Phaedo

narrator:	PHAEDO	*a student of Socrates, founder of philosophy school*
persons in the dialogue:	ECHECRATES	*of Phlius, a student of Philolaus and Eurytus*
	SOCRATES	*of Alopece, son of Sophroniscus*
	WARDER	*a prison attendant*
	XANTHIPPE	*Socrates' wife*
	CRITO	*a friend and contemporary of Socrates*
	SIMMIAS	*Theban, Pythagorean*
	CEBES	*Theban, Pythagorean*
	POISONER	*a public slave*
also present:	WOMEN	*of Socrates' household*
	APOLLODORUS	*a constant companion of Socrates*
	SOPHRONISCUS	*son of Socrates*
	MENEXENUS	*son of Socrates*
	CRITOBULUS	*son of Crito*
	Athenians	AESCHINES, ANTISTHENES, CTESIPPUS, EPIGENES, HERMOGENES, MENEXENUS *(son of Demophon)*
	Theban	PHAIDONDAS
	Megarians	EUCLIDES, TERPSION
scenes:	*a meeting of Phaedo and Echecrates in Phlius, a month after Socrates' death / Socrates' prison cell*	

ECHECRATES: Were you yourself there with Socrates on the day he drank the poison in the prison, Phaedo,[1] or did you hear about it from someone else? 57 a

PHAEDO: I was there myself, Echecrates.[2]

ECHECRATES: Well then, what did the man say before his death? And how did he die? I would love to hear about this. The fact is, no one from Phlius tends to visit Athens much these days, nor has any visitor come from there for quite a while, someone who could give us a definite account of those events, apart from saying that he drank the poison and died. They had nothing to say about anything else. 57 b

PHAEDO: So did you not even find out the details of the way the trial unfolded? 58 a

ECHECRATES: Yes, someone did report these events to us, and we were surprised that although the trial took place some time ago, he was evidently put to death much more recently. Why did

[1] Phaedo was a close associate of Socrates, and eventually set up a philosophical school in Elis.

[2] Echecrates was a Pythagorean philosopher from Phlius, near Corinth.

that happen, Phaedo?

PHAEDO: In his case, it was the result of a coincidence, Echecrates. It so happened that the prow of the ship which the Athenians send to Delos was crowned the day before the trial.

ECHECRATES: And what ship is this?

58 b PHAEDO: It is the ship on which, according to the Athenians, Theseus once travelled to Crete bringing the "twice seven" young people, and he saved them and saved himself.[3] Now, it is said that they vowed to Apollo, there and then, to send a sacred expedition to Delos every year if they were saved. Accordingly, every year since then, including this year, they send an expedition to honour the god. Now, they have a law that once they begin the expedition, the city is to be kept pure during that period, and no one may be executed by the authorities until the ship has arrived at Delos and returned once more, and on occasion, whenever the winds happen
58 c to detain them, this takes a lot of time. The sacred expedition begins once the priest of Apollo crowns the prow of the ship, and this happened, as I said, the day before the trial took place. That is why Socrates had so much time in prison between the trial and his death.

ECHECRATES: Yes, but what about the circumstances of the actual death, Phaedo? What did people say and how did they behave? Which of his friends were present with him? Or did the authorities not allow them to be there, and did he die bereft of friends?

58 d PHAEDO: Not at all. A number of them were present, quite a number, in fact.

ECHECRATES: Then try to recount all the details to us as clearly as possible, provided you have the time.

PHAEDO: Well, I do have the time and I shall try to give you an account. Yes, indeed, being reminded of Socrates is always the greatest delight of all to me, whether I speak of him myself or hear about him from someone else.

ECHECRATES: In that case, Phaedo, you have listeners who are like-minded, so try to recount everything as precisely as you can.

58 e PHAEDO: Well, I myself had a strange feeling while I was there, for I did not experience the usual pity of someone present at the death of a friend. Indeed, he himself appeared happy to me, Echecrates, both in his manner and in his words, so fearlessly and nobly did he meet his end. I was convinced he was not going to Hades without a divine portion and, indeed, that
59 a he would fare well even when he arrived there, if anyone ever does. These are the reasons I did not feel much of the pity which would seem to be expected of someone on a sad occasion. Nor again, did I feel the pleasure which is usual when we are engaged in philosophy, and our discussions were indeed of that kind. Instead, I had an utterly unusual feeling – a strange mixture combining pleasure and a like measure of pain – at the realisation that Socrates was going to pass away soon. And all those present were in much the same state, laughing at one moment and crying at the next, Apollodorus more than any of us. I presume
59 b you know the man and his character.

ECHECRATES: I do, of course.

PHAEDO: Well, he was completely overcome, and I was troubled myself, as were the others.

ECHECRATES: Who else was present, Phaedo?

PHAEDO: Of native Athenians, Apollodorus himself was present, and also Critobulus and his father, along with Hermogenes, Epigenes, Aeschines and Antisthenes. And there was Ctesippus the Paeanian, Menexenus, and some other Athenians.[4] Plato, I believe, was ill.

ECHECRATES: Were there any visitors present?

59 c PHAEDO: Yes, Simmias of Thebes, Cebes and Phaidondes. And from Megara there was Euclides and Terpsion.[5]

ECHECRATES: What about Cleombrotus and Aristippus?[6] Were they there?

PHAEDO: Actually, they were not. In fact, they were said to have been on Aegina.

ECHECRATES: And was anyone else there?
PHAEDO: I think that is just about everyone who was present.
ECHECRATES: In that case, will you tell us what discussions took place?
PHAEDO: I shall try to recount everything to you from the beginning. 59 d

Now, I myself and the others had always been in the habit of going to visit Socrates on the previous days, gathering at daybreak at the court where the trial took place, for this was near the prison. Every day we used to wait and converse with one another until the prison was opened, as it did not open early, and once it was opened, we would go in to Socrates and spend most of the day with him. We actually met earlier that morning because on the previous day, after we left the prison 59 e in the evening, we found out that the ship had returned from Delos, so we encouraged one another to get to our usual meeting place as early as possible next morning.

When we arrived, the doorkeeper came out as usual to answer us, and he told us to wait and not to go in until he called us. "The Eleven[7] are unchaining Socrates", he said, "and are giving instructions about how he is to die today." Now, it did not take him long before he returned and bade us enter. In we went and took in the scene: Socrates, just released from his bonds, and 60 a Xanthippe,[8] I am sure you know her, sitting beside him holding his little child. Once Xanthippe saw us, she cried out and said the sort of thing women usually say, "O Socrates, your friends will be speaking to you now for the very last time, and you to them." Then Socrates glanced towards Crito and said, "Have someone take her home, Crito."

And some of Crito's people led her away, crying and beating her breast, while Socrates sat 60 b up in the bed, bent his leg, rubbed it with his hand, and said as he was rubbing it, "Gentlemen, this thing which people call pleasure seems to be so strange. It is so extraordinarily related to pain, though this appears to be its opposite, for the two tend not to come to a person at the same time. Yet if someone pursues one and obtains it, he is almost always compelled to take the other, as though the two were joined to a single head. And it seems to me", he said, "that if Aesop[9] had 60 c thought about this, he would have made up a fable that the god wished to reconcile their strife, but as he was unable to do so he fastened their heads together, and that is why when one arises in someone the other also follows after it. It seems that is what just happened to me. After the pain in my leg on account of the chain, the pleasure now appears to follow."

Then Cebes took this up and said, "By Zeus, it is just as well you jogged my memory,

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3 According to legend, King Minos required the Athenians to send fourteen youths each year to his kingdom on the island of Crete to be sacrificed to the Minotaur. Theseus is reputed to have saved the youths and slain the monster, thus freeing the Athenians from this annual tribute.

4 The nine men listed here from Athens and the surrounding area were part of Socrates' inner circle. A few of them appear in other of Plato's dialogues: Apollodorus appears in Plato's *Symposium*; Crito, the father of Critobulus, lends his name to Plato's *Crito*; Hermogenes is the main interlocutor in Plato's *Cratylus*; Ctesippus is mentioned in both Plato's *Lysis* and *Euthydemus*; Menexenus has a small part in Plato's *Lysis* and has a dialogue named after him. Epigenes and Aeschines are both mentioned in Plato's *Apology* as having been present at the trial of Socrates; the latter was a writer of Socratic dialogues. Antisthenes is regarded as the founder of the Cynic school of philosophy.

5 Simmias, Cebes and Phaidondes were Pythagoreans from Thebes, north of Athens; Euclides and Terpsion were from Megara, a city west of Athens. The first two are mentioned in Plato's *Crito* as having raised enough money to secure Socrates' escape. Euclides was also a writer of Socratic dialogues, and founder of the Megarian school of philosophy.

6 Cleombrotus was a young follower of Socrates who was reputed to have taken his own life after reading the *Phaedo*. Aristippus was the founder of the Cyrenaic school of philosophy.

7 Among the 700 magistrates of Athens appointed by lot, eleven men, simply called 'the Eleven', were in charge of prisons and executions.

