

PLATO

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ON THE DEATH OF SOCRATES

READ IN GREEK AND ENGLISH BY PROFESSOR MOSES HADAS



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PLATO ON THE DEATH OF SOCRATES

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

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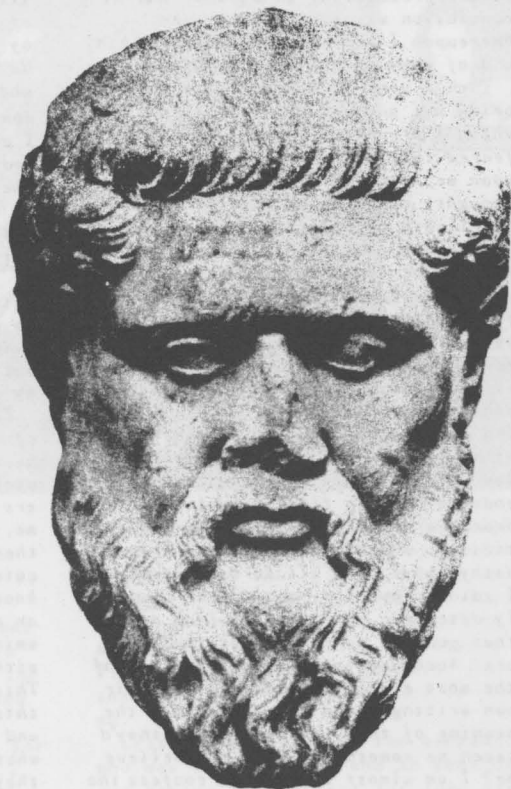
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PLATO

The Death of Socrates

Introduction, with readings
from the *APOLOGY*
and the *PHAEDO*, in Greek
and in English Translation

BY MOSES HADAS



PLATO

If there is one Greek whose name has become a household word, if there is one pagan who has achieved something approaching sainthood in the European tradition, that man is Socrates. Socrates himself wrote not a line, and we know of him only that he was a strikingly ugly man, trained as a stone carver, who went about Athens asking questions and provoking discussions chiefly on ethical problems; that he was followed and admired by a group composed for the most part of upperclass youths; that he might be spoken of as a Sophist but that he differed from the Sophists obviously in that he took no regular pupils and received no pay; that he believed in his own mission to question people, chiefly to the end of convincing them that an unexamined life is not worth living; that he sometimes went into a sort of trance while pondering a thought; and that in 399 B.C., at the age of 70, he was tried and condemned to death on the charge of disbelieving in the gods of the state and persuading others to his belief.

For this picture our principal source is Plato, who makes Socrates the central figure in his greatest *Dialogues*; and for the ordinary reader the most memorable thing in Plato is the personality of Socrates. It is the sublimity of Socrates rather than logic that gives wings to the lofty spiritual teachings of the *Dialogues*. All of Plato's earlier pieces contribute to the characterization of Socrates, but the most convincing picture of the man emerges from

the utterances attributed to him at the close of his life-- his defense at his trial (miscalled *Apology* in English; nothing could be less apologetic), and his conversation with his friends on the last day of his life, as reported in the *Phaedo*.

In the *Apology* Socrates presents, without coyness or swagger or unctiousness, his own concept of his mission to sting men, like a gadfly, to self-examination and to serve as a midwife to their travail with ideas. Here is the opening:

