

# **Intellectual and Moral Formation Components of Integral Education: Foundations from Ancient Greek Philosophy**

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## ***Abstract***

*As a composed being, a human person's existence, life, and growth encompass intellectual and moral development. In the light of Ancient Greek Philosophy, in this paper, we make a philosophical analysis on the nature of education that embraces both the intellectual and moral formation of the learners. We aim at seeing how these two dimensions of formative education are related and how the contemporary world can use such a combination for the good of the learners in particular and the good of the entire human society at large. We expose some moral and professional divergences in case learners are formed in one aspect of the two while excluding the other.*

**Keywords:** Ancient Greek philosophy, education, intellectual formation, moral formation.

## **1.0 Introduction**

This paper seeks to make a philosophical-anthropological analysis of the intrinsic relationship between intellectual formation and moral formation as components of integral education. The scope of our study encompasses ancient Greek philosophers to see how such thinkers conceived the relationship of the two dimensions of education and how such conceptions bear relevance to the whole educational enterprise in the contemporary world.

Our approach is critical and analytical on the nature of education about the nature of the human being as the subject and stakeholder of education.

By ancient Greek philosophy, we confine ourselves to the period extending from the time of Pythagoras to the time of Aristotle.<sup>1</sup> We deem this period as decisive to the thinking on education and human civilization of later epochs.

### **1.1 Education for Intellectual and Moral Excellence**

Studies show that the history of education in Ancient Greece went hand in hand with the historical development of the understanding of *arête*, that is, virtue (Tachibana, 2012, p. 21). According to Kaji Tachibana, the concept and delivery of education in Ancient Greece evolved through several stages. This evolution went hand in hand with shifting the purpose of education. For instance, education was meant for the chivalric minds in the Homeric era. This means education moulded the knights in their manners. As time went on, education in Sparta was for inculcating the virtues of soldiers. Later on, in Old Athens, education aimed to build virtue in sports and music. During the time of the Sophists, education in Athens was for instilling virtues in politics. In all these historical epochs, education encompassed both the intellectual formation and moral formation of the learners.

For the purpose of this paper, we hinge our analysis on the thinking of Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. We deem

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<sup>1</sup> The epoch of ancient Greek philosophy studied in this paper extends from the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC to the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. We deem this period as having a homocentric approach to reality, which gave education a rightful share in the whole treatment of philosophy.

these philosophers as the key thinkers of the ancient Greek world. We have put in place the roots and foundations of modern and postmodern thinking on human formation in general and educational theories in particular.

### **1.1.1 Pythagoras (570–500 BC)**

Pythagoras related a pursuit for knowledge and wisdom with a harmonious practical way of living and doing. For him, such a pursuit aims to establish harmony of a person with himself, with others, with the universe and with the divine realm.

With his understanding of ‘*harmony*’, Pythagoras took education or philosophy, in general, to be intrinsically related to morality. Such harmony was one of the major fabrics and principles of living and doing in the Pythagorean school at Crotona (Williams, 2007, p. 144–145). Moral aptitude was a subject of training and instruction for students in the school and one of the school entry requirements (Williams, 2007, p. 145).

The education curriculum at the school of Pythagoras did not separate knowledge acquisition and character formation. This formative educational symbiosis insisted on physical exercises, spiritual training and intellectual self-purification. For Pythagoras, such practices aimed at preparing pupils for transcendence to enter and serve in the realm of the god of purity and harmony (Williams, 2007, p. 148). Relating this contention with our argument that integral education should encompass both intellectual and moral formation, for the Pythagoreans, education is at a transcendently moral and spiritual level in its object, mode of acquisition, and in its ultimate finality (Williams, 2007, p. 148). This gives us a base to maintain that education is ultimately moral. All education

plans on education, curricula, its modes of delivery and acquisition, etc. should not separate intellectual dimensions from the morality domain.

The methods and means used in training and instruction in the Pythagorean School had a moral dimension. Pythagoras himself used sages' maxims to arouse both thinking and contemplation. He used music to instil a sense of harmony and purification of passions. He used mathematics to prepare pupils for intellectual abstraction and transcendence. Mathematics was also taken as a prerequisite for grasping the order and structure of the universe (Kenny, 2004, p. 9). Practices of purification and sacrificial rituals were part of the educational curriculum – all meant for the purification of the soul to merit living in the transcendental realm of gods.

The Pythagorean Community lived by combining study with a formative way of life to inculcate knowledge, morality, and discipline. As hinted above, they studied Mathematics and Music for intellectual and moral formation. Their way of life was formative as they lived by sharing property in common, leading ascetical life and having a formative course of life. Their ascetical practices included abstaining from eating some foods such as meat, poultry, fish, and total abstinence from eating beans (Kenny, 2004, p. 10).