8 Xanthippe was Socrates' wife. They had three children, two who were young men and a third still young enough to be carried by his mother.

9 Aesop was a legendary storyteller to whom a collection of fables was attributed.

60 d Socrates. A number of people have been asking me about your compositions, the setting of Aesop's fables to verse and the hymn to Apollo. In fact, Evenus[10] also asked me recently what exactly you had in mind, since you composed these works on arriving in prison, even though you had not composed anything before then. Now, if you would like me to have an answer for Evenus, tell me what I should say whenever he asks me again, for I know very well that he will ask."

60 e "Tell him the truth, Cebes," he replied. "I did not compose these works with a view to rivalling him or his poems. No, I knew that would not be easy. Rather, I was testing out the meaning of certain dreams and clearing my conscience in case they were, perhaps, instructing me to make music in the usual sense. Now, the dreams went something like this... the same one often came to me during the course of my life, sometimes in one guise, sometimes in another, but always saying the same thing. 'Socrates,' it said, 'make music and work at it.' On previous occasions, I assumed
61 a it was encouraging and exhorting me to do what I was already doing, just as people call upon runners to run. So I thought the dream was exhorting me to do what I was already doing – namely, to make music – since philosophy is the greatest music, and I was already engaged in that. But once the trial was over and the festival of the god was preventing my execution, it seemed important not to ignore the dream but to act upon it in case it might, perhaps, be instructing me to make
61 b music in the popular sense of the word. Indeed, it seemed safer not to depart until I had cleared my conscience by composing these works in obedience to the dream. So I first composed something for the god whose festival season it was, and after that I realised that a poet needs to compose stories rather than factual accounts if he is actually going to be a poet, and that I myself was no storyteller. So I took whatever stories were to hand, the fables of Aesop which I know, and turned the first ones I came upon into verse. So Cebes, tell this to Evenus and bid him farewell, and bid
61 c him pursue me as quickly as possible if he is of sound mind. I am departing today, it seems, for the people of Athens have given their command."

And Simmias said, "What an instruction to give to Evenus, Socrates! I have met the man many times already, and from what I know of him he will never be persuaded by your request, not willingly anyway."

"Why not?" he replied. "Is Evenus not a philosopher?"

"Well, I think he is," said Simmias.

"Then Evenus will indeed be willing, and so will anyone who engages in this activity in a worthy manner. However, he will not do violence to himself, for this, they say, is not lawful."

61 d And as he was saying this, he placed his feet on the ground and then conducted the rest of the discussion seated in that manner. So Cebes asked him,

"Socrates, what do you mean by 'it is not lawful to do violence to himself' and that a philosopher should be willing to follow someone who is dying?"

"What is this, Cebes? Have you and Simmias not heard about such matters through your association with Philolaus?"[11]

"Not in any detail, Socrates."

"Well, I too am recounting what I have heard about these issues. However, I will not begrudge
61 e you an account of whatever I happen to have heard. For it is perhaps especially appropriate for someone about to depart to the next world to consider the sojourn there and tell stories about what we think it will be like. Indeed, what else could one do until the time when the sun sets?"

"Socrates, on what precise basis is it said not to be lawful for someone to kill themselves? I have also heard Philolaus saying what you have just said when he was living among us, and I have heard from a number of others since that one should not do this. But I have never yet heard anything clear concerning these issues from anyone."

62 a "Then you should bestir yourself," he said, "for perhaps then you will actually hear. However, it

may perhaps seem surprising to you that this situation alone, in contrast to all others, admits of no exceptions and is never like other personal circumstances. Sometimes, for some people, it is better to be dead than to be alive. But if they are better off dead, perhaps it seems surprising to you that it is unholy for those very people themselves to act beneficially towards themselves, rather than waiting for another to perform that service."

And Cebes smiled gently and exclaimed in his own dialect, "Zeus be my witness!"

"Yes, indeed," said Socrates, "it may sound illogical when expressed in that way. However, in 62 b
spite of that, perhaps it does make some sense. The account about these matters, uttered in secret, declares that we humans are under guardianship and people should not free themselves from it or run away. This seems important to me, though it is not easy to understand. In any case, Cebes, I do think this is well expressed. The gods are our guardians and we humans are among the possessions of the gods. Do you not think so too?"

"I do, indeed," said Cebes.

"Well, then," said he, "if one of your own possessions were to kill itself, with no indication from 62 c
you that you wanted it dead, would you not be angry with it? And would you not punish it if you could do so?"

"Very much so," he replied.

"Perhaps then, in this sense, it is not illogical to say that someone should not kill themselves until a god sends some necessity, such as my present predicament."

"Well," said Cebes, "that appears reasonable anyway. However, when you said just now that the wish to die comes readily to philosophers, that, dear Socrates, sounded strange, especially 62 d
if what we were saying just now is reasonable, that the god is our guardian and we are his possessions. For it does not make sense for the wisest folk to be untroubled on departing from this care in which the gods, the very best guardians of beings, watch over them. For I presume they will not believe that they will take better care of themselves once they are free. Now, an unreasonable person might think that he should flee from his master, and he would 62 e
not figure out that one should not flee from the good but should stay as long as possible, and so he might make an unreasonable escape. However, the reasonable person would presumably desire to be constantly in the presence of someone better than himself. So on this basis, Socrates, the situation is likely to be the opposite of what you just said: it is appropriate for the wise to be troubled at the prospect of death and for the foolish to rejoice."

Now, I thought Socrates was pleased with Cebes' analysis, and he looked at us and said, "Cebes 63 a
is always scrutinising some argument or other and is not very willing to be persuaded as soon as someone makes any assertion."

Then Simmias said, "Well, on this occasion anyway, I believe that Cebes has a point. For why would people who are truly wise wish to flee from masters who are better than themselves, and take their leave of them so readily? And Cebes seems to be directing his argument at you because you are going so readily, leaving us and those good rulers whom, you agree, are gods."

"What you are saying is fair," he replied, "for I think you mean that I must defend myself against 63 b
these charges as if I were in a court of law."

"Yes, very much so," said Simmias.

"Come on, then," he said, "and I shall try to conduct my defence more persuasively in front of you than I did in front of the jurors. Indeed," he said, "Simmias and Cebes, if I did not believe,

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[10] Evenus of Paros was a late 5th-century sophist and teacher. He is also mentioned in Plato's *Apology* (20b-c) and *Phaedrus* (267a).

[11] Philolaus was an influential Pythagorean philosopher from southern Italy. He spent some time in Thebes, where he met Simmias and Cebes.

firstly, that I would be going to various wise and good gods, and secondly, to men who have died, better men than those who are here, I would be wrong to be untroubled by death.

63 c "Now, although I am hoping to arrive among good men, please note that I would not assert this very confidently. However, rest assured that if I were to assert anything else of this sort with confidence, I would also say that I am going to gods who are perfectly good masters. So on this basis I am not so troubled by all this, but am quite hopeful that there is something for those who have died, and, as the ancient saying puts it, 'at least it is much better for those who are good than for those who are bad'."

"What now, Socrates?" said Simmias. "Do you intend to depart keeping this understanding to yourself or would you be prepared to share it with us? For it seems to me that this is
63 d something good to be shared with us too, and at the same time it will act as your defence if you persuade us of what you are saying."

"In that case, I shall try," he said. "But first, I think Crito here wanted to speak a while ago. Let's ask him what he wants."

"Socrates," said Crito, "it is just that the man who is going to give you the poison has been saying to me for some time that you should be told to converse as little as possible, for he says that people who converse become more heated, and this sort of thing should be avoided
63 e before the poison is to be administered. Otherwise, people who do this are sometimes compelled to drink the poison twice or even three times."

And Socrates replied, "Do not mind him; just let him attend to his own duty and give the poison twice, and, if necessary, three times."

"Yes, I was quite sure you would say that," said Crito, "but he has been bothering me about these things for some time."

"Let him be," Socrates replied. "And instead, I now want to present an argument to you jurors as to why it seems likely to me that a man who has really spent his life in philosophy is confident
64 a when facing death, and is hopeful that he will obtain enormous benefits in the next world once he dies. Of course, Simmias and Cebes, I shall now try to explain how this might be the case. For most people are likely to be unaware that those who engage properly in philosophy are themselves in pursuit of nothing except dying and being dead. Now, if this is true, it would surely be strange for someone who was eager all his life for this alone to be troubled when he actually attained what he had pursued so eagerly for so long."

Then Simmias laughed and said,

64 b "By Zeus, Socrates, I am not really in laughing humour just now, but you have made me laugh. Yes, I believe that most people, on hearing this, would think you have made a very good point about philosophers, and our own people would agree emphatically that those who engage in philosophy really do have a longing for death, and that this is the fate they deserve to suffer! They are quite aware of that."

"And in a sense, Simmias, what they are saying would be true, except for their claim that they are aware. For they are unaware of the way in which true philosophers desire death, or the sense in
64 c which they deserve to die, or what kind of death it is. Indeed, we should just speak among ourselves", he said, "and bid farewell to those fellows. Do we think that death is something?"