Ὁ τι μὲν ἡμεῖς, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, πεπόνθατε ὑπὸ τῶν ἐμῶν κατηγορῶν, οὐκ οἶσα· ἐγὼ δ' οὐκ καὶ αὐτὸς ὑπ' αὐτῶν, ὀλίγου ἑμαντοῦ ἐπὶ λαθῶν· οὕτω πιθανῶς ἔλεγον. καὶ τοὶ ἀληθῆς γε, ὡς ἔπος εἰπέτε, οὐδὲν εἰρήκασι. μάλιστα δὲ αὐτῶν ἐν ἰθανύμασι τῶν πολλῶν ὧν ἐφύεσαντο, τοῦτο ἐν ᾧ ἔλεγον ὡς χρῆν ἡμᾶς εἰλαβεῖσθαι, μὴ ὑπ' ἐμοῦ ἰσαπατηθῆτε, ὡς δεινοῦ ὄντος λέγειν. τὸ γὰρ μὴ αἰσχυνοθῆναι, ὅτι αὐτῶν ὑπ' ἐμοῦ ἐξέλεγχθησονται ἔργα, ἐπειδὴν μὴδ' ὅπως οἰοῦν φαινῶμαι δεινός λέγειν, τοῦτο μοι ἔδοξεν αὐτῶν ἀνασχυντότατον εἶναι, εἰ μὴ ἄρα δεινὸν καλοῦσιν οὗτοι λέγειν τὸν τάληθῆ λέγοντα· εἰ μὲν γὰρ τοῦτο λέγουσιν, ἰμολογοῦσιν ἂν ἐγὼ γε οὐ κατὰ τοῦτους εἶναι ῥήτωρ· οὗτοι μὲν οὖν, ὡς περ ἐγὼ λέγω, ἢ τι ἢ οὐδὲν ἀληθῆς εἰρήκασι· ἡμεῖς δ' ἐμοῦ ἀκούσατε πᾶσαν τὴν ἀλήθειαν. οὐ μὲντοι μὴ Δί', ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, κεκαλλιπήμενοι γε λόγους, ὡς περ οἱ τούτων, ῥήμασι τε καὶ ὀνόμασι, οὐδὲ κεκοσμημένους, ἀλλ' ἀκούσατε εἰς τὴν λεγόμενα τοῖς ἐπιτιχοῦσιν ὀνόμασι· πιστεύω γὰρ δίκαια εἶναι ἃ λέγω, καὶ μηδεὶς ἡμῶν προσδοκᾶσθαι ἄλλως· οὐδὲ γὰρ ἂν δήπου πρόποι, ὦ ἄνδρες, τῆδε τῆς ἡλικίας ὡς περ μερακίῳ πλάττοντι λόγους εἰς ἡμᾶς εἰσέναι. καὶ μὲντοι καὶ πάντῃ, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, τοῦτο ἡμῶν εἶομαι καὶ παρῆμαί· ἐὰν διὰ τῶν αὐτῶν λόγων ἀκούσῃτε μου ἀπολογουμένου, εἰ ὡς περ εἶπω λέγειν καὶ ἐν ἀγορᾷ ἐπὶ τῶν τραπέζων, ἵνα ἡμῶν πολλοὶ ἀκηκῶσι, καὶ ἄλλοι, μήτε θαυμάζωσιν μήτε θορυβῶσιν τοῦτου ἔνεκα. ἔχει γὰρ οὕτως. νῦν ἐγὼ πρῶτον ἐπὶ δικαστήριον ἀναβέβηκα, ἔτη γεγονὸς πλείω ἰβδόμηκοντα· ἄτεχνός οὖν ἔνεως ἔχω τῆς ἐπιθέδε λέξεως. ὡς περ οὖν

ἂν, εἰ τῷ ὄντι λέγος ἐτίγγανον ὧν, ζυεργινώσκετε δήπου ἂν μοι, εἰ ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ φωνῇ τε καὶ τῷ τρόπῳ ἔλεγον, ἐν ὅσπερ ἐτεθράμην, καὶ δι' καὶ νῦν τοῦτο ἡμῶν δέομαι δίκαιον, ὡς γ' ἐμοὶ δοκᾷ, τὸν μὲν τρόπον τῆς λέξεως εἶναι ἴσως μὲν γὰρ χείρων, ἴσως δὲ βελτίων ἂν εἴη· αὐτὸ δὲ τοῦτο σκοπεῖν καὶ τοῦτο τὸν νοῦν προσέχειν, εἰ δίκαια λέγω ἢ μὴ· δίκαστοῦ μὲν γὰρ αὐτῆ ἀρετῆ, ῥήτορος δὲ τάληθῆ λέγειν.

How you have been affected by my accusers, men of Athens, I cannot tell; but I know that they almost made me forget who I was--so persuasively did they speak; and yet they have hardly uttered a word of truth. But of the many falsehoods told by them, there was one which quite amazed me;--I mean when they said that you should be upon your guard and not allow yourselves to be deceived because I am clever. To say this, when they were certain to be detected as soon as I opened my lips and proved myself to be anything but a clever speaker, did indeed appear to me most shameless--unless by cleverness they mean telling the truth; for if such is their meaning, I admit that I am eloquent. But in how different a way from theirs! Well, as I was saying, they have scarcely spoken the truth at all; but from me you shall hear the whole truth: not, however, delivered after their manner in a set oration duly ornamented with words and phrases. No, by heaven! but I shall use the words and arguments which occur to me at the moment; for I am confident that what I say is just. At my time of life I ought not to be appearing before you, men of Athens, in the character of a juvenile orator--let no one expect it of me. And I must beg of you to grant me a favour:--If I defend myself in my accustomed manner, and you hear me using the words which I have been in the habit of using in the agora, at the tables of the money-changers, or anywhere else, I would ask you not to be surprised, and not to make a disturbance on this account. For I am more than seventy years of age, and appearing now for the first time in a court of law, I am quite a stranger to the language of the place; and therefore I would have you regard me as if I were really a stranger, whom you would excuse if he spoke in his native tongue, and after the fashion of his country:--Am I making an unfair request of you? Never mind the manner, which may or may not be good; but think only of the truth of my words, and give heed to that. That is the function of a judge, as it is the function of an orator to speak the truth.