Other practices of ritualistic discipline in the Pythagorean Community included being barefooted when offering sacrifice, not blinking when offering a libation to gods, putting on shoes by starting with the right leg, observance of silence, not breaking bread, etc. (Kenny, 2004, p. 9). The Pythagorean Community had a life course of formation. Entering the

community had some conditions, while the full admission into the school had some stages. Before being admitted to an inner circle, new pupils were not allowed to attend the teachings of Pythagoras and could not see him face to face. They spent some years in an outer circle undergoing scrutiny and formative probation while separated from Pythagoras by using a curtain (Williams, 2007, p. 145).

Among other important Pythagorean doctrines was the transmigration of the souls termed in Greek as *metempsychosis* (Kenny, 2004, p. 229). This was a belief that human souls outlived human beings after their deaths by migrating and being reborn either in the forms of other human beings or subhuman animals or elevated into gods (Malone, 2009, p. 21). The soul's status after the transmigration depends on the level of purification one reaches before death. Therefore, a higher level of reincarnation requires higher learning and asceticism. Hardworking in learning and keeping ascetical observances and practices confirm the close relationship between intellectual education and moral formation for the liberation/betterment of the soul.

### **1.1.2 Socrates (469 BC–399 BC)**

For Socrates, knowledge and morality are inseparable. In what came to be interpreted as Socratic Intellectualism, Socrates was convinced that no one errs knowingly and that no one errs willingly (Segvic, 2000, p. 2). Error in this context means immoral way of doing and living. For Socrates, all forms of immorality are a product or a concretization of ignorance (Segvic, 2000, p. 3–4).

Such convictions were historically influenced. Socrates grew when Athens, his native city-state, was getting more and more percolated with democracy. This situation created a need for people, especially the youth, to get the proper education and education of being actively involved in the political life and activities of the state. The itinerant teachers of the time known as Sophists took advantage of the need and made it an opportunity for money-making and for spreading their doctrine. They thus instructed and trained the youth by giving them grammar, rhetoric and eloquence to persuade and win people in politics. For the Sophists, these skills were part of what they conceived as *arête* – a quality of virtuous human excellence in making concrete success in life (Brickhouse, 2004, p. 87–88).

The interest of the Sophists in educating the youth was neither attainment of truth nor formation of the soul. It was all about giving persuasive speaking skills to manipulate the audience for their advantage opportunistically. The Sophist mode of education ended up with the production of immoral lip-service leaders on the one hand, and uncritical docile public, on the other. While the former was trained in and given persuasive skills, the latter was indirectly trained to be uncritically docile and easily persuaded.

One of the Sophists, Protagoras taught that man is the measure of all things (Cooper, 1997, p. 103, 169). With this conviction, truth and morality are denied their objectivity and universality. Truth and morality are put at the mercy and in the wish of individuals and thus made subjective and relative (Sholarin *et al.*, 2015, p. 179). Polus, another Sophist, while training his followers in rhetoric, took skills in it to attain political power, which was the climax of happiness (*eudaimonia*) (Corey, 2002,

p. 74). For him, rhetorical power is not restricted by justice or injustice in exercising power in politics. Therefore, for Polus, education, specifically in rhetoric, is a means to attain power and justify using it in whatever manner as one wishes (Erickson, 2004, p. 4–5).

Thrasymachus, whom some scholars classify as a Sophist, taught rhetoric by infamously maintaining that justice is for the advantage of those in political power and that might is power. Relating this doctrine with our topic, which investigates the relationship between intellectual education and morality, we infer that for Thrasymachus education is a means to attain power, which ultimately makes one define and take advantage of justice (Corey, 2002, p. 78–79).

For Socrates, the education given by the Sophists was inadequate and immoral. Thus, he disqualified the Sophists as ignorant and kept their pupils in ignorance. For him, this ignorance was a state of immorality as well. He advocated a deeper form of education focused on the soul's inner life and quality (McLean *et al.*, 1997, p. 96). With this education approach, one discovers his/her ignorance and thus redresses it. On such an understanding of education as first and foremost meant for self-knowledge, Socrates developed a conviction that “an unexamined life is not worth living” (Cooper, 1997, p. 33).

Therefore, according to Socrates, each aspect of what societies consider as integral education should have a morality dimension. This is based on the very essence of education, on its proper mode of transmitting it to the learners, and on its mode of using it to solve socio-political and economic problems of humanity.

### **1.1.3 Plato (427 BC–348 BC)**

Plato took education as formative and transformative for the good of the learner in particular and the state in general (Sanni, 2019, p. 67). He took it to be formative because its components impact the learner and the state. Educational curricula, according to him, should holistically ameliorate the soul of the learner as concretized in his/her personality, thinking, attitudes, mindset, hierarchy of values, etc. (Sanni, 2019, p. 70–72).

