Abstract

While the reality of human existence may appear to be an unfair and unreasonable arena, we humans are nevertheless called on to live fairly, justly, and morally. If a just and moral action and life includes elements of self-restraint, of waiving of what would seem to be in one’s interests, a question may very reasonably be asked regarding the motivation (not in terms of the general social realm, i.e. fear of social punishment or interest in gaining a social advantage) for acting and living justly and morally in such an unfair and unreasonable reality. From a moral education point of view, it may seem that, as teachers and parents, we have every reason, and even a duty and responsibility, to advise our students and children (face-to-face and behind closed doors – far from the general social realm) that, if they have an option to increase their relative advantage without risk to themselves or of being caught (let alone risking themselves for a big moral idea), they should do so without hesitation. Would you advise your children, students or yourself otherwise? If so, why? After showing the limitations of other recent answers to the above question, I suggest an alternative answer based on a reading of Plato’s *Republic*. In my reading I focus on Plato's idea of the soul and suggest an interpretation of the allegory of the cave.