Socrates next deprecates the prejudice against him by explaining its origin:

Χαιρεφώντα γὰρ ἴστε ποῦ. οὗτος ἐμός τε ἑταῖρος ἦν ἐκ νέου, καὶ ἡμῶν τῷ πλείθει ἑταῖρός τε καὶ ἐνέφυγε τὴν φυγὴν ταύτην καὶ μετ' ἡμῶν κατήλθε. καὶ ἴστε ἢ οἷος ἦν Χαιρεφών, ὡς σφοδρὸς ἐφ' ὅ τι ὀρμήσει. καὶ εἴ ποτε καὶ εἰς Δελφοὺς ἔλθων ἐτόλμησε τοῦτο μαντεύσασθαι· καί, ὅπερ λέγω, μὴ θορυβῆτε, ὦ ἄνδρες· ἤρετο γὰρ εἴ, εἰ τις ἐμοῦ εἴη σοφώτερος. ἀνέειλεν οὖν ἡ Πυθία μηδένα σοφώτερον εἶναι. καὶ τούτων περὶ ὁ ἄσελφος ἡμῖν αὐτοῦ οὕτως μαρτυρήσει, ἐπειδὴ ἐκεῖνος τετελεύτηκεν.

Σκέψασθε τὲ ὧν ἔνεκα ταῦτα λέγω· μέλλω γὰρ ἡμᾶς διδάξαι, ὅθεν μοι ἡ ἐπιβολὴ γέγονε. ταῦτα γὰρ ἐγὼ ἀκούσας ἐνεθυμώμην οὕτως· τί ποτε λέγει ὁ θεός, καὶ τί ποτε αἰνίττεται; ἐγὼ γὰρ εἴ οὐτε μέγα οὐτε μικρὸν ἐννοῶ εἰμαντῶ σοφός ὢν· τί οὖν ποτε λέγει φάσκων ἐμὲ σοφώτατον εἶναι; οὐ γὰρ εἴηπου ψευδέταί γε· οὐ γὰρ θέμις αὐτῷ. καὶ πολὺν μὲν χρόνον ἠπόρουν, τί ποτε λέγει, ἔπειτα μόγις πάντῃ ἐπὶ ζήτησιν αὐτοῦ ταυτήν τινά ἐτραπόμην. ἤλθον ἐπὶ τινὰ τῶν