"Very much so," replied Simmias.

"Is it anything other than the separation of the soul from the body? And is this what it is to be dead? The body is separated from the soul and is just by itself, while the soul, having been separated from the body, is just by itself? Is death anything other than this?"

"It is nothing but this," he replied.

64 d "Now, good man, consider whether your views are the same as mine. Indeed, from these, I believe we shall come to know more about the issues we are investigating. Does it appear to you that a per-

son who loves wisdom would be serious about such so-called pleasures as eating and drinking?"

"Not in the least, Socrates," replied Simmias.

"What about sexual pleasures?"

"Not at all."

"And what about the other indulgences associated with the body? Do you think people of this sort would regard them as valuable? I mean, would they value the acquisition of distinctive clothing or shoes and other adornments of the body, or do you think they would disregard them and partake of them only to the extent really necessary?" 64 e

"I think the true philosopher would disregard them."

"Don't you think," he said, "in general, that the preoccupation of such a person is not about the body, but is directed away from it as much as possible, and turned towards the soul?"

"I do indeed."

"So is it obvious, in the first place, that in such matters the philosopher exceeds all others in freeing 65 a the soul, as much as possible, from communion with the body?"

"So it appears."

"And it seems to most people, I presume, Simmias, that someone to whom nothing of this sort is pleasant, and who does not partake thereof, does not deserve to be alive, and that a person who thinks nothing of the pleasures which derive from the body is well-nigh dead."

"Yes, what you are saying is certainly true."

"But what about the acquisition of wisdom itself? Is the body an impediment or not if it is brought along to assist in the search? My question goes something like this: do sight and hearing afford 65 b men any truth? Or is there truth in the sort of things even the poets are constantly repeating to us, that we neither see nor hear anything accurately? And, indeed, if these two bodily senses are neither accurate nor clear, it would be idle to consider the others, for they are all somehow inferior to these two, or doesn't it seem so to you?"

"It does seem so to me."

"So when does the soul encounter the truth? For whenever it attempts to contemplate anything in conjunction with the body, in that case it is obviously deceived by the body."

"What you say is true." 65 c

"Well, isn't it in reasoning rather than anywhere else that any of the things that are, become obvious to it?"

"Yes."

"But presumably, then, the soul reasons most beautifully whenever nothing else bothers it, neither hearing nor sight nor pain nor any pleasure, and it is just by itself to the greatest extent possible, bids the body farewell, has as little communion and contact with it as it can, and reaches towards what is."

"This is so."

"Then, is it here too that the soul of the philosopher shows most disregard for the body, flees from 65 d it, and strives to be just by itself?"

"So it appears."

"But Simmias, what about this? Do we say that there is something just itself, or nothing is?"

"By Zeus, we do indeed say that there is."

"And something is beautiful and is itself good?"

"How could there not be?"

"Now, have you ever yet seen anything of this kind with your eyes?"

"Not at all."

"But have you ever contacted them through the body by means of any other sense? And I am referring to all of them, for example, size, health, strength and all the others. In short, I am speaking of

65 e the being of them all, what each of them happens to be. Can the very truth of them be contemplated by means of the body? Or is it the case that whoever is best and most diligently prepared to understand each of these, in itself, is the person who will come closest to the knowledge of them?"

"Yes, certainly."

"Now, wouldn't a person undertake this with the utmost purity if he were to make his approach to each of them with the mind alone to the greatest possible extent? Without introducing sight into the mental activity, or dragging in any other sense perception whatsoever along with the reasoning,
66 a but making use of the mind just by itself, without admixture, wouldn't he take up the hunt for each of the things that are, as free as possible from eyes and ears and, in effect, from all that is bodily, for this disturbs the soul and does not allow it to acquire truth and wisdom whenever it communes with the body? Won't this person, Simmias, and no other, attain what is?"

"Socrates, what you are saying is extraordinarily true," replied Simmias.

66 b "Then," he said, "the genuine philosophers must form a particular opinion based upon these conclusions so that they say something of this sort to one another: 'Yes, a sort of narrow path seems to be leading us on to side with reason in the enquiry, because as long as we have the body, and our soul is compounded with such badness, we shall never satisfactorily obtain what we desire, and this we say is the truth. Indeed, the body brings countless distractions upon us just because it
66 c needs sustenance. What is more, if any illnesses befall it, they impede our hunt for what is. And the body also fills us with loves, desires, fears, a whole range of imaginings, and a lot of foolishness, so that, as they say, and it really is true, we never ever acquire any wisdom at all through its agency. And in fact, it is only the body and its desires which bring about wars, insurrections and fighting. For all wars arise on account of the possession of wealth, and we are compelled to acquire
66 d wealth because of the body, as we are slaves in its service. And because of all these factors, we become too busy to engage in philosophy. Worst of all, even if we do get time, free from its demands, and turn towards some philosophic enquiry, the body keeps intruding into the enquiry in all sorts of ways, bringing tribulation and agitation, and confounding us so that we are unable to see truth clearly because of it. But, in fact, this argument has shown us that if we are ever going to have pure knowledge of anything, we must be quit of the body and behold the objects them-
66 e selves, with the soul itself. We claim to be lovers of wisdom, and we shall obtain what we desire and what we claim to love, when we die, as the argument indicates, but not while we are alive.

"Indeed, if it is impossible to know anything purely whilst accompanied by the body, there are two possibilities. Either it is impossible to acquire the knowledge at all, or it happens after
67 a death, for then, and not until then, will the soul be just by itself, separate from the body. And while we are living in the body, in this way we shall, it seems, be closest to acquiring knowledge when we have the least interaction and communion with it, only what is absolutely necessary and are not contaminated with its nature, but purify ourselves from it, until God himself releases us. And in this way, being pure and liberated from the foolishness of the body, we are likely to be with
67 b those who are like this, and we shall know all that is pure through ourselves alone. And this, I daresay, is the truth: that the impure has no contact with the pure for that would not be lawful.' I believe, Simmias, that this is the sort of thing which all those with a proper love of learning will think and say to each other. Is that how it seems to you?"

"More than anything, Socrates."

"Therefore," said Socrates, "if this is all true, my friend, there is great hope that when someone arrives where I am going, there, if anywhere, they fully attain that objective which has given rise to
67 c so much endeavour in our lives so far. So this departure which is now forced upon me offers good hope for any man who believes he has prepared his mind, which has, in a sense, been purified."

"Yes, certainly," said Simmias.

"But does not this purification turn out to be just what we said it was in the earlier discussion: the

separation of soul from body to the greatest extent possible; getting soul accustomed to gathering itself together, and collecting itself from all parts of the body, to dwell just by itself as best it can, both in its present situation and hereafter; being set free from the body as though from bonds?" 67 d

"Yes, certainly."

"And isn't this how death is described, a freeing and separation of soul from body?"

"Entirely so."

"And we are saying that it is only those who engage in philosophy correctly who are always most eager to free the soul. This is the particular practice of the philosophers; the freeing and separating of soul from body. Is this so?"

"So it appears."

"So, as I said in the beginning, it would be ridiculous for a man who prepares himself throughout 67 e life by being as close to death as possible, and who lives accordingly, to be troubled at the arrival of his own death."

"Ridiculous, of course."

"So, in fact, Simmias," he said, "those who engage properly in philosophy practise dying and, of all people, death is least fearful to them. Reflect upon this. If they are indeed at variance with the body in every way, and they wish to have soul just by itself, but they are fearful and troubled when this happens, wouldn't that be very irrational? Shouldn't they be glad to go to a place where there 68 a is hope that those who arrive there, freed from association with their former adversary, will attain that which they have loved throughout their lives, and what they have loved is wisdom? When humans' loved ones, wives or sons, have died, many people have been prepared to go after them willingly into Hades, led by the hope of seeing their loved ones, and of being with them there. So, if someone actually loves wisdom and has a firm hold of this same hope that he will attain no wisdom worth mentioning anywhere else but in Hades, will he be troubled when he is dying? Won't 68 b he be glad to go there? Surely he must think so, my friend, if he is in fact a philosopher, for he will hold strongly to the view that there, and nowhere else, will he attain wisdom in its purity. And if this is the case, then as we said before, it would be highly irrational for such a person to fear death."

"Very much so, by Zeus."

"Therefore, do you have sufficient evidence", said Socrates, "that a man whom you see grieving when he is going to die is no lover of wisdom, but a lover of the body? The same person also turns 68 c out to be a money-lover, or a lover of honour, one or the other or both."

"Indeed," he said, "the situation is just as you describe."

"Well, Simmias, doesn't what we refer to as courage belong mainly to those with a philosophic disposition?"

"Entirely so."

"And sound-mindedness too, sound-mindedness as most people describe it, not being aroused in the face of desires but being frugal and orderly. Doesn't this belong only to those who show least regard for the body and spend their lives in philosophy?"

"It must." 68 d

"Now, if you wish to consider the courage and sound-mindedness of other people, it will seem unusual to you."

"In what way, Socrates?"