Plato used the Allegory of the Cave to depict the process, the aim and finality of education (Cooper, 1997, p. 1132) and the Allegory of the Divided Line (Cooper, 1997, p. 1130). Both allegories portray education as a transformative process through which an individual and society are ultimately liberated from the chains of ignorance and immorality (Sanga, 2018, p. 87).

In the Allegory of the Cave, features of the cave are slaves, chains, darkness, and shadows stand for human predicaments of ignorance and lack of virtue. A laborious work of unchaining the enslaved people and dragging them out of the cave depicts a professional liberation of ignorant and non-virtuous humanity enslaved by ignorance and immorality (Sanga, 2018, p. 87). The act of returning to the cave done by those illuminated by the Idea of the Good is a pictorial expression of the duty of the elite class and professionals to use their expertise and positions to serve and instill knowledge and morals to the masses through action and exemplary life.

In the Allegory of the Divided Line, pictorially, the line shows step-by-step ascending processes of acquiring knowledge and growth in virtue (Cooper, 1997, p. 1130). The processes begin with the lowest level *eikasia*, a level of imagination shadows



and reflections in water (Cooper, 1997, p. 1130). Epistemologically speaking, this is rudimentary perception based on conjecture and sense perception. From the moral point of view, moral principles are taken at their face values. At this level, both knowledge and morality are sought, exposed and lived with a mythical stance.

The second stage on the ascending ladder of cognition is the level of *pistis*. This is the level of uncritical belief and embracing of all that experience offers (Brumbaugh, 1981, p. 143). From the epistemological point of view, *pistis* is the level of common sense cognition that is not scientifically justified and not backed by any known principles. From the morality point of view, *pistis* is a level of uncritical assimilation of moral practices based on common practices, the moral fabrics of which are not proved.

After the *pistis* level, there comes the *dianoia* level. This is a stage of thinking and understanding based on untested hypotheses (Cooper, 1997, p. 1130). Unlike the level of *pistis*, the level of *dianoia* involves thinking, understanding and using hypotheses though unproved yet. It is a level with both educational and moral dimensions. From an educational or epistemological point of view, it is a level of attaining truth such as mathematical truth backed by some hypotheses and attained through a rigorous involvement of the intellect. From a moral point of view, *dianoia* is a level of understanding and embracing moral practices while being backed by some untested hypotheses.

The final and highest level of cognition is the level of *noesis*. Epistemologically speaking, this is the level of attaining the

intelligible world as opposed to the world of senses. At the level of *noesis*, one reaches the universal principles of all knowledge and morality. From the moral point of view, at this level, one grasps the idea of the Good – the climax of knowledge and morality.

The proportionality of the line segments of the Divided Line depicts the proportionality of the levels of knowledge and morality and portrays the proportionality between knowledge and morality in professionalism. The latter proportion arouses some challenging philosophical questions to the learned and the professionals of our time. For instance, is it logically tenable that being knowledgeable is *ipso facto* being morally upright in being and in doing? In other words, is it logically defensible that advancements in intellectual knowledge go hand in hand with advancements in moral maturity?

We experience immoral acts inspired by advanced or sophisticated knowledge in the contemporary world. Examples of such acts, immoral but professionally, include fraud in accounting, cyber crimes backed by advanced knowledge in Information Technology, masterminded terrorism backed by advanced knowledge, etc. How do we reconcile such discrepancies of being intellectually educated while such education is a cause, a condition or an occasion of immoral acts? This gives us a base to argue that a mere intellectual education without proportional moral formation is likely to result in professional but immoral acts.

For Plato, authentic education is a comprehensive and holistic exercise. It covers a greater part of one's life, touching different aspects and dimensions of human life, and focuses on all

aspects of the human essence. In its holistic approach, both the soul and the body have rightful shares of educative formation. Again, to make holistically mature citizens well-balanced in soul dimensions, the rational spirited, and appetitive parts should be educated and formed accordingly (Cooper, 1997, p. 1130).

Plato's doctrine on the formative education of the philosopher-king and guardians as leaders and informed custodians of the state inspires modern policy makers and implementers. Civil leadership and professional civil service need intellectual amassing of knowledge and skills. They also require a moral formation in virtues such as justice, accountability, truthfulness, honesty, altruistic selflessness, etc.