εἴποιτε ὁ Σώκρατες, νῦν μὲν ἄνυτον οὐ πεισόμεθα, ἀλλ' ἀφίεμέν σε, ἐπὶ τούτῳ μὲν τοι, ἐφ' ὅτε μηκέτι ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ ζητήσῃ διατρίβῃ μηδὲ φιλοσοφῇ· εἰν δὲ ἄλλος ἐπὶ τοῦτο πράττων, ἀποθανεῖ· εἰ οὖν με, ὅπερ εἶπον, ἐπὶ τούτοις ἀφίετε, εἴποιμι ἂν ὑμῖν ὅτι ἐγὼ ὑμᾶς, ὁ ἀνὴρ Ἀθηναῖος, ἀπαύχομαι μὲν καὶ φίλῳ, πείσομαι δὲ μάλλον τῷ θεῷ ἢ ὑμῖν, καὶ ἕωσπερ ἂν ἐμπνέω καὶ οἴσῃς τὸ δὲ, οὐ μὴ παύσωμαι φιλοσοφῶν καὶ ὑμῖν παρακελευόμενός τε καὶ ἐνδεικνύμενος ὅφρα ἂν αἰεὶ ἐντυγχάνω ὑμῶν, λέγων οἵτις ἐπίθω, ὅτι ὁ ἀρίστος ἀνὴρ ἄνθρωπος ὢν, πύλωος τῆς μεγίστης καὶ εὐδοκίμοτάτης εἰς σοφίαν καὶ ἰσχύν, χρημάτων μὲν οὐκ αἰσχύνει ἐπιμελούμενος, ὅπως σοὶ ἔσται ὡς πλείστα, καὶ δόξης καὶ τιμῆς, φρονήσεως δὲ καὶ ἀληθείας καὶ τῆς ψυχῆς, ὅπως ὡς βελτίστη ἔσται, οὐκ ἐπιμελεῖ οὐδὲ φροντίζει; καὶ εἴαν τις ὑμῶν ἀμφισβητῇ καὶ φῆ ἔπιμελεῖσθαι, οὐκ εὐθὺς ἀφήσω αὐτὸν οὐδ' ἀπειμι, ἀλλ' ἐρήσομαι αὐτὸν καὶ ἐξετάσω καὶ ἐλέγξω, καὶ εἴαν μοι μὴ δοκῇ κερτῆσθαι ἀρετὴν, φάμαι δὲ, ὄνειδιώ ὅτι τὰ πλείστον ἄξια περὶ ἐλαχίστου ποιεῖται, τὰ δὲ φανυλότερα περὶ πλείονος. ταῦτα καὶ νεωτέρῳ καὶ πρεσβυτέρῳ, ὅφρα ἂν ἐντυγχίνω, ποιήσω, καὶ ξένῳ καὶ ἀσπῷ, μᾶλλον δὲ τοῖς ἀσπίσι, ὅφρα μὴ ἐγγυτέρω ἐστέ γένει. ταῦτα γὰρ κελεύει ὁ θεός, εὐ ἴστε, καὶ ἐγὼ οἴομαι οὐδὲν πῶ ὑμῖν μείζον ἀγαθὸν γενέσθαι ἐν τῇ πόλει ἢ τὴν ἐμὴν τῷ θεῷ ὑπηρεσίαν. οὐδὲν γὰρ ἄλλο πράττων ἐγὼ περιέρχομαι ἢ πείθων ὑμῶν καὶ νεωτέρους καὶ πρεσβυτέρους μήτε σμμάτων ἐπιμελεῖσθαι μήτε χρημάτων πρότερον μηδὲ οὕτω σφόδρα ὡς τῆς ψυχῆς, ὅπως ὡς ἀρίστη ἔσται, λέγων ὅτι οὐκ ἐκ χρημάτων ἀρετὴ γίγνεται, ἀλλ' ἐξ ἀρετῆς χρήματα καὶ τᾶλλα ἀγαθὰ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἅπαντα καὶ ἰδία καὶ δημοσία. εἰ μὲν οὖν ταῦτα λέγων εἰσφθεῖρω τοὺς νέους, ταῦτ' ἂν εἶη βλαβερά· εἰ δὲ τίς μὲ φησὶν ἄλλα λέγειν ἢ ταῦτα, οὐδὲν λέγει. πρὸς ταῦτα φαῖν ἂν, ὁ Ἀθηναῖος, ἢ πείθεσθε ἄνυτον ἢ μὴ, καὶ ἢ ἀφίετε ἢ μὴ ἀφίετε, ὡς ἐμοῦ οὐκ ἂν ποιήσαντο; ἄλλα, οὐδ' εἰ μέλλω πολλὰς τεθνήσκειν.

Some one will say: And are you not ashamed, Socrates, of a course of life which is likely to bring you to an untimely end? To him I may fairly answer: There you are mistaken: a man who is good for anything ought not to calculate the chance of living or dying; he ought only to consider whether in doing anything he is doing right or wrong--acting the part of a good man or of a bad....For the fear of death is indeed the pretence of wisdom, and not real wisdom, being a pretence of knowing the unknown; and no one knows whether death, which men in their fear apprehend to be the greatest evil, may not be the greatest good. Is not this ignorance of a disgraceful sort, the ignorance which is the conceit that man knows what he does not know? And in this respect only I believe myself to differ from men in general, and may perhaps claim to be wiser than they are:--that whereas I know but little of the world below, I do not suppose that I know; but I do know that injustice and disobedience to a better, whether god or man, is evil and dishonourable, and I will never fear or avoid a possible good rather than a certain evil.

And therefore if you let me go now, and....say to me, Socrates, this time we will not mind Anytus, and you shall be let off, but upon one condition, that you are not to enquire and speculate in this way any more, and that if you are caught doing so again you shall die;--if this was the condition on which you let me go, I should reply: Men of Athens, I honour and love you; but I shall obey the god rather than you, and while I have life and strength