"You know that everyone else regards death as one of the great evils?"

"Very much so."

"And don't the courageous among them submit to death, whenever they do so, from fear of greater evils?"

"That is what happens."

"So apart from the philosophers, everyone is courageous due to fear and terror. However, it is quite

illogical to be courageous due to terror and cowardice."

68 e "It certainly is."

"And what about those among them who are orderly? Aren't they in the same predicament, namely that they are sound-minded due to a certain lack of restraint? Indeed, we say that this is impossible, but nevertheless this is what their foolish sound-mindedness turns out to be like. They are afraid of being deprived of certain pleasures, so, out of desire for these pleasures, they refrain from other pleasures because they are controlled by these pleasures. However, being ruled by pleasure is what
69 a they call lack of restraint, but it now turns out that they control pleasures because they themselves are controlled by other pleasures. This is like what was just referred to: they are, in a way, sound-minded due to lack of restraint."

"So it seems."

"Bless you, Simmias, I suspect that when it comes to excellence, this trading is not right, exchanging pleasures for pleasures, pains for pains, fear for fear and greater for less as if they were coins.
69 b No, there is only one proper coin for which all these must be exchanged, and that is wisdom, and everything should really be bought and sold for this and in conjunction with this. And courage, sound-mindedness, justice and in short, true excellence, should accompany wisdom, whether pleasures, fears and everything else of that sort be present or absent. But if these are exchanged for one another unaccompanied by wisdom, won't such excellence be a shadowy image, which is actually
69 c slavish and devoid of anything sound or true? But the true is, in fact, a purification from everything of that sort, and sound-mindedness, justice, courage, and wisdom itself are purifications. And it seems that those who established our mysteries[12] were no ordinary folk, but in fact they said long ago, in riddling language, that whoever arrived in Hades uninitiated and imperfect will lie in the mire, while someone who has been purified and perfected when he arrives there will dwell with the gods. For as they say in the mysteries,

69 d *The thyrsus bearers are many*
But the Bacchae are few.[13]

"And the Bacchae are, in my view, none other than those who have properly engaged in philosophy. And so, throughout my life, unstintingly and to the best of my ability, I have been eager in every way to become one of them. But whether I have been eager in the right way and whether we have achieved anything, that I shall know for certain quite soon when I arrive there, if it be god's will. That is how it seems to me.

"Now, Simmias and Cebes," said he, "thus do I make my case that it is reasonable to bear without difficulty or tribulation my departure from yourselves and the rulers of this place, for I
69 e believe that I shall encounter rulers there who are just as good as these, and companions too. So, if I am any more persuasive towards you with this defence than I was to the Athenian jurors, all would be well." Once Socrates had said all this, Cebes responded by saying,

70 a "Socrates, it seems to me at least, that in general what you have said is excellent, but what you said about the soul brings up a lot of doubt in people lest it may no longer be anywhere, once it is quit of the body. They believe that it is destroyed and perishes on the very day a person dies, as soon as it is separated from the body, and going forth, dispersed like breath or smoke, it takes flight, is gone and is no longer anywhere at all. However, if the soul were, in fact, just by itself, gathered together, freed from those evils you described just now, there
70 b would be a great and beautiful hope, Socrates, that what you are saying is true. But it will probably require no small amount of gentle persuasion to prove that after the person dies the soul exists and possesses some power and wisdom."

"What you say is true, Cebes," said Socrates. "But what are we to do? Would you like us to converse about this very topic, on the question of whether this is likely to be the case or not?"

"I, for my part, would be glad to hear what opinion you hold on these issues," replied Cebes.

"Well," said Socrates, "I do not think anyone who heard us now, even if he were a comic poet, would say that I am being verbose and I am constructing arguments which are of no relevance. So if you see fit, we should examine the matter in detail. 70 c

"Let us consider whether the souls of people who have died are in Hades or not, in the following manner. There is an ancient story, which we remember, that the souls exist in the other world having arrived there from this world, and they arrive back here again, coming into being from those who have died. Now, if this is the case, that the living come into being from those who have died, must not our souls be there, for they could not come into being again if they were not there? And if it actually becomes evident that the living come into being from nothing else than from those who have died, this constitutes an adequate proof that these things are so. But if this is not the case, another argument would be required." 70 d

"Yes, certainly," said Cebes.

"Then, if you wish to understand this more easily, do not consider human beings alone, but all animals and plants and, in short, anything which comes to be. Let us see whether any of them which happen to have an opposite comes into being from those opposites. Beauty is presumably opposite to ugliness, just is opposite to unjust, and there are thousands more examples. So let us consider this: whether anything which has an opposite must come into being from nothing else but its own opposite. For instance, whenever something becomes greater, presumably it must have been lesser before and became greater afterwards." 70 e

"Yes."

"And if it becomes lesser, does it not become lesser having previously been greater?" 71 a

"That is so."

"And indeed, from the stronger comes the weaker and from the slower the quicker?"

"Yes, certainly."

"What about this, doesn't worse come into being from better and the more just from the more unjust?"

"How could it be otherwise?"

"Do we understand this sufficiently now, that everything comes into being in this way, opposite things arising from opposites?"

"Yes, certainly."

"What about this further question? Is there something of this sort, something in between all these pairs of opposites, which is twofold? Are there two processes, one going from one extreme to the other, and a second going in the opposite direction? For there is increase and decrease in between something greater and something lesser, and, accordingly, do we refer to one as increasing and the other as decreasing?" 71 b

"Yes."

"Doesn't this happen in all cases, separation and combination, cooling and heating? And even if we sometimes do not use the names, must it not, in fact, always be like this: that they are generated from one another, and there is generation into one another?"

"Certainly."

"What about this?" he said. "Is there an opposite of being alive, just as being awake is the opposite of being asleep?" 71 c

"There is, of course," he replied.

"What is it?"

"Being dead."

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12 The mysteries and rites of initiation referred to here are those that were associated with Orpheus.

13 This quote contrasts the true worshippers of Dionysus, the Bacchae, with those who merely carry the outward symbols of such worship, i.e. the thyrsus, a giant fennel stalk covered with ivy.

"Don't these come into being from one another since they are opposites, and, as there are two of them, aren't there two processes in between them?"

"There must be."

"Then," said Socrates, "I shall describe to you one pairing which we just referred to and its processes too, and you should then describe the other one to me. So I say that there is 'being asleep' 71 d and 'being awake', and from being asleep arises being awake, and from being awake arises being asleep, and the processes between the two are falling asleep and waking up. Is that enough for you," he said, "or not?"

"It is certainly enough."

"Then, describe life and death to me on this basis. Don't you say that being alive is the opposite of being dead?"

"I do, indeed."

"And do they arise from one another?"

"Yes."

"Then, what is generated from the living?"

"The dead."

"And what is generated from the dead?".

"I have to admit that it is the living."

"So, Cebes, do those who are alive, and anything that is alive, come into being from those who have died?"

71 e "It appears so," he replied.

"So in Hades our souls are."

"So it seems."

"Now, of the two processes involved here, one at any rate is evident, for dying is surely an evident process, is this so?"

"Yes, certainly"

"Well," he asked, "how shall we proceed? If we do not balance this with an opposite process, then won't nature be one-legged in this respect? Isn't it necessary to assign some process which is the opposite of dying?"

"Absolutely."

"What process is this?"

"Coming to life again."

"Now, if there is such a thing as coming to life again, would not the coming to life again be the 72 a generation of those who are alive, from those who have died?"

"Certainly."

"So, we agree that the living come into being from the dead in this way, just as much as the dead come from the living; and since this is the case, it seems there is sufficient proof that the souls of the dead necessarily exist somewhere, and they come into being once more, from there."

"It seems to me, Socrates," he said, "that based upon what has been agreed, this must be the case."

"Well, if you look at it this way, I think you will see that what we have agreed is right. For if the 72 b various processes did not always correspond to one another as if they were going around in a circle, but the generation was always in a straight line, only from something to its opposite, and it never turned back to the other again or went in the other direction, you know that everything would finally have the same form, suffer the same fate, and would stop coming into being."

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"It is not difficult to understand what I mean," he said. "For instance, if there were a process of falling asleep, on the one hand, without any corresponding process of awakening from sleep, you

know everything would eventually make Endymion[14] look insignificant, and his great sleep would 72 c
be of no account because everyone else would be the same as him, asleep. And if everything was combined and nothing was separated, the statement of Anaxagoras[15] that 'all things were together' would soon be fulfilled. By the same argument, dear Cebes, if everything which ever partakes of life were to die, and the dead were to remain in that condition once they had died, without coming back to life again, isn't it totally inevitable that eventually everything would be dead, and nothing would be alive? For if the living were to come into being from other sources, and the living, for 72 d
their part, were to die, is there any way to avoid everything being consumed by death?"

"I do not think so at all, Socrates," replied Cebes. "Yes, it seems to me that what you are saying is entirely true."

"Yes, Cebes," he said, "that is how it seems to me. It is truer than any account, and we are not deceived when we agree with all this. Yes, there is, in fact, also a process of coming back to life again, the living do come into being from those who have died, and the souls of those who have died exist.

