can easily be determined as to its size and capacity. It extends for a length of 262 meters, and it is estimated that at full capacity it could have held some 30,000 spectators for the games. Since this capacity far exceeded the immediate population of Aphrodisias, it can be assumed that this stadium was used not only by the city inhabitants and visitors, but also by other people living in the general area nearby the ancient site. Archaeological investigation indicates that the stadium was not used for horse or chariot racing, but rather it was utilized as an arena for athletic games and competitions, and later in the Roman period for hunting games between wild animals and gladiators.

The Baths of Hadrian are some 200 metres West of the agora, and consist of a huge hall and cold, tepid and hot baths, with a heating furnace and an extensive set of underground passages to be used by the bath staff in serving the needs of the bathers and visitors to the facility.

The city was protected by a large defensive wall which circled the city. The wall has three gates, which corresponded to the cardinal points as well as several watch towers. It is determined that the wall was constructed in the late Roman period as protection against the threat and fear of barbarian invasion. The wall has a perimeter of nearly 3.5 kilometers.

Over the centuries the city has endured several heavy and violent earthquakes, as well as a rising water table resulting in extensive flooding of the area. It is assumed that the major part of the damage done to the city came as a result of the major earthquakes in the fourth and seventh centuries.

HISTORY OF GASTRONOMY IN THE WEST

The first significant step toward the development of gastronomy was the use of fire by primitive man. To cook his food, which gave rise to the first meals as families gathered around the fire to share the foods that they had cooked. Prehistoric cave paintings such as those in Les Trois Frères in Ariège, in southern France, depict these as early gastronomic events.

In the ancient civilizations of Assyria, Babylonia, Persia, and Egypt, the selection, preparation, service, and enjoyment of food were practiced on an elaborate scale. In the Book of Daniel, the Bible relates the story of how Belshazzar, the king of the Chaldeans, “made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand.” He then commanded gold and silver vessels to be brought, and he and his wives, princes, and concubines drank wine and praised gods of gold, silver, brass, iron, wood, and stone.

GREECE AND ROME

In ancient Greece, the Athenians believed that mealtime afforded an opportunity to nourish the spirit as well as the body. They reclined on couches while eating and accompanied their repasts with music, poetry, and dancing. The Greeks provided a philosophical basis for good living. Epicureanism. It held that pleasure was the main purpose in life; but pleasure was not intended to imply the self-indulgence that it connotes today. The Epicureans believed that pleasure could best be achieved by practicing self-restraint and indulging in as few desires as possible. Today the epicure is defined as one who is, “endowed with sensitive and discriminating tastes in food and wine.”

The ancient Greeks practiced moderation in all things, but the Romans were known for their excesses. Ordinary citizens subsisted on barley or wheat porridge, fish, and ground pine nuts (edible pine seeds), but Roman emperors and wealthy aristocrats gorged themselves on a staggering variety of foods. They staged lavish banquets where as many as 100 different kinds of fish were served, as well as mountainous quantities of beef, pork, veal, lamb, wild boar, venison, ostrich, duck and peacock. They ordered ice and snow hauled down from the Alps to refrigerate their perishable foods, and they dispatched emissaries to outposts of the Roman Empire in search of exotic delicacies. Mushrooms were gathered in France, and the Roman author Juvenal, writing in the late first and early 2nd century AD, describes a dinner at his patron's house where mullet from Corsica, and lampreys from Sicily were served.

Yet, whereas the Romans placed great value on exotic delicacies, they were not gastronomes in the true sense of the word. The term implies a sensitivity and discrimination that they lacked. The unbridled appetites of the Roman emperors and nobles often carried them to wild extremes. The Emperor Caligula drank pearls that had been dissolved in vinegar. Maximus reportedly consumed 60 pounds of meat in a day, and Albinus was alleged to have eaten 300 figs, 100 peaches, 10 melons, and vast quantities of other foods at a single sitting. Lucellus was an immensely wealthy man who entertained so lavishly that his name became a symbol both for extravagance and for culinary excellence.