I shall never cease from the practice and teaching of philosophy, exhorting any one whom I meet and saying to him after my manner: You, my friend,--a citizen of the great and mighty and wise city of Athens,--are you not ashamed of heaping up the greatest amount of money and honour and reputation, and caring so little about wisdom and truth and the greatest improvement of the soul, which you never regard or heed at all? And if the person with whom I am arguing, says: Yes, but I do care; then I do not leave him or let him go at once; but I proceed to interrogate and examine and cross-examine him, and if I think that he has no virtue in him, but only says that he has, I reproach him with undervaluing the greater, and overvaluing the less. And I shall repeat the same words to every one whom I meet, young and old, citizen and alien, but especially to the citizens, inasmuch as they are my brethren. For know that this is the command of the god; and I believe that no greater good has ever happened in the state than my service to the god. For I do nothing but go about persuading you all, old and young alike, not to take thought for your persons or your properties, but first and chiefly to care about the greatest improvement of the soul. I tell you that virtue is not given by money, but that from virtue comes money and every other good of man, public as well as private. This is my teaching, and if this is the doctrine which corrupts the youth, I am a mischievous person. But if any one says that this is not my teaching, he is speaking an untruth. Therefore, men of Athens, I say to you, do as Anytus bids or not as Anytus bids, and either acquit me or not; but whichever you do, understand that I shall never alter my ways, not even if I have to die many times.

Men of Athens, do not interrupt, but hear me; there was an understanding between us that you should hear me to the end: I have something more to say, at which you may be inclined to cry out; but I believe that to hear me will be good for you, and therefore I beg that you will not cry out. I would have you know, that if you kill such an one as I am, you will injure yourselves more than you will injure me. Nothing will injure me, not Meletus nor yet Anytus--they cannot, for a bad man is not permitted to injure a better than himself. I do not deny that Anytus may, perhaps, kill him, or drive him into exile, or deprive him of civil rights; and he may imagine, and others may imagine, that he is inflicting a great injury upon him: but there I do not agree. For the evil of doing as he is doing--the evil of unjustly taking away the life of another--is greater far.

And now, Athenians, I am not going to argue for my own sake, as you may think, but for yours, that you may not sin against the god by condemning me, who am his gift to you. For if

you kill me you will not easily find a successor to me, who, if I may use such a ludicrous figure of speech, am a sort of gadfly, given to the state; and the state is a great and noble steed who is tardy in his motions owing to his very size, and requires to be stirred into life. I am that gadfly which the god has attached to the state, and all day long and in all places am always fastening upon you, arousing and persuading and reproaching you. You will not easily find another like me, and therefore I would advise you to spare me. I dare say that you may feel out of temper (like a person who is suddenly awakened from sleep), and you think that you might easily strike me dead as Anytus advises, and then you would sleep on for the remainder of your lives, unless God in his care of you sent you another gadfly. When I say that I am given to you by the god, the proof of my mission is this:--if I had been like other men, I should not have neglected all my own concerns or patiently seen the neglect of them during all these years, and have been doing yours, coming to you individually like a father or elder brother, exhorting you to regard virtue; such conduct, I say, would be unlike human nature. If I had gained anything, or if my exhortations had been paid, there would have been some sense in my doing so; but now, as you will perceive, not even the impudence of my accusers dares to say that I have ever exacted or sought pay of any one; of that they have no witness. And I have a sufficient witness to the truth of what I say--my poverty.

Socrates closes his defense by explaining why he omits the customary appeal for mercy:

Setting aside the question of public opinion, there seems to be something wrong in asking a favour of a judge; and thus procuring an acquittal, instead of informing and convincing him. For his duty is, not to make a present of justice, but to give judgment; and he has sworn that he will judge according to the laws, and not according to his own good pleasure; and we ought not to encourage you, nor should you allow yourself to be encouraged, in this habit of perjury--there can be no piety in that. Do not then require me to do what I consider dishonourable and impious and wrong, especially now, when I am being tried for impiety on the indictment of Meletus. For if, O men of Athens, by force of persuasion and entreaty I could overpower your oaths, then I should be teaching you to believe that there are no gods, and in defending should simply convict myself of the charge of not believing in them. But that is not so--far otherwise. For I do believe that there are gods, and in a sense higher than that in which any of my accusers believe in them. And to you and to God I commit my cause, to

be determined by you as is best for you and me.

The jury is polled and Socrates is found guilty by 280 votes to 220. The next procedure was for the defense to offer an alternative penalty to that asked by the prosecution. Socrates says that a proper alternative would be for the state to maintain him at public expense, but that at the solicitation of his friends, who would provide the money, he would propose a moderate monetary fine. The proposal is rejected and Socrates is condemned to death. The final portion of the discourse is delivered apparently while the officials are busy with their documents:

Not much time will be gained, Athenians, in return for the evil name which you will get from the detractors of the city, who will say that you killed Socrates, a wise man; for they will call me wise, even although I am not wise, when they want to reproach you. If you had waited a little while, your desire would have been fulfilled in the course of nature. For I am far advanced in years, as you may perceive, and not far from death. I am speaking now not to all of you, but only to those who have condemned me to death. And I have another thing to say to them: You think that I was convicted because I had no words of the sort which would have procured my acquittal--I mean, if I had thought fit to leave nothing undone or unsaid.... The difficulty, my friends, is not to avoid death, but to avoid unrighteousness; for that runs faster than death. I am old and move slowly, and the slower runner has overtaken me, and my accusers are keen and quick, and the faster runner, who is unrighteousness has overtaken them. And now I depart hence condemned by you to suffer the penalty of death,--they too go their ways condemned by the truth to suffer the penalty of villainy and wrong; and I must abide by my award--let them abide by theirs. I suppose that these things may be regarded as fated,--and I think that they are well.