"And indeed," Cebes said in response, "if that argument, Socrates, which you are in the 72 e
habit of recounting so frequently, is true, then according to that, learning for us is nothing other than recollection, and on this basis we must presumably have learned at some previous time what we are now remembering. But this would be impossible unless our soul was 73 a
somewhere before it took on this human form. So, in this way too, the soul seems to be something immortal."

Simmias interjected and said, "Cebes, what proofs have we for these claims? Please remind me, for I do not remember them very well at present."

"Well," said Cebes, "one excellent argument is this: if people are asked questions and someone questions them properly, the people, of themselves, describe everything as it is. However, if knowledge and a correct account were not within them, they would not have been able to do this. What is more, if someone shows them diagrams or the like, you have 73 b
the clearest evidence that this is the case."

"And," said Socrates, "as you are not quite persuaded by this, Simmias, let us see whether you will agree if you consider it as follows. Do you actually doubt that what we call learning is recollection?"

"I do not doubt it," said Simmias, "but I want to undergo the very process the argument is describing; I want to be reminded. From Cebes' attempt at the argument, I almost remember it already and I am persuaded. Nevertheless, I would now like to hear how you propose to deal with it."

"It goes like this," he said. "We agree, of course, that if someone is to be reminded of something, 73 c
he must have known that very thing on a previous occasion."

"Certainly," he replied.

"Now, do we also agree that whenever knowledge arises in a particular manner, it is recollection? What manner am I referring to? Well, if someone, having seen something or heard it or acquired some other perception of it, were to know not only that thing, but if he also thought of something else, something the knowledge of which was not the same but different, would we be right to say that he recollected whatever it was that he thought of?" 73 d

"What do you mean?"

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[14] Endymion was a beautiful mortal who was granted eternal youth by Zeus, who put him into an everlasting sleep, all at the request of Selene.

[15] Anaxagoras was a natural philosopher from Clazomenae in Ionia, who lived a generation before Socrates. His influence upon Socrates is described later in the dialogue.

"Something like this. Presumably the knowledge of man and of lyre are different."

"How could they not be?"

"You know that whenever lovers see a lyre or a garment or anything else which a favourite was in the habit of using, their experience is as follows. They recognise the lyre and they apprehend in their mind the figure of the boy who owns the lyre, and this is recollection, as when someone who has seen Simmias is often reminded of Cebes, and presumably there would be thousands of other examples of that sort."

"Yes, by Zeus, thousands," said Simmias.

73 e "Isn't that sort of thing a recollection, particularly when the experience relates to things which have already been forgotten through time and lack of consideration?"

"Yes, certainly," he replied.

"What about this?" he asked. "Isn't it possible to be reminded of a man on seeing a picture of a horse, or a picture of a lyre, or to be reminded of Cebes on seeing a picture of Simmias?"

"Very much so."

"And isn't it possible to be reminded of Simmias on seeing a picture of Simmias?"

74 a "It is, indeed."

"So, doesn't it follow from all this that there is recollection arising from likes, but also from unlikes?"

"It follows."

"But whenever someone recollects anything from like things, isn't there something else that must occur to him? Won't he recognise whether or not the thing lacks anything in respect of its likeness to whatever he is recollecting?"

"He must," replied Simmias.

"Well," he said, "consider if this is how these matters stand. We say, I presume, that there is something equal, not of wood to wood, or stone to stone, or anything else of that sort, but the equal itself, something different besides all these. May we say that there is such a thing or not?"

74 b "Indeed, let us say most certainly that there is. It is amazing, by Zeus."

"And do we know what it is?"

"Certainly," he replied.

"From where did we obtain the knowledge of this? Isn't it as we just said? From seeing pieces of wood or stone or other equals, we have brought that equal to mind from these, and that is different from these. Or does it not appear different to you? Think about this too, as follows. Do not equal pieces of wood and stone, being the same, sometimes appear equal to one thing but not to another?"

"Yes," certainly.

74 c "What about this? Did the equals themselves ever appear unequal to you, or equality to be inequality?"

"Not yet anyway, Socrates."

"Then these equals, and the equal itself, are not the same."

"Not at all, Socrates, not according to me."

"And yet," he said, "from these equals, which are different from that equal, the knowledge of equality has nevertheless come into your mind and been apprehended."

"What you say is very true," he said.

"Isn't it either like them or unlike them?"

"Certainly."

"But that makes no difference," he said. "As long as you see one thing and bring something else

74 d to mind from this observation, be it like or unlike, recollection must have taken place."

"Yes, certainly."

"What about this?" he said. "Is our experience somewhat as follows in relation to what is in the pieces of wood and in the equals we mentioned just now? Do they appear just as equal to us as the

equal just by itself, or do they lack something of that on account of being something that is like the equal, or do they lack nothing?"

"They are considerably lacking," he replied.

"Do we not agree that whenever someone sees something and thinks, 'what I now see is aiming to be like something else among things that are, however, it lacks something and is unable to be quite like that, instead it is inferior', presumably someone who recognises this must have had prior knowledge of that which he says it has come to resemble, and of which it is falling short?" 74 e

"He must."

"Well now, is this also our experience in relation to the equals and the equal itself, or is it not?"

"Entirely so."

"Then we must have had prior knowledge of the equal before that occasion when we first saw the equals and realised that these are all striving to be like the equal but attain it in a deficient manner." 75 a

"This is so."

"But then do we also agree that it is recognised, and can only be recognised from seeing, touching, or one of the other senses? I am saying that these are all the same."

"Yes, Socrates, they are the same, in the context of what this argument is trying to show."

"Well, in any event, we must have recognised from sense perceptions, that all perceptible equals are striving towards what equal is, and are deficient with respect to it. Or how would we express this?" 75 b

"In that way."

"Then, before we began to see and hear and use the other senses, I presume we must have acquired knowledge of what the equal itself is if we are to refer the equals perceived through the senses to that equal and recognise that everything of this sort endeavours to be like that, but is inferior to it."

"That must follow from what we said before, Socrates."

"Didn't we see and hear and use the other senses as soon as we were born?"

"Certainly." 75 c

"Then we must have acquired the knowledge of the equal before we acquired the senses. Is that what we are saying?"

"Yes."

"So, apparently we must have acquired this knowledge before we were born."

"So it seems."

"Therefore, if we were born possessing this knowledge, having acquired it before birth, then is it not the case that before we were born, and at birth, we knew not only the equal, and the more and the less, but everything of that sort too? Indeed, this argument is no more concerned with the equal than with beauty itself, good itself, justice, holiness, and as I say, everything to which we apply the term 'what it is', both in the enquiries when we ask questions, and in the responses when we answer them. In which case, we must have acquired the knowledge of all these before birth." 75 d

"That is it."

"And if after we have acquired it we have not forgotten it every time, we must always be born with the knowledge and live with the knowledge throughout our lives. For that is what knowing is, the retention of knowledge, without loss, once it has been acquired. For we do refer to forgetting as the loss of knowledge, do we not, Simmias?" 75 e

"Entirely so, Socrates, of course," he replied.

"On the other hand, I presume that if we acquired knowledge before birth and lost it in the process of birth, but later on, by using the senses in this regard, we re-acquired the knowledge we previously possessed, then what we call learning would be a re-acquisition of our own knowledge. And wouldn't we be right to call this recollection?"

"Certainly."

76 a "In fact, this was shown to be possible: that once we perceive something by sight or hearing, or apprehend it with some other sense, it is possible to bring something else to mind from this, something we have forgotten, something associated with it, which may be like it or unlike it. Consequently, as I say, there are two possibilities: either we were born knowing these things, and we all know them throughout life, or else later those who we say are learning are merely remembering, and in that case learning would be recollection."

"Yes, indeed, Socrates, that's how things stand."

76 b "Well, which will you choose, Simmias? Were we born with the knowledge or do we recollect later on what had previously been known?"

"I cannot choose just now, Socrates."

"What about this? Can you make a choice and form an opinion about the following? Would somebody who knows be able to give an account of what is known or not?"

"Yes, this must be so, Socrates," he replied.

"And do you think that everyone can give an account of the matters we have just been talking about?"

"I wish they could," said Simmias, "but I am very much afraid that this time tomorrow there will no longer be a single person who can do this in a worthy manner."

76 c "So it does not seem to you, Simmias, that everyone knows this?"

"Not at all."

"Then are they recollecting what was previously learned?"

"They must be."

"When did our souls acquire the knowledge of these things? For, evidently, it was not the very moment at which we were being born human beings."

"Of course not."

"So it was before then."

"Yes."

"So, Simmias, even before then, our souls were there, prior to being in human form without bodies, and possessed wisdom."

"Unless we acquire knowledge of these at the time we are being born, Socrates, for that particular occasion still remains for consideration."

76 d "So be it, my friend. But is there some different occasion when we lose it? For we have just agreed that we are not born possessing this knowledge. So do we lose it at the very time we acquire it? Or can you suggest some other time?"