The vulgarity and ostentation of Roman banquets were satirized by Petronius in the *Satyricon*, written in the first century AD. A former slave named Trimalchio entertains at a gargantuan feast at which the guests are treated to one outlandish spectacle after the other. A donkey is brought in on a tray, encircled with silver dishes bearing dormice that have been dipped in honey. A huge sow is carved and live thrushes fly up from the platter. A chef cuts open the belly of a roast pig and out pour blood sausages and blood puddings.

Respectfully Submitted;

Marcus Audens

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—ECLIPSE, OCCULTATION AND TRANSIT—

PLUTARCH’S INTEREST IN ECLIPSES—

THE HISTORIAN THUCYDIDES COMMENTS ON THE FREQUENCY OF ECLIPSES DURING THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR, WHICH BEGAN IN 431 B.C. AND LASTED FOR 27 YEARS. THE MOST INTERESTING OF THESE WAS A SOLAR ECLIPSE THAT OCCURRED IN THE SUMMER OF THE FIRST YEAR OF THE WAR (CALCULATED DATE; AUGUST 27, 413 B.C.) ON THE FORMER OCCASION, “THE SUN ASSUMED THE SHAPE OF A CRESCENT AND BECAME FULL AGAIN, AND DURING THE ECLIPSE SOME STARS BECAME VISIBLE” (A STATEMENT THAT AGREES WELL WITH MODERN COMPUTATIONS). THE LATTER DATE HAD BEEN SELECTED BY THE ATHENIAN COMMANDERS NICIAS AND DEMOSTHENES FOR TH DEPARTURE OF THEIR ARMIES FROM SYRACUSE. ALL PREPARATIONS WERE READY, BUT THE SIGNAL HAD NOT BEEN GIVEN WHEN THE MOON WAS ECLIPSED. THE ATHENIAN SOLDIERS AND SAILORS CLAMORED AGAINST DEPARTURE, AND NICIAS , IN OBEDIENCE TO THE SOOTHSAYERS , RESOLVED TO REMAIN THRICE NINE DAYS. THIS DELAY ALLOWED THE SYRACUSANS TO CAPTURE OR DESTROY THE WHOLE OF THE ATHENIAN FLEET AND ARMY.

AUGUST 15, 310 B.C. IS THE DATE OF THE TOTAL ECLIPSE OF THE SUN THAT IS SAID TO HAVE BEEN SEEN AT SEA BY AGATHOCLES AND HIS MEN AFTER THEY ESCAPED FROM SYRACUSE AND WERE ON THEIR WAY TO AFRICA. DIODORUS, A HISTORIAN OF THE 1ST CENTURY B.C. REPORTS THAT: “ON THE NEXT DAY (AFTER THE ESCAPE) THERE OCCURRED SUCH AN ECLIPSE OF THE SUN THAT UTTER DARKNESS SET IN AND THE STARS WERE SEEN EVERYWHERE.” MODERN COMPUTATIONS OF THE ECLIPSE TRACK RENDER IT PROBABLE THAT AGATHOCLES’ SHIPS ALONG THE NORTH OF SICILY DURING THE COURSE OF THE JOURNEY: THE SUN WOULD HAVE ONLY BEEN PARTIALLY OBSCURED ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE ISLAND.

IN PLUTARCH'S DIALOG CONCERNING THE FEATURES OF THE MOON'S DISK, ONE OF THE CHARACTERS NAMED LUCIUS, DEDUCES FROM THE PHASES OF THE MOON AND THE PHENOMENON OF ECLIPSES A SIMILARITY BETWEEN THE EARTH AND THE MOON AND ILLUSTRATES HIS ARGUMENT BY MEANS OF A RECENT ECLIPSE OF THE SUN, "WHICH BEGINNING JUST AFTER NOON, SHOWED US PLAINLY MANY STARS IN ALL PARTS OF THE HEAVENS, AND PRODUCED A CHILL IN THE TEMPERATURE LIKE THAT OF TWILIGHT." THIS ECLIPSE HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED WITH ONE THAT OCCURRED ON MARCH 20, A.D. 71 WHICH WAS TOTAL IN GREECE. WHETHER PLUTARCH IS DESCRIBING A REAL, THEREFORE DATABLE, EVENT OR IS MERELY BASING HIS DESCRIPTION ON ACCOUNTS WRITTEN BY EARLIER AUTHORS HAS BEEN DISPUTED, HOWEVER, LATER IN THE SAME DIALOGUE, LUCIUS REFERS TO A BRIGHTNESS THAT APPEARS AROUND THE MOON'S RIM IN TOTAL ECLIPSES OF THE SUN. THIS IS ONE OF THE EARLIEST KNOWN ALLUSION TO THE SOLAR CORONA. PLUTARCH WAS UNUSUALLY INTERESTED IN ECLIPSES, AND HIS *PARALLEL LIVES*, AN ACCOUNT OF THE DEEDS AND CHARACTER OF ILLUSTRIOUS GREEKS AND ROMANS, CONTAINS MANY REFERENCES TO BOTH LUNAR AND SOLAR ECLIPSES OF CONSIDERABLE HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE. THERE ARE ALSO FREQUENT RECORDS OF ECLIPSES IN OTHER ANCIENT GREEK LITERATURE.