And now, you men who have condemned me, I would fain prophesy to you; for I am about to die, and in the hour of death men are gifted with prophetic power. And I prophesy to you who are my murderers, that immediately after my departure punishment far heavier than you have inflicted on me will surely await you. Me you have killed because you wanted to escape the accuser, and not to give an account of your lives. But that will not be as you suppose: far otherwise. For I say that there will be more accusers of you than there are now; accusers whom hitherto I have restrained: and as they are younger they will be more inconsiderate with you, and you will be more offended at them. If you think that by killing men you can prevent some from censuring your evil lives, you are mistaken; that is not a way of escape which is either possible or

honourable; the easiest and the noblest way is not to be suppressing others, but to be improving yourselves. This is the prophecy which I utter before my departure to the judges who have condemned me....

Let us reflect in another way, and we shall see that there is great reason to hope that death is a good; for one of two things--either death is a state of nothingness and utter unconsciousness, or, as men say, there is a change and migration of the soul from this world to another. Now if you suppose that there is no consciousness, but a sleep like the sleep of him who is undisturbed even by dreams, death will be an unspeakable gain. For if a person were to select the night in which his sleep was undisturbed even by dreams, and were to compare with this the other days and nights of his life, and then were to tell us how many days and nights he had passed in the course of his life better and more pleasantly than this one, I think that any man, I will not say a private man, but even the great king will not find many such days or nights, when compared with the others. Now if death be of such a nature, I say that to die is gain; for eternity is then only a single night. But if death is the journey to another place, and there, as men say all the dead abide, what good, my friends and judges, can be greater than this? If indeed when the pilgrim arrives in the world below, he is delivered from the professors of justice in this world, and finds the true judges who are said to give judgment there, Minos and Rhadamanthus and Aeacus and Triptolemus, and other sons of the gods who were righteous in their own life, that pilgrimage will be worth making. What would not a man give if he might converse with Orpheus and Musaeus and Hesiod and Homer? Nay, if this be true, let me die again and again. I myself, too, shall have a wonderful interest in their meeting and conversing with Palamedes, and Ajax the son of Telamon, and any other ancient hero who has suffered death through an unjust judgment; and there will be no small pleasure, as I think, in comparing my own sufferings with theirs.

....And you too, my judges, must regard death hopefully and must know of a certainty that no evil can happen to a good man, either in life or after death. He and his are not neglected by the gods; nor has my own approaching end happened by mere chance. But I see clearly that the time had arrived when it was better for me to die and be released from trouble; that is why the oracle gave no sign. For the same reason, also, I am not angry with my condemners, or with my accusers; they have done me no harm, although they did not mean to do me any good; and for this I may blame them.

Still I have a favour to ask of them. When my sons are grown up, I would ask you, my friends, to punish them; and I would have you trouble

them, as I have troubled you, if they seem to care about riches, or anything, more than about virtue; or if they pretend to be something when they are really nothing,--then reprove them, as I have reprovved you, for not caring for what they ought, and for thinking that they are something when they are really nothing. And if you do this, both I and my sons will have received justice at your hands.

The hour of departure has arrived, and we go our ways--I to die, and you to live. Which is better God only knows.