#### **1.1.4 Aristotle (384–322 BC)**

We advance our discussion on Aristotle's thought on education and its relation with moral formation basing on his conviction that: "*All men by nature desire to know*" (Barnes, 1984, p. 3343) and that "*Every art and every inquiry ... every act and purpose ... aims at some good*" (Barnes, 1984, p. 3718). On Aristotelian tone, we aim to establish the relationship between the natural desire to know on one hand, and some good as an ultimate goal of knowing or acquiring education. In this discussion, we take education as encompassing scientific intellectual knowledge based on some principles (Barnes, 1984, p. 699). Through inquiry, intellectual education aims good that all human beings desire (Barnes, 1984, p. 3718). Again, the attainment of such education as something good is prompted by the human nature. This gives us a base to maintain that education and the good are related by nature.

But is the ‘good’ referred to by Aristotle necessarily a moral good? In other words, does the good desired for by nature necessarily bear a moral dimension? Responses to, or a discussion on, these queries, will help us show the relationship between intellectual education and moral formation.

Seeking a response to these queries, we recourse to Aristotle’s doctrine on the teleology of being and acting. The *telos* that is the end-in-view of human acting is to attain some good. The overall *telos* for human existence and acting is attaining *eudaimonia*, the *life worth living* interpreted as happiness (Kakkori, 2007, p. 18). This life is good, essentially characterized by virtue (Ladikos, 2010, p. 75). Education in its integral dimensions is one of the means of inculcating virtue and thus making people know and actualize happiness as *life worth living* (Ladikos, 2010, p. 75). With this analysis, education and virtuous life as its purpose are essentially linked. Society cannot realize the virtuous life worth living without education. Education does not merit the name if its purpose is not to realize a virtuous life that is morally worth living.

Through education, a human being actualizes what Aristotle terms as *phronesis* which means ‘*practical wisdom*’ (Kakkori, 2007, p. 18). *Phronesis* is the intellectual knowledge of the appropriate and right way of acting virtuously. It is a level of knowledge and practicality of using prudence to judge and act so that morality upright is achieved. It is the wisdom of picking the morally right words of speaking, the morally right manner of acting, the morally right opportunity and occasion of pursuing what is morally good.

For Aristotle, therefore, education is related with morality by not ending just at the levels of *episteme* as a theoretical acquisition of knowledge. Nor does it end with *techne* as art of production. *Episteme* is education at the level of theoretical intellectual grasping of what is morally good. *Techne* is the practical use of knowledge to produce something, whereas *phronesis* involves prudence of putting knowledge and experience into practice to reach what is morally good (Kakkori, 2007, p. 18). *Phronesis* involves learning through an experience of practical and concrete situations (Kakkori, 2007, p. 19). With a dimension of experience *phronesis* encompasses an aspect of lived-time and age (Kakkori, 2007, p. 19).

Aristotle disqualifies education as vulgar if it lacks a moral formative dimension. In relation to this position, we read from his work:

*Any occupation, art, or science, which makes the freeman's body, soul or mindless fit for the practice or exercise of virtue is vulgar* (Barnes, 1984, p. 4550).

As the quotation stands, the vulgarity of education is in the lack of a morality dimension and its effect of incapacitating a person from practicing virtue. In this line of thought, education without morality is not only deficient but also morality harmful. He describes such harm as morally deforming and degrading (Barnes, 1984, p. 4550). This makes us have a base to affirm that educational curricula at all levels should be mainstreamed with moral education in the contemporary digital world with gigantic advancements in science and technology. This approach is good for the learners in particular and for society in general.

Aristotle's doctrines on causality and the act-and-potency structure of finite beings help us expound the reason and how to mainstream moral formation into educational curricula. He understood finite beings, human beings included as being in a metaphysical structure of act and potency, the dynamism of which requires causality. Our interest in relation to these doctrines is to show that the whole exercise of education in the thinking of Aristotle is a transformation of learners from one state of knowledge to another. This is a metaphysical motion of becoming built on the act-and-potency structure. It is a motion that is realizable through the active agency of an efficient cause that teleologically acts for a purpose as a final cause.

In the context of this paper, we focus our interest on Aristotle's theories of efficient causality and final causality. We focus our discussion on the named theories to show how educators and the total education framework can be understood as efficient causes of a virtuous and educated society. On the same tone, we aim at showing how the integration of knowledge and morality is a final cause of education. We are also interested in analyzing learners' act-and-potency structure as a necessary structure for the learners to receive and assimilate intellectual and moral education combined as a unity.

By way of description, Aristotle understands a cause as that which has a positive contribution to another being (Bittle, 1939, p. 333). In relation to the theme of this paper, our interest is to investigate which contributes positively to intellectual education and to the moral formation of learners, who are both well-knowledgeable and strongly virtuous in being and doing.

