

Plato's *Republic*, Book 4: The City, the Soul, and the Virtues

Throughout the whole of the Republic, the guiding question has been: What is Justice? In order to answer that question, several other *Virtues* have to be examined and studied – for Justice is a Virtue, and virtues are interconnected with each other.

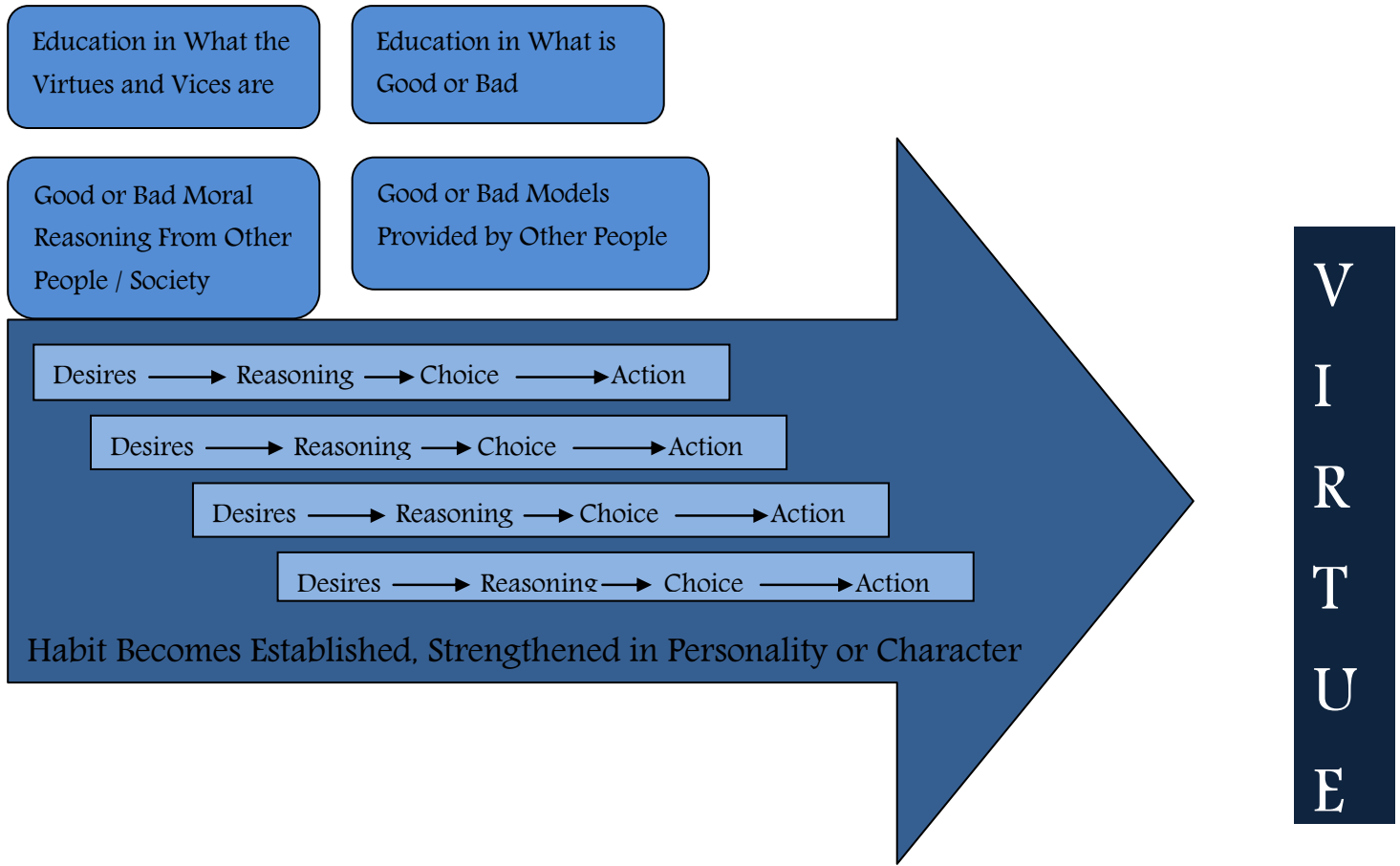
Virtues (*aretai*, in Greek) are certain types of characteristic and lasting excellences of various things. The ancient Greeks used the term virtue (*arête*) with a wide range of meanings:

- for things like physical strength or attractiveness – characteristics of the body
- for things like abilities – being able to sing well, act well, run well – these were often also referred to as capacities (*dunamis*) or as skills (*technai*)
- for good qualities of mind -- being able to understand quickly, having good memory, reasoning well
- for moral qualities – dispositions to characteristically act the right way – e.g. justice, honesty, loyalty, courage, good temper – these are the kinds of virtues we are interested in.

What does it mean to say that a person is a good person of this or that sort, e.g. a patient, generous, or just person?

Typical View	Rule-Based Moral Theory View	Virtue Ethics View
We regard certain quality as good, desirable quality in a person. No thought given to what the quality really is, though we talk about it	Rules determine what counts as having good, desirable quality for a person. Rules can supposedly cover every case comprehensively	Virtues – habitual dispositions – are the good qualities. This particular quality understood by studying it, looking at models
Person's actions in this case happen to fit that quality – or at least some people say or feel so	Person's actions follow those rules for what counts as that good quality	Person's actions flow from their virtuous character or Person's actions are aligned with what virtue
Person gets called "good" Person gets ascribed the good quality	Person is called "good" because they follow the rules determining what counts as having that quality	Person is good – or on way to goodness – in that particular way.
Can't actually rely on person to behave that way in other cases There may not even be agreement about whether the person has that quality or not	Don't really know whether the quality is established in the person or not, or whether they just follow rules. Some cases will arise which the rules can't address well	You can count on that person to behave in virtuous ways because quality is established or on way to being established in the character or personality of that person in lasting, habitual way

How are Virtues Developed in a Person?



Virtues In The City, Virtues In the Soul

Justice. harmony of the parts and their virtues				
Justice in the City. -- All of the parts possess and exercise their virtues. -- All of the parts do their jobs without interfering with the business of other parts	The Guardians or Rulers. Have to become educated, know what is best for all parts of city, rule accordingly	Wisdom or Prudence	<u>Rational Part of the Soul.</u> Has to understand what is best both in general and in particular situations, order other parts of soul	Justice in the Soul. -- All of the parts possess and exercise their virtues. -- Reason commands, and Spirit enforces its commands, and Appetites obey them
	The Lesser Guardians or Soldiers. Have to protect city from outside threats, enforce rule of Guardians	Courage or Fortitude	<u>Spirited Part of the Soul.</u> Has to resist appetites, enforce will of rational part, and protect person	
	The Common People, Tradespeople, Workers. Have to provide all the other goods needed for life, obey rule	Temperance or Moderation	<u>Appetitive Part of the Soul.</u> Has to keep desires, pursuit of pleasures, avoidance of pain within limits	