ROMAN—

ROMAN HISTORY IS LESS REplete WITH REFERENCES TO ECLIPSES THAN THAT OF GREECE, BUT THERE ARE SEVERAL INTERESTING REFERENCES TO THESE EVENTS IN ROMAN WRITINGS. SOME LIKE THE TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE SAID BY DIO CASSIUS, A ROMAN HISTORIAN OF THE THIRD CENTURY A.D. TO HAVE OCCURRED AT THE TIME OF THE FUNERAL OF AGRIPPINA, THE MOTHER OF NERO, NEVER TOOK PLACE. ONE THAT HAS ATTRACTED THE STUDENTS OF ASTRONOMY AND OF THE ROMAN CALENDAR ALIKE IS STATED BY CICERO TO HAVE OCCURRED IN WHAT MAY HAVE BEEN THE 350TH YEAR FROM THE FOUNDING OF ROME. HE ALSO SAY THAT IT WAS DESCRIBED BY THE POET QUINTUS ENNIUS: "ON THE NONES OF JUNE THE SUN WAS COVERED BY THE MOON AND NIGHT." THIS HAPPENING WOULD APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN A TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE OF JUNE 21, 400 B.C., WHICH REACHED A TOTAL OR ALMOST TOTAL PHASE AT ROME A FEW MINUTES AFTER SUNSET. ITS RECORDED DATE SEEMS TO SHOW THAT IN THAT YEAR THE CALENDAR MONTH OF JUNE BEGAN 16 DAYS LATER THAN IT DID AFTER THE JULIAN REFORM. THE ECLIPSE OF THE MOON ON JUNE 21-22, 168 B.C. HAS ATTRACTED MUCH ATTENTION. THE ROMANS WERE AT THAT TIME AT WAR WITH THE MACEDONIA, AND POLYBIUS SAYS THAT THIS ECLIPSE WAS INTERPRETED AS AN OMEN OF THE ECLIPSE OF A KING AND THUS ENCOURAGED THE ROMANS AND DISCOURAGED THE MACEDONIANS.

WHAT MAY WELL BE AN INDIRECT ALLUSION TO A TOTAL ECLIPSE OF THE SUN THAT CAUSED DARKNESS AT ROME IS RECORDED BY LIVY FOR A TIME CORRESPONDING TO 188 -

187 B.C. (THE CONSULSHIP OF VALERIUS MESSALLIA AND LIVIUS SALINATOR):

“BEFORE THE NEW MAGISTRATES DEPARTED FOR THEIR PROVINCES , A THREE -DAY PERIOD OF PRAYER WAS PROCLAIMED IN THE NAME OF THE COLLEGE OF DECENVIRS AT ALL THE STREET CORNER SHRINES BECAUSE IN THE DAYTIME AT THE THIRD HOUR DARKNESS HAD COVERED EVERYTHING.”

THE DARKNESS TOOK PLACE SOMETIME AFTER THE ELECTION OF THE CONSULS (IDES OF MARCH), AND ALLOWING FOR THE CONFUSION OF THE ROMAN CALENDAR AT THIS TIME, THE TOTAL ECLIPSE OF JULY 17, 188B.C., WOULD BE THE MOST SATISFACTORY EXPLANATION FOR THE UNUSUAL DARKNESS. SINCE THE SUN IS NOT MENTIONED IN THE TEXT, THE PHENOMENON POSSIBLY OCCURRED ON A CLOUDY DAY. TWO YEARS EARLIER (190 B.C.), LIVY RECORDS AN ECLIPSE AS HAPPENING AT THE BEGINNING OF JULY. THE CALCULATED DATE, HOWEVER, IS MARCH 14, IN THAT YEAR. CONSEQUENTLY, THE ROMAN CALENDAR IN THAT YEAR MUST HAVE BEEN AS MUCH AS 3 1/2 MONTHS OUT OF ADJUSTMENT.