Aristotle's theory of causality is closely related to his other theory of the metaphysical framework of mobility in the sense of change of beings from one state of being to another. These two doctrines combine his understanding of causality behind such motion on one hand, and the act-and-potency metaphysical structure, which makes such motion possible on the other. In this context, we take education as a type of motion both of the deposit of knowledge from one point to another, and a motion of a learner from a state of ignorance to being knowledgeable. First, such motion is possible because learners have the potency of undergoing change and receiving perfection. Secondly, the motion is possible because there are causes to effect it.

According to Aristotle, all human beings, of whom learners make a part, by nature, desire to acquire knowledge (Barnes, 1984, p. 3343). The same natural desire aims at a good finality. As per principle of causality, a good effect or a good finality presupposes a good cause or a combination of good causes. In this line of thought, knowledge imbued with morality as a good finality of education presupposes a good framework characterized by knowledge and morality. Such a framework encompasses knowledgeable and virtuous educators, morally upright curricula, integral educational policies and regulations, etc.

An efficient cause is understood as a productive contribution to produce. In the context of this paper, such productive contribution to the knowledge and morality which learners acquire is given by whomever or by whatever has a positive contribution to the educative and moral shaping of the learners. Efficient causes, in this context, include educators, education policy makers, parents and guardians, the curricula and

curricular developers, educational financiers, etc. All these causes succeed to effect a product that is both intellectually and morally good if they themselves are good. Morally upright educators using morally sound curricula, guided and regulated by morally upright policies and regulations will result in morally upright learners whose education is imbued with moral values.

Such intellectual education, which goes hand in hand with the moral formation of the learners as hinted upon above, is possible with the assumption that learners are intrinsical with the potency to acquire such formative education. Potency as a component of a metaphysical structure of finite beings is the capacity to undergo change, receive perfection, or become in the sense of moving from one state of being to another (Collins, 1990, p. 64). Notwithstanding, the differences among learners and the uniqueness of each learner, each of them can receive formative education, each at their level depending on their potentialities and disposition (Collins, 1990, p. 74–76). Together with the intellectual and moral dispositions of the learners, potentialities should consider education to effect the desired good end.

## **1.2 Analysis of Combining Intellectual Formation and Moral Formation**

In this section, we carry out a critical analysis as regards the nature of the relationship between the two. We want to see whether the relationship is necessary or contingent; whether the relationship is of a cause and effect or of a condition and a consequent. We shall also see whether the relationship between the two is linear, circular, or spiral.



### **1.2.1 Nature of the relationship between intellectual formation and moral formation**

As exposed above, ancient Greek Philosophers did not separate intellectual formation from moral formation of learners. In our thinking, the two dimensions of human formation have a variety of relationships. In this analysis, we take the two to have a causal relationship, a conditional relationship, or an occasional one.

First, they have a causal relationship in that intellectual formation aims at producing virtuous individuals (Ladikos, 2010, p. 78). On such grounds, for Aristotle, an education framework that hampers a moral growth of an individual is vulgar in the sense of being harmful both to the individual and to the society at large (Barnes, 1984, p. 4550). In this relationship, imparting intellectual knowledge is an efficient causative mechanism for the individuals to acquire moral excellence. In the meantime, moral excellence is taken as a final causative framework as an end in view for intellectual formation.

But does it necessarily follow that a limited capacity for intellectual formation implies a limited capacity for an individual to assume moral formation? What if a learned person succumbs to immorality, does such moral decadency wipe away the intellectual excellence he/she had before? Does failure in one necessarily entail failure in the other? Again, is education the only way to moral formation or are there some other routes one can take to acquire morality without being intellectually educated? Socrates in his Socratic intellectualism knowledge and virtue are convertible. He/she who is intellectually excellent is *ipso facto* morally refined (Batista, 2015, p. 152).

This conviction, however, leaves behind a string of researchable issues hinged on whether in reality, and to commonplace people intellectual excellence and moral excellence necessarily coincide.

The queries raised above bring us to the second relationship between intellectual formation and moral formation in education. The second relationship is the possibility of one being a condition for the other rather than being its cause. In this context, we understand a condition as a prerequisite, a requirement for something to happen (Bittle, 1939, p. 337). Some ancient Greek Philosophers proposed scenarios of situations as conditions for the realization of something. For instance, an aptitude for learning and for receiving moral formation was a condition to be admitted to the Pythagorean School (Williams, 2007, p. 337). A basic intellectual well-being was a condition for entering Plato's Academy in which pupils got intellectual and moral formation (Dillon, 2003, p. 96). For Aristotle, a moral disposition of the learner was a condition for assimilating intellectual formation. These examples show that one can be a condition for the other without positively contributing to it.

A condition as taken in the examples given above may not be understood as a mere gateway for admission to the said schools. A condition as alluded to above is a situation or a feature that favours an occurrence of something. In the context of the issues under discussion, all that collectively favour the process of imparting knowledge, acquiring knowledge and growing virtues are termed as conditions for education and morality. Although a condition is necessary for something to happen, it does not qualify to be a cause because it does not positively contribute to

the being of that which happens. In other words, the essence of the effected being does not carry elements of that which favoured its occurrence.