"Not at all, Socrates. I was talking nonsense without realising it."

"Well, Simmias, is this how matters stand with us? If, on the one hand, as we are constantly repeat-
76 e ing, there is beauty and good, and all being of that kind, and we refer everything from the senses to this being, rediscovering what existed previously, and is our own, and we compare these to this, then just as surely as these exist so also must our souls exist before we were born. But on the other hand, if these do not exist, this argument would have proceeded differently. So is that how matters stand, is there an equal necessity that these exist and that our souls exist before we are born, and if these do not exist, neither do those?"

"Socrates, it certainly seems to me that the necessity is the same," said Simmias, "and the
77 a argument has taken refuge, quite beautifully, in the conclusion that the soul's existence before we were born is just as certain as the existence of the being you are now describing. For nothing is so clear to me as the fact that all such things, beauty, good and all the others you just mentioned, exist. Nothing could be more certain and, in my view, this has been adequately proven."

"And what about Cebes?" said Socrates. "For it is also necessary to persuade Cebes."

"In my view, it is enough for him too," replied Simmias. "However, he is the most obstinate of men when it comes to incredulity in the face of arguments. Now, I believe he has been adequately persuaded that our soul existed before we were born, but whether the soul will 77 b
continue to exist after we die seems unproven even to me, Socrates. Rather, the point made by Cebes still stands, the fear of the multitude that once a person dies, the soul is dispersed, and this is the end of its being. For why could it not arise and be constituted from some other source and exist before it arrives in human form? But once it has arrived and then departed, couldn't it too then come to an end and be destroyed?"

"You expressed that well, Simmias," said Cebes. "It seems as if what has been proven 77 c
is half of what is required, that our soul existed before we were born. But it is necessary to add a proof that after we die, it will exist no less than before birth, if the proof is to be complete."

"Well, Simmias and Cebes, that has been proven already," said Socrates, "provided you combine this argument and the one we agreed upon before this, the one about all the living being born from the dead, into the same argument. For if the soul also exists previously, and it must come 77 d
to life and come into being from nowhere else but from death and dying, surely it must exist after death since it has to be born again? So the proof you require has already been given. Nevertheless, I think that you and Simmias would also love to pursue this argument even further, and you are afraid, like children, lest, in truth, the wind will blow the soul away and scatter it when it departs from the body, especially if someone happens to die, not on a calm day, but during 77 e
a strong gale."

Cebes laughed at this, and said, "Try to reassure us, Socrates, as if we were afraid. We are not really afraid, but perhaps there is some child within us who is afraid of such things. So try to persuade him not to fear death, as he fears monsters."

"Then," said Socrates, "you should sing charms to him every day until this has been charmed away."

"Now, Socrates," he said, "where are we going to get a good singer of such charms, since 78 a
you are leaving us?"

"Greece is well populated, Cebes, and there are surely many good men there, and the non-Greek peoples are numerous too, so you should search all these thoroughly in pursuit of such a singer of charms, sparing neither money nor effort, for there is no better way to spend your money than on this. But you should also search with one another for you are unlikely to find anyone more capable of doing this than yourselves."

"Very well," said Cebes, "this shall be done. However, we should resume the discussion from where we left off, if that is acceptable to you." 78 b

"Of course it is acceptable. Why wouldn't it be?"

"Well spoken," he said.

"In that case," said Socrates, "should we ask ourselves a question like this: to what sort of thing does the fate of being scattered belong, and for what sort of thing should we fear this fate, and what sort of thing escapes it? Then should we go on to investigate which of the two is soul, and on this basis be confident or fearful for our own soul."

"What you say is true," he said.

"Now, doesn't it belong to something which has been compounded, and which is by nature a com- 78 c
pound, to suffer this fate and to be broken up in the same way it was compounded? But if there is anything which is un-compounded, it belongs to this alone, if anything, not to suffer such a fate."

"I think this is true," said Cebes.

"Now, the things which are always the same and unchanging are most likely to be the un-compounded things, while those which are constantly changing and never the same are those which are compounded. Is this so?"

"Well, it seems so to me, anyway."

78 d "Then let us go", he said, "to the same things we discussed earlier. Is the being itself, whose existence we give an account of through question and answer, always unchanging and the same, or is it constantly changing? The equal itself, the good itself, that which each itself is, and 'what is', do these ever admit any change whatsoever? Or does that which each of them always is, since it is uniform just by itself, remain the same and unchanging and never admit any alteration in any respect?"

"It must remain unchanging and the same, Socrates," said Cebes.

78 e "And what about the many beautiful things, such as people or garments or anything else of that sort, or the many equals, or anything else bearing the same name as those unchanging things? Do these remain the same, or in total contrast to those are they almost never ever the same as themselves or one another in any respect at all?"

"Yes, that is the way they are," said Cebes. "They never remain the same."

79 a "Now, these you can touch and see and perceive with the other senses. However, there is nothing else by which you could ever apprehend the unchanging things, except the reasoning of the mind, but such things are unseen and are not visible. Is this so?"

"What you are saying is entirely true," he replied.

"Then would you like us to propose two kinds of things that are, one visible, the other not visible?"

"Let us propose that."

"And does that which is not visible always remain the same, while the visible is never the same?"

"We should propose this too."

79 b "Come then," he said, "do we ourselves consist of anything other than body and soul?"

"Nothing else."

"Now, which kind do we say the body most resembles and to which is it most akin?"

"It is obvious to everyone that it resembles the visible kind."

"What about the soul? Is it visible or invisible?"

"It cannot be seen by humans anyway, Socrates."

"But surely we meant visible and invisible in the context of the nature of human beings? Or do you think otherwise?"

"No, the context is the nature of human beings."

"Now, what do we say about the soul? That it is visible or that it is invisible?"

"It is not visible."

"So it is invisible then?"

"Yes."

"So the soul is more like the invisible than the body is, while the body is more like the visible."

79 c "Yes, Socrates, it absolutely must be."

"Well have we not said this before? Whenever the soul makes use of the body to consider anything, either through sight or through hearing or through any other sense – for consideration through the body means considering anything through the senses – then the soul is dragged by the body to things which never remain the same. It wanders, is confused, and it is dizzy as though drunk because it is in contact with things of that sort."

"Yes, indeed."

79 d "But whenever it considers just by itself, the soul departs to another realm, to the pure, eternal, immortal and unchanging. And since it is akin to this, it is constantly in its presence, whenever it is just by itself and allowed to be so. Then the soul ceases its wandering, associates with these, and remains always the same and unchanging because it is in contact with things of that sort. And this condition of the soul is called wisdom."

"What you are saying is entirely beautiful and true, Socrates," he said.

79 e "Well then, from what we have already said and are now saying, which of the two kinds does the

soul seem to you to resemble, and to which is it more akin?"

"Socrates," he replied, "I think that anyone, even the slowest learner, would agree, based upon this approach, that the soul is completely and, in every respect, more like that which always remains the same, rather than that which does not."

"What about the body?"

"It is more like the other kind."

"Now, look at it this way. Once soul and body are together, nature directs the body to serve and be 80 a
ruled, and the soul to rule and dominate. And in these respects again, which of them do you think is like the divine and which like the mortal? Or don't you think the divine is naturally fitted to rule and to lead, and the mortal to be ruled and to serve?"

"Yes, I do."

"Then, which of them does the soul resemble?"

"It is obvious, Socrates, that the soul resembles the divine, while the body resembles the mortal."

"Then consider this, Cebes," he said. "From everything that has been said, are we to conclude that 80 b
the soul is most like the divine, immortal, single in form and indissoluble, which is known by reason and always remains unchanging and the same as itself? And is the body, on the other hand, most like the human, mortal, unreasoning, multiform and dissoluble, which never remains the same as itself? Do we have anything to say which contradicts this, dear Cebes, anything which says that this is not the case?"

"We have nothing."

"Well then, this being the case, doesn't it belong to the body to be readily dissolved, while the soul, for its part, is entirely indissoluble or almost so?"

"How could it be otherwise?" 80 c

"Now, you realise", he said, "that when a person dies, his visible part, the body, lying in the visible realm, the thing we call a corpse, is prone to dissolution, decomposition and dispersal. But none of these processes happens immediately; instead, it endures for quite a long time, and if someone dies while the body is in good condition and at the right time of life, it lasts even longer. Indeed, once the body has shrunk and has been embalmed as the Egyptians embalm them, it remains almost entire for a considerable period of time, and even when it decays, some parts of the body, bones 80 d
and sinews and everything of that sort, are virtually immortal. Isn't this so?"

"Yes."

"But does the soul, the unseen, go to another noble, pure and unseen place of this sort, a true Hades, alongside the good and wise god, whither, God willing, my own soul should go? Is something of this sort, endowed with such a nature, dispersed and destroyed as soon as it departs from the body, as most people say? Far from it, dear Cebes and Simmias. No, the outcome is much more like the 80 e
following. If the soul were to depart whilst pure, dragging nothing belonging to the body with it, because the soul had no willing communion with it in life but shunned it, and gathered itself into itself because that is its constant practice, then this is nothing but the proper practice of philosophy, and the true practice of dying without reluctance. Or would this not be the practice of death?" 81 a

"Entirely so."