THE CHRONOLOGY OF PTOLEMY’S CANON OF KINGS, WHICH GIVES THE BABYLONIAN SERIES FROM 747 TO 539 B.C., THE PERSIAN SERIES FROM 538 TO 324 B.C., THE ALEXANDRIAN SERIES FROM 323 TO 30 B.C., AND THE ROMAN SERIES FROM 30 B.C. ONWARD, IS CONFIRMED BY ECLIPSES. THE ECLIPSE OF 763 B.C., RECORDED IN THE ASSYRIAN EPONYM CANON, MAKES IT POSSIBLE TO CARRY THE CHRONOLOGY BACK WITH CERTAINTY THROUGH THE PERIOD COVERED BY THAT CANON TO 893 B.C. IDENTIFIABLE ECLIPSES THAT WERE RECORDED UNDER NAMED ROMAN CONSULS EXTEND BACK TO 217 B.C. THE DATE SOLAR ECLIPSE OF ENNIUS (400 B.C.), THE LUNAR ECLIPSE SEEN AT PYNDA IN MACEDONIA ON JUNE 21-22, 168B.C., AND THE SOLAR ECLIPSE RECORDED AT ROME IN 190B.C. CAN BE USED TO DETERMINE MONTHS IN THE ROMAN CALENDAR IN THE NATURAL YEAR. FURTHERMORE ECLIPSES OCCASIONALLY HELP TO FIX PRECISE DATES OF A SERIES OF EVENTS, SUCH AS THOSE ASSOCIATED WITH THE ATHENIAN DISASTER AT SYRACUSE. THE LATE BABYLONIAN ASTRONOMICAL TEXTS OCCASIONALLY MENTION MAJOR HISTORICAL EVENTS, AS FOR EXAMPLE , THE DATES OF WHEN XERXES AND ALEXANDER THE GREAT DIED. MOST OF THESE CLAY TABLETS , INSCRIBED WITH A CUNEIFORM SCRIPT, ARE NOW FOUND IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

REFERENCE:— ENCYCLOPAEDIA BRITANNICA, VOL. 17, “ECLIPSE, OCCULTATION, AND TRANSIT,” PAGE 874;

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED;

MARCUS AUDENS

—ETHICS #1—

DEFINITION—

SOCRATES—

THE STUDY AND PURSUIT OF ETHICS IS AN INTERESTING ONE. IN REGARD TO SOCRA-
TES AND ETHICS, BY CONVENTIONAL STANDARDS, HE WAS CERTAINLY GUILTY OF COR-
RUPTING THE YOUTH OF ATHENS BY DESTROYING LONG HELD SOCIAL BELIEFS AND
IDEAS. HOWEVER, HE HIMSELF SAW THIS DESTRUCTION OF BELIEFS WHICH COULD
NOT STAND UP TO CRITICISM AS A NECESSARY PRELIMINARY STEP IN THE SEARCH FOR
TRUE KNOWLEDGE. IN THIS HE DIFFERED GREATLY FROM THE SOPHISTS WITH THEIR
MORAL RELATIVISM, FOR HE THOUGHT THAT VIRTUE IS SOMETHING THAT CAN BE
KNOWN AND THAT THE GOOD PERSON IS THE ONE WHO KNOWS OF WHAT VIRTUE, OR
JUSTICE, CONSISTS.