The philosophical masters believed of such schools that pupils could not intellectually grasp the course content without such conditions. They could not also pass profitably through the formative life cycle in the schools and achieve moral excellence without having the said conditions. Pythagoras, for instance, was convinced that his inspiring teachings could have intellectual and moral impact on the learners on condition that the latter were strictly scrutinized for good character, docility and capacity to grasp the training (Williams, 2007, p. 146). For him, such were the conditions which necessarily favoured or permitted intellectual and moral formation in the school.

Another example is Plato, who believed that his mission to Sicily to train and form King Dionysius II, and his court did not bear fruit because such learners did not have prior conditions for such formative training (Kenny, 2006, p. 38). After this failure, when he instituted his Academy at Athens he laid down some prerequisites both for admission and for grasping the training content. Again, Alexander the Great, a student of Aristotle, did not make it to a virtuous political leader but a megalomaniac tyrant, not because Aristotle failed to teach him. Still, he ran short of the conditions for the training into virtue (Kenny, 2006, p. 62).

Taking intellectual aptitude as a condition for moral formation or vice versa leads to Socratic Intellectualism, which makes knowledge and morality synonymous or necessarily co-existent. This does not tally with reality in which there are

cases of well knowledgeable human beings but knowingly and at times willingly lead immoral life. In such cases one can still argue to make a difference between being knowledgeable and being educated. In the thinking of Ancient Greek philosophy, education and formation of whatever kind presuppose intellectual knowledge.

The third relationship between intellectual formation and moral formation can be a relationship of an occasion. In this sense, one is or creates an opportunity for the other to happen. In the Pythagorean School, for instance, the school setting and the curriculum on Mathematical principles was an occasion for a face-to-face encounter with Pythagoras as a morality role model to be emulated by the pupils. In the schools of the ancient Greek philosophy era, pupils were engaged in intellectual discourses that acted as occasions or opportunities for them to develop and deepen moral values.

### **1.2.2 Education: a right to all or a privilege to the naturally privileged?**

The international community, its member states, and some scholars count education as a fundamental human right (Lee, 2013, p. 1). In her study, Sharon E. Lee goes further by taking education as not only a fundamental human right but also “*an indispensable means of realizing other human rights*” (Lee, 2013, p. 1). The term ‘*indispensable*’ is understood as an emphasis and description of the necessity of education to realize other human rights. In this context, other human rights such as right to food, to shelter, to freedom, etc. are realizable on condition that there is an educational framework that ensures people’s education in general and particularly the

mainstreaming of the human rights content into the education curricula.<sup>2</sup>

Conceiving and defining education as a fundamental human right is an issue of the contemporary world. Although education featured well in the socio-political framework of ancient Greece, it was not taken as a human right. However, our interest here is to see how the notion of education and its relation with the other aspects of human life as understood by the ancient Greek philosophers can help shed light to, and give shape to the positioning of education in the whole spectrum of human life in the contemporary world.

As exposed earlier, Pythagoras and Plato had some entry conditions to qualify for their schools. Can one lay down entry qualifications to education and still claim it a right for all? Their schools were not building on some other previous schools for the named philosophers. They were building either on the natural talents or on the moral fineness of the candidates resulting from their upbringing background. Pythagoras, for instance, banked on good character, docility, and intellectual aptitude to learn as conditions to enter his school (Williams, 2007, p. 145). Plato laid down a condition of prior knowledge of Geometry before admission to the Academy (Dillon, 2003, p. 96). Examples from the two schools show us that admission to such schools was on merits rather than wholesale.

Such prerequisites for candidacy were used to screen the qualifying candidates and leave out those who did not qualify. If intellectual formation in such schools led pupils to virtuous

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<sup>2</sup> Education should be taken as a right rather than a privilege. Education curricula should contain knowledge and understanding of human rights as a human right.

excellence, does it mean the non-qualifying ones naturally went without intellectual and moral formation? Was the screening method not discriminatory if judged in the eyes and standards of the contemporary world in which the international community takes education to be all-inclusive?

In this analysis, we deem it an overstatement to judge Pythagoras and Plato as discriminatory for laying standards and conditions for recruiting candidates to their schools. In our time, standards and qualifications as conditions for entry to educational institutions of all levels are both commonplace and a gauge for educational quality assurance. There cannot be quality of admission to an educational institution without some basic presuppositions and assumptions regarding candidates. Plato, for instance, had some curricula components for all and some specific curricula components for specific candidates meant for specific roles in the city-state though all based on natural merits. Those meant to be guardians had to have natural merits of being spirited, strong, speedy, and philosophic (Cooper, 1997, p. 1015). Laying down such conditions for a specific candidacy did not aim to eliminate others for its own sake. It was meant for seeking suitable candidates for a specific career all meant for the state's common good.