"Once it is in this condition, will the soul not journey to that which is like it, to the unseen, the divine, immortal and wise, and on arrival will blessedness not be its lot, being released from wandering and stupidity, fears and wild passions and the other evils of the human condition? Then, as they say of the initiated, the soul truly spends the rest of the time with the gods. Should we describe it like this, Cebes, or in a different way?"

"In this way, by Zeus," replied Cebes.

"But if, on the other hand, it departs from the body, sullied and impure, because the soul constantly 81 b

associates with it, serving it and loving it and being enchanted by it through desires and pleasures, so that nothing seems to be true except what has bodily form, what one can touch and see, eat or drink, or use for sexual gratification, while anything obscure to the eyes and unseen, known by
81 c reason and apprehended by philosophy, is something it tends to hate, fear and shun, do you think that a soul in such a condition will depart pure, just by itself?"

"Not at all," he replied.

"Rather, when interpenetrated by that which has bodily form, I think this familiarity and association with the body forces the soul to adopt its nature due to the constant association and great concern with the physical."

"Yes, certainly."

"Well then, my friend, we must accept that this element is burdensome, heavy, earthy and visible. And, indeed, the kind of soul which possesses this is weighed down and dragged once more into the visible realm through fear of Hades and the unseen, and as the story goes, prowls about memo-
81 d rials and tombs, where indeed some shadowy apparitions of souls have actually been seen. These are the visible images of souls of this kind, souls which were not set free in a pure condition but partaking of the visible, and that is why they can be seen."

"Quite likely, Socrates."

"Yes, Cebes, and it is also likely that these are the souls not of good but of degenerate folk, who are compelled to wander about such places to pay the penalty for their former way of life which was bad. And they wander until they are bound once more in a body by the desire belonging to the
81 e bodily form, their close consort. And quite likely, they are bound in such habits as they have practised during life."

"What sort of habits do you mean, Socrates?"

"For instance, those who have practised gluttony, insolence or drunkenness, rather than avoiding
82 a these at all costs, are likely to take on the forms of donkeys or beasts of that sort. Or do you not think so?"

"What you are saying is certainly very likely."

"While those who have preferred injustice, tyranny and robbery take on the forms of wolves, hawks and kites. Or where else should we say such souls go?"

"Into creatures of this sort, of course," said Cebes.

"And obviously each of the others would take their course based upon the similarities of their concern."

"Yes, that is obvious. How could it be otherwise?"

82 b "Will the happiest among them not take the best course, those who have pursued civil and social virtue which they call sound-mindedness and justice, born of habit and concern but devoid of philosophy and of reason?"

"In what sense are they happiest?"

"Because it is likely that these people return once more to this sort of sociable or gentle class, perhaps as bees, wasps or ants, or even into the human race again, and from them moderate people are born."

"Quite likely."

"However, no one but the lover of knowledge, one who has practised philosophy and departs in
82 c an entirely pure condition, is allowed to attain the race of gods. And these are the reasons, Simmias my friend, and you too Cebes, why those who love wisdom aright abstain from all of the desires of the body and resist them and do not give themselves over to them. It is not because they fear poverty or loss of property, like most people who love wealth; nor again do they refrain from them because they are afraid of dishonour, or a reputation for depravity, like the lovers of power and reputation."

"Indeed, Socrates, that would not be appropriate," said Cebes.

"It certainly would not, by Zeus," he said. "For in fact, Cebes, those with any concern for their 82 d
own soul who do not live their lives fashioning bodies bid farewell to these fellows and do not follow the same path as people who do not know where they are going. They do not believe that they themselves should act in opposition to philosophy and the liberation and purifying process it affords, so they turn and follow philosophy wherever it may lead."

"How does this happen, Socrates?"

"I shall tell you," he said. "Those who love knowledge realise that when philosophy takes the soul 82 e
in hand, it is literally fettered within the body, glued to it, and the soul is compelled to view things that are through the body, as if it were a prison, rather than viewing them itself, through itself. The soul is wallowing in total ignorance, and philosophy discerns the most ingenious aspect of the prison, that it works by means of desires, so that the actual prisoner may be the greatest accomplice in his imprisonment. Now, as I was saying, the lovers of knowledge realise that when philosophy 83 a
takes their soul in hand in such a condition as this, it exhorts the soul gently and tries to set it free, pointing out that enquiry by means of the eyes is fraught with deceit, and that enquiry by means of the ears and the other senses is also deceptive.

"Philosophy persuades the soul to withdraw from the senses and use them only as much as necessary, imploring it to collect and gather itself into itself, trust nothing else except its own self, and what it can cognise just by itself, about things that are, just by themselves. The soul should 83 b
not believe that what it considers by any other means, things that are different in different circumstances, are true. These are known by the senses and are visible, but what soul sees is known by reason and is unseen by the senses.

"Now, the soul of the true philosopher does not think that this liberation should be resisted, and accordingly it refrains from pleasures and desires, pains and fears, as much as it is able to, realising that whenever people experience intense pleasure, pain, fear or desire, the extent of the evil which afflicts them as a consequence is not what they think it is. It is not disease or some 83 c
financial loss born of desire. No, it is the greatest and most extreme evil of all, this they experience and do not realise it."

"What is this evil, Socrates?" said Cebes.

"That whilst experiencing intense pleasure or pain, the soul of every person is compelled to believe that whatever is mainly responsible for the experience is completely evident and entirely true, when this is not the case. And these are, for the most part, visible, aren't they?"

"Yes, certainly."

"Is not the soul completely fettered by the body, in this experience?" 83 d

"In what way?"

"Because each pleasure and pain has a sort of nail which fastens and pins the soul to the body and makes it corporeal, fancying that whatever the body declares to be true is true. For I believe the soul is compelled to become like the body in manner and in nurture because it shares the body's opinions and it delights in the same things. And it can never enter Hades in a pure condition, but it always departs contaminated with the body, so that it quickly falls into another body and grows 83 e
there like a seed that is sown. Accordingly, the soul has no share in the company of the divine, the pure, and the unitary."

"What you are saying is very true, Socrates," said Cebes.

"Now, Cebes, that is why those who love knowledge aright are orderly and courageous, and not for the reasons that most people give. Or do you think it is?"

"I certainly do not." 84 a

"No indeed, the soul of the person who loves wisdom would reason as we have described and would never deign to use philosophy to free itself, and then, once free, give itself over again to

pleasure and pain, fetter itself once more, and perform the endless task of Penelope,[16] weaving some web in the opposite direction. Instead, the soul maintains serenity in the face of these, following reason and abiding always in that, beholding what is true and divine and beyond opinion,
84 b and being nourished by these. It thinks it should live in this way while it remains alive, and when it dies, arriving among its own kindred and kind, be released from the evils of humanity. Now, there is no danger, Simmias and Cebes, that a soul, nourished in this way, will be afraid once it has practised this, afraid that it may be dispersed on departure from the body, be blown away by the wind, take flight, and no longer be anywhere at all."

84 c Now, there was silence for quite some time after Socrates had said all this, and it looked as if he himself was reflecting on the discussion which had concluded, and so too were most of us. But Simmias and Cebes were conversing with one another in whispers. When Socrates noticed them, he asked, "What is this? Perhaps you think that these arguments have been poorly presented. Of course, they still afford many grounds for suspicion and points of attack, if someone really intends to scrutinise them properly. Now, if you are considering some other issue, then I have nothing to say. However, if some aspect of these arguments is perplexing you, do not hesitate to state it and
84 d scrutinise it yourselves if, in your view, it could have been better formulated. And what is more, you should include me in the discussion if you think you might make better progress with my involvement."

And Simmias said, "In fact, Socrates, to tell you the truth, both of us have been perplexed for some time, one urging the other on and telling him to ask you a question, as we wanted to hear your response. However, we were reluctant to make any trouble, in case it might be unpleasant for you because of the present misfortune."

When he heard this, Socrates laughed gently, and said, "Oh dear, Simmias, I shall certainly
84 e have difficulty in persuading other people that I do not regard my present predicament as a misfortune, when I cannot even persuade you two. Instead, you are afraid that I am more ill-tempered now than I have been all my life. And apparently you think I am less of a prophet than the swans who
85 a sing throughout their lives but sing most of all, and most beautifully, once they realise that they must die, rejoicing because they are about to enter the company of the god whom they are serving.

"But human beings, on account of their own fear of death, utter falsehoods even about the swans, and say that they sing their song of departure in sorrow, lamenting their death. They do not appreciate that no bird ever sings when it is hungry or cold or suffering any other distress, not even the nightingale or the swallow or the hoopoe, birds which are actually said to be singing
85 b lamentations in sorrow. But neither these nor the swans appear to me to be singing in sorrow. I think, rather, that because they are birds of Apollo, swans have prophetic powers, and foreseeing all the good of Hades, they sing and are more delighted on that day than they ever were before. And I myself believe that I am their fellow servant, devoted to the same god, possessing a prophetic power from the lord which is no less than theirs, and I am no more distressed than they are to depart this life. So on that account, you should say or ask anything you want, for as long as the eleven officers of the Athenians allow it."

