

Was Socrates wise to stay in Athens to die? Examine firstly the context of the word wise , Socrates wasn't wise in the sense of preserving his own life as he stayed to die. He was encouraged and given the chance to escape by his friend Crito, but Socrates did not want to escape . Why?

Socrates was a wise man. He believed in absolutes, and pursued the knowledge of man's source of goodness and virtue. He believed that the repayment of evil with evil was wrong. In short, Socrates was a very moral person. He stayed in Athens because he said that he had lived by the laws of the country for all his life. He had enjoyed the privileges of a civilized society, and that he had been treated as any other citizen would have come to expect. Now that the laws didn't suit him, was it fit for him to ignore them? Crito, in vain, tries to dissuade him.

Socrates compares the laws of the state to a father/mentor figure:

The state says that all of the laws and statutes have protected him and raised him. His parents were married by the law, and the same saw to it that he was educated. Now the state says "Is it alright for you, who thinks so much of virtue, to destroy us?"

Socrates is wise to see that he would be contradicting not only himself, but he would

betray the examples he was trying to set to his followers.

The impact of Socrate's teachings on the world were greatly increased by his decision. Socrates had no education, therefore none of his own teachings were ever written. His followers have carried on his messages and lessons into later times. Would Socrate's teachings really have been carried on at all if he hadn't followed through?

The impact of his teachings would have been greatly lessened had he escaped. All the lessons of "virtue" and "courage" would have been taught by a hypocritical man. Socrates was brave enough to face that sentence without fear

or cowardice; and he is remembered as one who died for what they believed in.

It could be safe to call Socrates a martyr: He laid down his life for what he considered

to be right, selflessly.

Socrates was morally obligated to stay in Athens to die. The choice was not the selfish one, but the honorable one. He didn't have to stay, as Crito would have arranged escape, but he declined. Socrates believed firmly in "practicing what you preach" as demonstrated by his decision. This shows the moral fiber of which he is made.

He explains people should set the highest value "not on living, but living well."

This means abiding by a set of values and morals which will lead to a virtuous, honest and "good" life. This also involves following the laws of the state, and to break the law would be repaying evil with evil. This notion is absolutely unacceptable

to Socrates.

Socrates was morally obligated by the "laws" , a personified figure of justice,

to stay in Athens. It says that he was given a share of all the good things the city

had to offer; and if he didn't like it, he had many years to move away. It says that

Socrates was pleased so much with living in Athens he started a family.

The laws "say" to Socrates that even if he does run to Thebes or Megara, he will be recognized as one who subverts the law. Also if he ran to Thessaly, an ungoverned town, he would do nothing but feast. And how could a man like Socrates enjoy life without virtue, institutions and courage? Finally, they say to him to come clean before justice, not his friends. This would make judgement in the next life easier on him(the laws of Hades).

There are, in today's society, certain circumstances which a citizen is justified

in disobeying the law. The laws of today recognize certain offences may be justified with certain legal defences. The defences of duress and self-defence are valid today, with the exception of severe crimes such as murder.

It must be recognized that also, in situations like emergencies or life-or-death situations, a citizen may ignore laws applicable to the situation. Take for example; the person whose father is having a heart attack, or a pregnant woman going into labor. These people probably wouldn't obey the traffic laws while rushing to the hospital. Is this justification to break the law? Many people would say that while it is morally and legally wrong to break any laws; these situations would be acceptable. Personal judgement would prevail over the situation at hand.