In the contemporary world, The International Community spoke of its objective of having universal primary education by 2015 (United Nations [UN], 2015, p. 4, 24–27). The phrase, '*universal education*', such objective did not advocate haphazard admission. It rather spoke of a qualified universal education with some normative assumptions, such as entry age framework for the candidates, educational and professional competency levels of teachers, defined teacher-pupil ratios,

defined and measurable learning outcomes, adequacy of learning space and facilities, etc.<sup>3</sup> Putting in place such conditions is to be taken positively as for quality enhancement rather than taking it negatively as discriminatory.

Standards and conditions for learning as laid down by Pythagoras and Plato were meant to put each candidate in his/her rightful place as per his/her natural merits. Both Pythagoras and Plato put people into social strata based on some standards. The standard for social stratification, according to Pythagoras, was what one lived for; that is, the purpose of being. For him, at the bottom of the social ladder are material-gain seekers, second are fame seekers and on top are wisdom seekers (Guthrie, 1985, p. 164). It is like each person defined his/her social strata without being discriminated against by anyone.

Plato, on the other hand, had masses as material producers at the bottom led by the virtue of temperance, and then next was guardians led by the virtue of courage and on top was philosophers led by the virtue of wisdom (Cantu, 2010, p. 26). Although Plato's educational curriculum was equally open to all still each underwent a training which suited best his/her natural merit. Education was not given for its own sake. It prepared each individual to fit best into his/her social stratum

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<sup>3</sup> As per study conducted by Omari, I. M, Mbise, A. S, Mahenge, S. T, Malekela, G. A & Besha, M. P (1983) on *Universal Primary Education in Tanzania*, International Development Research Centre – Canada, Universal Primary Education entry age and duration were regulated different from country to country. The entry age and duration in brackets were 7 (7) years in Tanzania and Zambia; 6 (6) years in Burundi and Comoro; 6 (7) years in Botswana, Kenya and Lesotho; 7 (6) years in Somalia and Ethiopia. This variety shows that universal free education is subjected to some regulations to make it effective.

and thus enabled him/her to render service according to his/her talents and according the education received as per natural disposition (Barrow, 2010, p. 113).

### **1.3 Morality and Religiousness vis-à-vis Intellectuality**

The ancient Greek philosophers, especially Pythagoras and his school, Socrates and Plato treated morality while imbuing it with religious stances. These philosophers did not draw a sharp line between the religious and virtuous way of life. For instance, it was on such grounds that Pythagoras and his school, for the reasons of *metempsychosis*, advocated and practiced ascetical way of life such as abstinence from eating meat, fish, beans, etc. In the same school, intellectual learning was accompanied by religious rituals aimed at purifying the soul (Guthrie, 1985, p. 198).

A critical analysis of such dietetic discipline and religious purity concretized through prayer, contemplative silence, abstinence from illicit sexual intercourse, etc., provoke some questions. Were all these backed by any rational or scientific knowledge, or were mere syncretism and superstition? What is the relationship between such abstinences and knowledge?

While it is easy in the context of ancient Greek philosophy to relate morality and religion as indispensable conditions for purifying the soul, it is not easy to relate the two with the intellectual well-being of the one practising them. However, there was a crosscutting conviction among the ancient Greek Philosophers that the soul is imprisoned or entombed in the body (Guthrie, 1985, p. 311). One of the effects of this entombment was the loss of knowledge that the soul had before (Klein, 1979, p. 111).



One of the ways and means to purify and free the soul from the said predicament was subjecting the body to some ascetical disciplinary measures. One of the outcomes and purposes of purifying and free the soul from the body was a recovery, a revival, a recollection, or a reminiscence of knowledge – which the soul had before being entombed in the body. Here, Plato's doctrine of *anamnesis*, which understands knowledge as a recollection, helps to show the link between ascetical-religious practices and intellectual well-being of a learner. For Plato, religious rituals and festivals also relieve humanity from the labours of ignorance and immorality resulting from fallen nature. In relation to this contention, Plato, in his book of *Laws* (*Laws II*, 653c-d), tells us:

*Education, then, is a matter of correctly disciplined feelings of pleasure and pain. But in a man's life, the effect wears off, and in many respects, it is lost altogether. The gods, however, took pity on the human race, born to suffer as it was, and gave it relief in the form of religious festivals to serve as periods of rest from its labour* (Cooper, 1997, p. 1344).