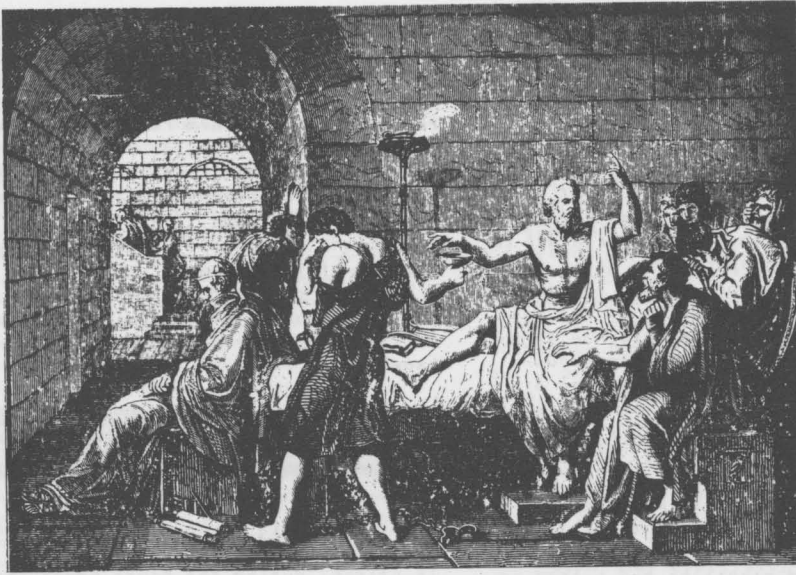


The *Phaedo* is the most spiritual and the most eloquent of the *Dialogues*. In prison, during the hours preceding his death, Socrates discourses to his friends on the most timely and timeless of all questions, the immortality of the soul. The individual characters of the friends present--Simmius inclined to mysticism, Cebes more rational, Apollodorus unrestrainable in his grief, Crito the competent manager, and the others--are unmistakably indicated. The dramatic setting, the earnestness of the arguments, the eschatological vision of retribution after death which supplements the arguments, and the saintly bearing of Socrates when he takes the hemlock make the *Phaedo* a great masterpiece in the literature of salvation.

Towards the end of the piece, after his description of the vision of the future world, Socrates says that he wishes to bathe, to save others the trouble of washing the corpse, and Crito then asks, "How shall we bury you?"

In any way that you like; but you must get hold of me, and take care that I do not run away from you. Then he turned to us, and added with a smile:--I cannot make Crito believe that I am the same Socrates who have been talking and conducting the argument; he fancies that I am the other Socrates he will soon see, a dead body--and he asks, How shall he bury me? And though I have spoken many words in the endeavour to show that when I have drunk the poison I shall leave you and go to the joys of the blessed,--these words of mine, with which I was comforting you and myself, have had, as I perceive, no effect upon Crito.... Be of good cheer, my dear Crito, and say that you are burying my body only, and do with that whatever is usual, and what you think best.

When he had spoken these words, he arose and went into a chamber to bathe; Crito followed him and told us to wait. So we remained behind, talking and thinking of the subject of discourse, and also of the greatness of our sorrow; he was like a father of whom we were being bereaved, and we



were about to pass the rest of our lives as orphans. When he had taken the bath his children were brought to him (he had two young sons and an elder one); and the women of his family also came, and he talked to them and gave them a few directions in the presence of Crito; then he dismissed them and returned to us.

Now the hour of sunset was near, for a good deal of time had passed while he was within. When he came out, he sat down with us again after his bath, but not much was said. Soon the jailer, who was the servant of the Eleven, entered and stood by him, saying:--To you, Socrates, whom I know to be the noblest and gentlest and best of all who ever came to this place, I will not impute the angry feeling of other men, who rage and swear at me, when, in obedience to the authorities, I bid them drink the poison--indeed, I am sure that you will not be angry with me; for others, as you are aware, and not I, are to blame. And so fare you well, and try to bear lightly what must needs be--you know my errand. Then bursting into tears he turned away and went out.

Socrates looked at him and said: I return your good wishes, and will do as you bid. Then turning to us, he said, How charming the man is: since I have been in prison he has always been coming to see me, and at times he would talk to me, and was as good to me as could be, and now see how generously he sorrows on my account. We must do as he says, Crito; and therefore let the cup be brought, if the poison is prepared: if not, let the attendant prepare some.

Yet, said Crito, the sun is still upon the hill-tops, and I know that many a one has taken the draught late, and after the announcement has been made to him, he has eaten and drunk, and enjoyed the society of his beloved: do not hurry--there is time enough.

Socrates said: Yes, Crito, and they of whom you speak are right in so acting, for they think that they will be

gaining by the delay; but I am right in not following their example, for I do not think that I should gain anything by drinking the poison a little later; I should only be ridiculous in my own eyes for sparing and saving a life which is already forfeit. Please then to do as I say, and not to refuse me.

Crito made a sign to the servant, who was standing by; and he went out, and having been absent for some time, returned with the jailer carrying the cup of poison. Socrates said: You, my good friend, who are experienced in these matters, shall give me directions how I am to proceed. The man answered: You have only to walk about until your legs are heavy, and then to lie down, and the poison will act. At the same time he handed the cup to Socrates, who in the easiest and gentlest manner, without the least fear or change of colour or feature, looking at the man with all his eyes, Echecrates, as his manner was, took the cup and said: What do you say about making a libation out of this cup to any god? May I, or not? The man answered: We only prepare, Socrates, just so much as we deem enough. I understand, he said: but I may and must ask the gods to prosper my journey from this to the

other world--even so--and so be it according to my prayer. Then raising the cup to his lips, quite readily and cheerfully he drank off the poison. And hitherto most of us had been able to control our sorrow; but now when we saw him drinking, and saw too that he had finished the draught, we could no longer forbear, and in spite of myself my own tears were flowing fast; so that I covered my face and wept, not for him, but at the thought of my own calamity in having to part from such a friend. Nor was I the first; for Crito, when he found himself unable to restrain his tears, had got up, and I followed; and at that moment, Apollodorus, who had been weeping all the time, broke out in a loud and passionate cry which made cowards of us all.