IT IS THEREFORE NOT ENTIRELY ACCURATE TO SEE THAT SOCRATES AS CONTRIBUTING
A METHOD OF INQUIRY, BUT NO POSITIVE VIEWS OF HIS OWN. HE BELIEVED IN GOOD-
NESS AND SOMETHING THAT CAN BE KNOWN, EVEN THOUGH HE DID NOT HIMSELF PRO-
FESS TO KNOW IT. HE ALSO THOUGHT THAT THOSE WHO KNOW WHAT GOOD IS ARE IN
FACT GOOD. THE LATTER BELIEF SEEMS PECULIAR TODAY, BECAUSE WE MAKE A
SHARP DISTINCTION BETWEEN WHAT IS GOOD AND WHAT IS IN A PERSON'S OWN IN-
TERESTS. ACCORDINGLY IT DOES NOT SEEM SURPRISING IF PEOPLE KNOW WHAT THEY
OUGHT MORALLY TO DO, BUT THEN PROCEED TO DO WHAT IS IN THEIR OWN INTEREST
INSTEAD. HOW TO PROVIDE SUCH PEOPLE WITH REASONS FOR DOING WHAT IS RIGHT
HAS BEEN A MAJOR PROBLEM FOR WESTERN ETHICS. SOCRATES DID NOT SEE A PROB-
LEM HERE AT ALL; IN HIS VIEW ANYONE WHO DOES NOT ACT WELL MUST SIMPLY BE IG-
NORANT OF THE NATURE OF GOODNESS. SOCRATES COULD SAY THIS BECAUSE IN AN-
CIENT GREECE THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN GOOD AND SELF-INTEREST WAS SIMPLY
NOT MADE, OR AT LEAST NOT IN THE CLEAR-CUT MANNER THAT IT IS TODAY. THE
GREEKS BELIEVED THAT VIRTUE IS GOOD BOTH FOR THE INDIVIDUAL AND FOR THE
COMMUNITY. TO BE SURE THEY RECOGNIZED THAT TO LIVE VIRTUOUSLY MIGHT NOT BE
THE BEST WAY TO PROSPER FINANCIALLY, BUT THEN THEY DID NOT ASSUME , AS WE
ARE PRONE TO DO, THAT MATERIAL WEALTH IS A MAJOR FACTOR IN WHETHER A A PER-
SON'S LIFE GOES WELL OR ILL.

PLATO—

SOCRATES' GREATEST DISCIPLE (428/427 - 348/347 B.C.) ACCEPTED THE KEY SO-
CRATIC BELIEFS IN THE OBJECTIVITY OF GOODNESS AND IN THE LINK BETWEEN KNOW-
ING WHAT IS GOOD AND DOING IT. HE ALSO TOOK OVER THE SOCRATIC METHOD OF
CONDUCTING PHILOSOPHY , DEVELOPING THE CASE FOR HIS OWN POSITIONS BY EX-
POSING ERRORS AND CONFUSIONS IN THE ARGUMENTS OF HIS OPPONENTS. HE DID
THIS BY WRITING HIS WORKS AS DIALOGUES IN WHICH SOCRATES IS PORTRAYED AS
ENGAGING IN ARGUMENT WITH OTHERS, USUALLY SOPHISTS. THE EARLY DIALOGUES
ARE GENERALLY ACCEPTED AS REASONABLY ACCURATE ACCOUNTS OF SOCRATES'

VIEWS, BUT THE LATER ONES , WRITTEN MANY YEARS AFTER THE DEATH OF SOCRATES, USE THE LATTER AS A MOUTHPIECE FOR IDEAS AND ARGUMENTS THAT WERE PLATO'S RATHER THAN THOSE OF THE HISTORICAL SOCRATES. IN THE MOST FAMOUS OF PLATO'S DIALOGUES,

POLITICS (THE REPUBLIC), THE IMAGINARY SOCRATES IS CHALLENGED TO THE FOLLOWING EXAMPLE:

SUPPOSE A PERSON OBTAINED THE LEGENDARY RING OF GYGES, WHICH HAS THE MAGICAL PROPERTY OF RENDERING THE WEARER INVISIBLE. WOULD THAT PERSON STILL HAVE ANY REASON TO BEHAVE JUSTLY?