With reference to the quotation in the religious festivals, the human souls entombed in the bodies had a chance of relief by encountering with gods – an encounter, which among others, revived and restored the lost knowledge and morality. This again shows how religious rituals are related to knowledge (Cooper, 1997, p. 1344).

We further analyse the relationship between ascetical-religious practices on one hand and intellectual well-being on the other to see whether such relationship is linear, circular or spiral. If the ascetical-religious practices effect knowledge recollected by *anamnesis* as the end of the process, then the relationship is

linear. If the effected knowledge helps the learner practice profitably some ascetical-religious practices that again produce the same knowledge, then the process is viciously. If ascetical-religious practices make one reminisce knowledge, which makes the learner climb the ladder of being better off in ascetic practices, which makes the learner ascend in knowledge by recollecting knowledge of a higher level, the relationship between the two is spiral.

In our analysis, we take Plato's theory of knowledge ascending in a spiral manner. His allegory of the cave has a feature of '*returning to the cave*' (Cooper, 1997, p. 1137). After being illuminated and acquired true knowledge of the intelligible elements, the learned spirally return to the cave to free prisoners of ignorance and immorality in the sense of sharing their labours. This exercise has a spiral effect on the learned ones as it makes them better off by putting into practice their knowledge and morality by helping others. In the light of Plato, it is our interpretation that repetition of moral acts by habitually *returning into the cave* makes one more knowledgeable and more advanced in morality (Cooper, 1997, p. 1137, 1139).

#### **1.4 Separation of Intellectual Formation and Moral Formation**

As seen above, for the ancient Greek philosophers, the two modes of human education and formation are to be done together for the holistic excellence of the individuals and the well-being of the society at large. But does the same conviction feature into the educational frameworks and professional training agenda of the contemporary world societies? The world of our time is currently battling with the relativism of moral principles and practices. We experience the growth of atheism

and irreligiousness. In the guise of advancements in science and technology the material dimension of reality either annihilates or overshadows the humanity's spiritual and transcendental aspects.

In this part of the paper, in the light of ancient Greek philosophy, we analyze the evils that humanity is suffering or is likely to succumb to in case intellectual formation and moral formation divorce each other.

As expounded earlier, as far as Socrates and Plato are concerned, one cannot attain virtue without intellectual knowledge and vice versa (Batista, 2015, p. 155). However, we experience some educational curricula devoid of moral fabrics. There are cases of curricula that lack a moral dimension and are also contrary to morality. This is hinted upon by Aristotle when he speaks of vulgar knowledge, which leaves a learner morally and intellectually wounded (Banes, 1984, p. 4550).

The contemporary world has some characteristics which deliberately or coincidentally harbour a separation of knowledge and morals. It advocates a democratic way of living and doing, which accommodates ideologies that advocate human rights, freedom of different faces and natures. It is a world with advancements in science and technology, information culture, globalization, etc. In this atmosphere, education without incorporating morals results in well-trained and knowledgeable professionals without conscience and a sense of transcendence. Such professionals glorify legalism at the expense of morality, advocate activism devoid of objectivity, stand for moral relativism, for materialism, succumb to corruption in their workplaces, etc.

Intellectual advancement without morality produces experts who are likely to use their knowledge and professional positions to sacrifice moral values. Examples include experts in finance and accounting who are likely to misuse their well-gotten knowledge for embezzlement and corruption of public funds through fraudulent reports, etc. (Awolowo *et al.* 2018, p. 958–959). Other examples include lawyers who are intellectually and professionally smart but without conscience. These are likely to stand for justice exclusively on legal lines at the expense of truth, wisdom, and the common good (McMorrow, 2010, p. 294). The health and medical professionals with expertise ultimately meant for the promotion of human life may use the same expertise to jeopardize life through abortions, mercy killing, etc., in the guise of the patients' right of autonomy and self-determination defended by legalism devoid of morality (Patil, 2013, p. 7–8).

Conversely, inculcating religious doctrines and moral principles without allowing ample rational space for intellectually digesting what one believes in and stands for leads people into religious and ideological fundamentalism, fanaticism and irrational activism, irrational religiosity, superstition and syncretism. Such uncritical behaviours put communities and society into insecurity, in wars, anxiety, fear of terrorism, etc. (Yilmaz, 2006, p. 4).

## **2.0 Conclusion and Recommendations**

Our observation is that ancient Greek philosophers conceived a human being as a multidimensional rational being. This rationality, among others, bears dimensions of being intellectual and being moral. A human being concretizes and grows in

rationality by being properly formed both in his/her intellectual and moral dimensions. The two dimensions complement and concretize each other, thus making a human being integrally mature and balanced. In matters of integral education, therefore, learners are said to achieve appropriate intellectual growth if they associate it with the cultivation of, and development in, moral values.

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