

Socratic Circle: Code of Hammurabi

1. In his eponymous code of law, King Hammurabi of Babylon said, “For any physician who heals someone’s eye, if the patient is an *aristocrat*, then they must pay the physician 10 shekels of silver, but if the patient is a *commoner*, then they must pay the physician 5 shekels of silver. For any physician who heals a broken bone, if the patient is an *aristocrat*, then they must pay the physician 5 shekels of silver, but if the patient is a *commoner*, then they must pay the physician 3 shekels of silver.” Imagine that a rich person and a poor person both get the very same medical treatment from the very same medical doctor. According to Hammurabi, the rich person should pay more than the poor person for the same medical treatment. In your opinion, is that fair? *Why* or why *not*? Explain.

2. As a word for fairness, the word “equity” is a word for *equality-based* fairness. In your opinion, is equality necessary for fairness? Why or why not? Explain.