Socrates alone retained his calmness: What is this strange outcry? he said. I sent away the women mainly in order that they might not misbehave in this way, for I have been told that a man should die in peace. Be quiet then, and have patience. When we heard his words we were ashamed, and refrained our tears; and he walked about until, as he said, his legs began to fail, and then he lay on his back, according to directions, and the man who gave him the poison now and then looked at his feet and legs; and after a while he pressed his foot hard, and asked him if he could feel; and he said, No; and then his leg, and so upwards and upwards, and showed us that he was cold and stiff. And he felt them himself, and said: When the poison reaches the heart, that will be the end. He was beginning to grow cold about the groin, when he uncovered his face, for he had covered himself up, and said--they were his last words--he said: Crito, I owe a cock to Asclepius; will you remember to pay the debt? The debt shall be paid, said Crito; is there anything else? There was no answer to this question; but in a minute or two a movement was heard, and the attendants uncovered him; his eyes were set, and Crito closed his eyes and mouth.

Καὶ ὁ Κρίτων ἀκούσας ἔνευσε τῷ παιδὶ πλεσιον ἰστώτι, καὶ ὁ παῖς ἐξελθὼν καὶ συγχρὸν χρόνον διατριψάς ἤκεν ἄγων τὸν μέλλοντα δίδόναι τὸ φάρμακον, ἐν κύλικι φέροντα τετριμμένον· ἰδὼν δὲ ὁ Σωκράτης τὸν ἄνθρωπον, εἶπεν, εἴη, εἴη, ὦ βέλτιστε, σὺ γὰρ τούτων ἐπιστήμων, τί χρῆ ποιεῖν; Οὐδὲν ἄλλο, εἴη, ἢ πίνοντα περιμένα, ἕως ἂν σου βάρος ἐν τοῖς σκέλεσι γένηται, ἔπειτα κατακείσθαι· καὶ οὕτως αὐτὸ ποιήσει. καὶ ἅμα ὤρεξε τὴν κύλικα τῷ Σωκράτει· καὶ ὄς λαβὼν καὶ μάλα ἴλεως, ὦ Ἐχέκρατες, οὐδὲν τρέσας οὐδὲ διαφθείρας οὐτ' οὐ χρώματος οὐτε τοῦ προσώπου, ἀλλ' ὡς περ εἴθε ταυρῶν ὑποβλήψας πρὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπον, Τί λέγεις, εἴη, περὶ τοῦδε τοῦ πόματος πρὸς τὸ ἀποσπείσαι τι; ἔξεστιν, ἢ οὐ; Τοσοῦτον, εἴη, ὦ Σωκράτες, τρίβομεν, ὅσον οἴμεθα μέτριον εἶναι πίνειν. Μανθάνω, ἢ δ' ὄς· ἀλλ' εὐχέσθαι γέ που τοῖς θεοῖς ἔξεστί τε καὶ χρῆ, τὴν μετοίκησιν τὴν ἐνθὲνδε ἐκείσε εὐτυχῆ γενέσθαι· ἃ δὴ καὶ ἐγὼ εὐχομαι τε καὶ γένοιτο ταύτη· καὶ ἅμα εἰπὼν ταῦτα ἐπισχόμενος καὶ μάλα εὐχερῶς καὶ εὐκόλως ἔξεπιε.

ἦδε ἡ τελευτῆ, ὦ Ἐχέκρατες, τοῦ ἑταίρου ἡμῖν ἐγένετο, ἄνδρες, ὡς ἡμεῖς φαίμεν ἂν, τῶν τότε ὧν ἐπειράθημεν ἀρίστου καὶ ἄλλως φρονιμωτάτου καὶ δικαιοτάτου.

Such was the end, Echecrates, of our friend; concerning whom I may truly say, that of all men of his time whom I have known, he was the wisest and justest and best.

Moses Hadas, Professor of Greek and Latin at Columbia University, is the author of *A History of Greek Literature* (1950) and *A History of Latin Literature* (1952), and the editor of the *Modern Library Tacitus* (1942), *Cicero* (1951), and *The Greek Poets* (1953). He has published many translations of classical literature.

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