BEHIND THIS CHALLENGE LIES THE SUGGESTION MADE BY THE SOPHISTS AND STILL HEARD TODAY, THAT THE ONLY REASON FOR ACTING JUSTLY IS THAT A PERSON CANNOT GET AWAY WITH ACTING UNJUSTLY. PLATO'S RESPONSE TO THIS CHALLENGE IS A LONG ARGUMENT DEVELOPING A POSITION THAT APPEARS TO GO BEYOND ANYTHING THE HISTORICAL SOCRATES ASSERTED. PLATO MAINTAINED THAT TRUE KNOWLEDGE CONSISTS NOT IN KNOWING PARTICULAR THINGS BUT RATHER IN KNOWING SOMETHING GENERAL THAT IS COMMON TO ALL PARTICULAR CASES. THIS IS OBVIOUSLY DERIVED FROM THE WAY IN WHICH SOCRATES WOULD PRESS HIS OPPONENTS TO GO BEYOND MERELY DESCRIBING PARTICULAR GOOD, OR TEMPERATE, OR JUST ACTS, AND TO GIVE INSTEAD A GENERAL ACCOUNT OF GOODNESS, OR TEMPERANCE, OR JUSTICE. THE IMPLICATION IS THAT WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT GOODNESS IS UNLESS WE CAN GIVE A GENERAL ACCOUNT. BUT THE QUESTION THEN ARISES, WHAT IS IT THAT WE KNOW WHEN WE KNOW THIS GENERAL IDEA OF GOODNESS? PLATO'S ANSWER SEEMS TO BE THAT WHAT WE KNOW IS SOME GENERAL FORM OR IDEA OF GOODNESS, WHICH IS SHARED BY EVERY PARTICULAR THING WHICH IS GOOD. YET, IF WE ARE TRULY TO BE ABLE TO KNOW THIS FORM OR IDEA OF GOODNESS, IT SEEMS TO FOLLOW THAT IT REALLY DOES EXIST. PLATO ACCEPTS THIS IMPLICATION. HIS THEORY OF FORMS IS THE VIEW THAT WHEN WE KNOW WHAT GOODNESS IS, WE HAVE KNOWLEDGE OF SOMETHING THAT IS THE COMMON ELEMENT IN VIRTUE OF WHICH ALL THINGS ARE GOOD AND AT THE SAME TIME, IS SOME EXISTING THING, THE PURE FORM OF GOODNESS.

IT HAS BEEN SAID THAT ALL OF WESTERN PHILOSOPHY CONSISTS OF FOOTNOTES TO PLATO. CERTAINLY THE CENTRAL ISSUE AROUND WHICH ALL OF WESTERN ETHICS HAS REVOLVED CAN BE TRACED BACK TO THE DEBATE BETWEEN THE SOPHISTS, ON THE ONE HAND, WITH THEIR CLAIMS THAT GOODNESS AND JUSTICE ARE RELATIVE TO THE CUSTOMS OF EACH SOCIETY OR, WORSE STILL, MERELY A DISGUISE FOR THE INTERESTS OF THE STRONGER, AND, ON THE OTHER, PLATO'S DEFENSE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF KNOWLEDGE OF AN OBJECTIVE FORM OR IDEA OF GOODNESS.

BUT EVEN IF WE KNOW WHAT GOODNESS OR JUSTICE IS, WHY SHOULD WE ACT JUSTLY IF WE CAN PROFIT FROM DOING THE OPPOSITE? THE REMAINING PART OF THE CHALLENGE POSED BY THE LEGENDARY RING OF GYGES IS STILL TO BE ANSWERED, FOR EVEN IF WE ACCEPT THAT GOODNESS IS OBJECTIVE, IT DOES NOT FOLLOW THAT WE ALL HAVE SUFFICIENT REASON TO DO GOOD. WHETHER GOODNESS LEADS TO HAPPINESS IS, AS HAS BEEN SEEN FROM THE PRECEDING DISCUSSION OF EARLY ETHICS IN OTHER CULTURES, A

VIEWS, BUT THE LATER ONES , WRITTEN MANY YEARS AFTER THE DEATH OF SOCRATES, USE THE LATTER AS A MOUTHPIECE FOR IDEAS AND ARGUMENTS THAT WERE PLATO'S RATHER THAN THOSE OF THE HISTORICAL SOCRATES. IN THE MOST FAMOUS OF PLATO'S DIALOGUES,

