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Philosophy
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The Ring of Gyges

If you had the ring of gyges, how would you behave? Do you think there is any reason to be moral, even with the ring? Why or why not?

Similar to JR Tolkein's "ring to rule all rings" in the trilogy Lord of the Rings, the ring of Gyges grants the wearer invisibility and seeming non-existence to those around him or her. If I had the ring of Gyges, there are many things I would consider doing. Helping myself to food at buffets, sitting in on shows or visiting theme parks I would never be able to afford otherwise, watching all the newest movies all day and night at theatres in town, pass gas without regard to person or place, and perhaps even walk around naked, just to experience a nudist's life for a little while. Most of the things I would imagine doing with the ring involve breaking laws or rules of society. However, with the ring, before I actually did any of those things, I would have to consider if I could live with knowing what I had done. Rude people share their flatulence loudly in public and various people have been known to slip into a theatre or two during slow times. Stealing food and taking money from the artists or performers working from their craft is debatably less socially accepted.

The ring does grant invisibility but it does not take away the morals already ingrained in me. That is the best reason, in my opinion, to be moral with the ring. In Edgar Allan Poe's A Tale Tell Heart, the man may have gotten away with murder, but it was his own conscience that drove him to turn himself in in the end. Not everyone would, but I would like to think though I wouldn't ever want to find myself in such a situation, I would seek contrition. The combined indoctrination of my parents and faith provide a code of conduct for my life along with punitive results for acting outside of the code. Were I to live all my life and never be found out, I still believe that after death, I would still have to answer to God for what I did while alive.

When a man is asked if he is a cheater, it depends on his company as to whether or not he proclaims to be. Granted, not all men, or women for that matter, lie in the face of their interrogator. Around certain groups of people, however, an individual allows certain parts of themselves to show. Glaucon states that people are "too weak to do injustice with impunity" and therefore believes that if given the opportunity to do so without suffering consequences injustice would be done. A person's reputation, the fear of retaliation,