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PERENNIAL TOPIC FOR ALL WHO THINK ABOUT ETHICS. PLATO'S ANSWER IS THAT JUSTICE CONSISTS IN HARMONY BETWEEN THE THREE ELEMENTS OF THE SOUL: INTELLECT, EMOTION, AND DESIRE. THE UNJUST PERSON LIVES IN AN UNSATISFACTORY STATE OF INTERNAL DISCORD, TRYING ALWAYS TO OVERCOME THE DISCOMFORT OF UNSATISFIED DESIRE BUT NEVER ACHIEVING ANYTHING BETTER THAN THE MERE ABSENCE OF WANT. THE SOUL OF THE GOOD PERSON, ON THE OTHER HAND, IS HARMONIOUSLY ORDERED UNDER THE GOVERNANCE OF REASON, AND THE GOOD PERSON FINDS TRULY SATISFYING ENJOYMENT IN THE PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE. PLATO REMARKS THAT THE HIGHEST PLEASURE, IN FACT, COMES FROM INTELLECTUAL SPECULATION. HE ALSO GIVES THE ARGUMENT FOR THE BELIEF THAT THE HUMAN SOUL IS IMMORTAL, THEREFORE, EVEN IF JUST INDIVIDUALS SEEM TO BE LIVING IN POVERTY OR ILLNESS, THE GODS WILL NOT NEGLECT THEM IN THE NEXT LIFE, AND THERE THEY WILL HAVE THE GREATEST REWARDS OF ALL. IN SUMMARY THEN PLATO ASSERTS THAT WE SHOULD ALL ACT JUSTLY BECAUSE IN DOING SO WE ARE "AT ONE WITH OURSELVES AND WITH THE GODS."

TODAY THIS MAY SEEM LIKE A STRANGE ACCOUNT OF JUSTICE AND A FARFETCHED VIEW OF WHAT IT TAKES TO ACHIEVE HUMAN HAPPINESS. PLATO DOES NOT RECOMMEND JUSTICE FOR ITS OWN SAKE, INDEPENDENTLY OF ANY PERSONAL GAINS ONE MIGHT OBTAIN FROM BEING A JUST PERSON. THIS IS CHARACTERISTIC OF GREEK ETHICS, WITH ITS REFUSAL TO RECOGNIZE THAT THERE COULD BE AN IRRESOLVABLE CONFLICT BETWEEN ONE'S OWN INTEREST AND THE GOOD OF THE COMMUNITY. NOT UNTIL IMMANUEL KANT, IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY, DOES A PHILOSOPHER FORCEFULLY ASSERT THE IMPORTANCE OF DOING WHAT IS RIGHT SIMPLY BECAUSE IT IS RIGHT QUITE APART FROM SELF-INTERESTED MOTIVATION. TO BE SURE , PLATO MUST NOT BE INTERPRETED AS HOLDING THAT THE MOTIVATION FOR EACH AND EVERY JUST ACT IS SOME PERSONAL GAIN; ON THE CONTRARY, A PERSON WHO TAKES UP JUSTICE WILL DO WHAT IS JUST BECAUSE IT IS JUST. NEVERTHELESS PLATO ACCEPTS THE ASSUMPTION OF HIS OPPONENTS THAT ONE COULD NOT RECOMMEND TAKING UP JUSTICE IN THE FIRST PLACE UNLESS DOING SO COULD BE SHOWN TO BE ADVANTAGEOUS FOR ONESELF AS WELL AS FOR OTHERS.

IN SPITE OF THE FACT THAT MANY PEOPLE NOW THINK DIFFERENTLY ABOUT THIS CONNECTION BETWEEN MORALITY AND SELF INTEREST, PLATO'S ATTEMPT TO ARGUE THAT THOSE WHO ARE JUST ARE IN THE LONG RUN HAPPIER THAN THOSE WHO ARE UNJUST HAS HAD AN ENORMOUS INFLUENCE ON WESTERN ETHICS. LIKE PLATO'S VIEWS ON THE OBJECTIVITY OF GOODNESS , THE CLAIM THAT JUSTICE AND PERSONAL HAPPINESS ARE LINKED HAS HELPED TO FRAME THE AGENDA FOR A DEBATE THAT CONTINUES EVEN TODAY.

REFERENCE:- ENCYCLOPAEDIA BRITANNICA, VOL. 18, "ETHICS," PAGES 498-450

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED;

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