85 c "That is beautifully expressed," said Simmias, "and I shall tell you what is perplexing me, and Cebes will, in turn, say why he does not accept what has been said. It seems to me, Socrates, and perhaps to you too, that definite knowledge of such matters is either impossible or extremely difficult in this life. That said, however, it is a very faint-hearted person who does not scrutinise the arguments about these matters in every manner possible, without giving up until totally exhausted by the enquiry. For we should proceed on these issues in one of two ways, either learn
85 d or discover how matters stand, or if this is impossible, then adopt the best and most unassailable argument of humankind, climb on board that, as if it were a raft in a perilous sea, and sail upon it

through life, unless one can travel on a more secure vessel, some divine word, safely and free from danger. What is more, I will not be ashamed to ask a question now, in view of what you are saying, nor shall I blame myself later on because I did not say what I am now thinking. Indeed, Socrates, when I consider what has been said, either from my own perspective or from Cebes' perspective, the account does not appear entirely adequate."

And Socrates said, "Perhaps this appearance is true, my friend, but you should explain in 85 e
what way the account is inadequate."

"It seems to me inadequate," Simmias said, "in this sense. Someone might propose the very same argument in relation to attunement and a lyre and its strings, saying that the attunement is indeed an unseen, non-physical, entirely beautiful and divine element in the tuned lyre, while the 86 a
lyre itself and its strings are, by contrast, physical objects with physical form. They are compounds, which are earthly and akin to the mortal. So when someone breaks the lyre, or cuts and severs the strings, if someone were to maintain the same argument as you, he would say that this attunement must still exist and cannot have perished because there would be no way the lyre could still exist with its strings severed, strings that are mortal in nature, while the attunement, which is similar in 86 b
nature and akin to the divine and immortal, perishes before the mortal perishes. He would claim, rather, that the attunement itself must somehow still exist, and the wood and strings must rot away first before anything happens to that. And in fact, Socrates, I think you yourself are aware that this is the sort of thing we actually take the soul to be. It is as if our body is tempered and held together by hot and cold, dry and moist, and the like, and that our soul is a blend and attunement of these 86 c
very elements once they are properly mixed with one another in a measured way.

"Now, if the soul happens to be an attunement, it is obvious that whenever the body is relaxed beyond measure or is strained by diseases or other evils, the soul, even though it is utterly divine, must perish immediately, just like the other attunements in sounds or in any manufactured objects. And what remains of each body must last for a long time until it is either burned up or rots away. 86 d

"So consider this, how shall we respond to this argument if someone asserts that the soul, being a blend of elements in the body, is the first thing to perish in what we call death?"

Socrates, as he did so often, stared openly, smiled, and said, "Simmias is making a fair point. Now, if anyone here is more resourceful than I am, why do they not respond to him for he does actually seem to be coming to terms with the argument quite well? However, before we respond, I think it is useful to hear first what further objection Cebes is raising about the argument. 86 e
That will give us time to decide what we shall say, and then, once we have heard them both, we shall agree with them if their objections seem to ring true in any way, and if not, then we shall proceed to defend the argument at that stage. So come on, Cebes," he said, "speak up. What else was bothering you?"

"Speak I shall," said Cebes, "for it appears to me that the argument is still in the same predicament and is open to the same objection we stated previously. I will not retract the argument 87 a
that our soul existed even before it entered this form, as this has been elegantly and, if it is no exaggeration to say so, quite thoroughly proven. However, the argument that it still exists, somehow, after we die, does not seem to me to have been proven. I do not accept Simmias' point that the soul is less strong and less enduring than the body, for I think it is far superior in all these respects. So, the argument might ask me, 'Why are you still incredulous when you can see that the weaker part still exists after the person dies? Do you not accept that the more enduring part 87 b
must still survive at that particular time?'

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[16] Penelope was the wife of Odysseus. She had promised to marry one of her suitors once she finished weaving a shroud for her father-in-law. In order to deceive the suitors, she wove by day and undid each day's work by night. Thus, her task of weaving was endless. *Odyssey* ii.92-105.

"Now, determine whether my response to this makes any sense. Indeed, just like Simmias, it seems I shall also need to use an image. For I think that what is being said is quite like the following argument about an old man, a weaver, who has died. Someone might say that the man has not perished but is somehow alive and well, and they might offer the garment he used to wear and which he had woven himself, as evidence, because it is safe and sound and has not perished. And
87 c if anyone was unconvinced by this, he might ask them whether a human being is longer lasting than a garment he uses and wears, and having received the answer that the person is much longer lasting, he might think he had proved that the person is alive and well since the less enduring object has not perished. But I do not think that this is the case, Simmias, so consider what I am about to say. Everyone would appreciate that this is a ridiculous argument to propose, because this weaver, having woven and worn out many such garments, has perished after them, although there were
87 d many. However, I presume he perished before the last of them and a man is not in any degree inferior to, or weaker than, a garment on that account.

"Now, I think the soul's relation to the body would admit the same comparison, and anyone who uses these very arguments in that context would appear to me to be speaking reasonably, because the soul is long lasting, while the body is weaker and less enduring. He would argue that in fact each of the souls wears out numerous bodies, especially if it lives for many years, for if the body is in flux and is perishing while the person is still alive, then the soul is constantly weaving anew whatever
87 e has been worn away. Yet when the soul perishes, it must be wearing the last garment it wove, and it must perish before that one, and that one alone. And with the perishing of the soul, the body would demonstrate its natural weakness at that stage and would quickly rot away and be gone.

"Accordingly, we should not yet deem this argument worthy of belief and be confident that
88 a our soul will still exist after we die. For suppose we were to make even more concessions to this disputant than you suggest, and grant to him that our soul exists, not only in the interval before our birth, but concede that there is no reason why, in some cases, it should not still exist even after we die, and continue to exist, and be born and die again many times, as the soul is so strong by nature that it can withstand being born many times. Yet having granted this, we would still not accept that the soul is unaffected during its multiple births, and that it will not come to an end
88 b during one of the particular deaths and perish completely. But he would reply that no one has ever known the particular death and the particular dissolution of the body which brings destruction to the soul, since it is impossible for any of us to be aware of it. And if this is the case, it is not appropriate for anyone to have confidence in the face of death, a confidence which is not unreasonable unless he can prove that the soul is completely immortal and indestructible. Otherwise, anyone who is about to die must be in constant fear on behalf of his own soul, lest it perish utterly during its present separation from the body."

88 c Now, when the rest of us had heard them saying all this, we became unsettled, as we confessed to one another afterwards, because having been strongly persuaded by the previous argument, Simmias and Cebes now seemed to be disturbing us once more and casting us into doubt, not only in relation to the earlier discussion but also in relation to matters we would discuss later on. We feared that we might not be worthy judges of anything, or even that the issues themselves might be subject to doubt.

ECHECRATES: By the gods, Phaedo, I have sympathy for you. In fact, when I heard you saying this
88 d just now, I started thinking to myself, 'What argument can we still believe in? The argument presented by Socrates was highly persuasive, but now its credibility has collapsed.' In fact this argument that our soul is an attunement is extraordinarily captivating to me now, and it always has been, and when you mention this it reminds me that I hold these views already. And I really need some other argument to convince me once more, from the beginning, that

the soul of a dying man does not die along with him. So tell me, by Zeus, how did Socrates pursue the argument? And what about the man himself, did he show any sign of being upset like the rest of you, or did he defend the argument calmly? And did he defend it adequately, or were there deficiencies? Tell us everything as precisely as you can. 88 e

PHAEDO: Well now, Echecrates, I had been amazed by Socrates many times before, but I was never as delighted as I was in his company at that moment. The fact that the man had something to say was not really anything unusual, but I was most amazed: firstly, at the pleasant, gracious and admiring way he accepted the argument of the young men; also by how keenly he discerned how we had been affected by their arguments; and finally by how well he cured us, rallied us as if we were fleeing in defeat, and turned us around to follow him and examine the argument together. 89 a

ECHECRATES: How did he do this?

PHAEDO: I shall tell you.

I was sitting to the right of Socrates on a small stool beside the bed and he was seated much higher up than me. He stroked my head and gathered up the hair around my neck, for he was accustomed, on occasion, to play with my hair. "Tomorrow," he said, "perhaps you will cut off these beautiful locks, Phaedo." 89 b

"Quite likely, Socrates," I replied.

"Not if you let me persuade you."

"What would happen then?" I said.

"I will cut my hair today," he said, "and you will cut these locks if our argument meets its end and we prove unable to bring it back to life. And if I were you and the argument got away from me, I would take an oath, just like the Argives,[17] not to let my hair grow until I had defeated the arguments of Simmias and Cebes in a fresh battle." 89 c

"But`," said I, "they say that even Heracles could not do battle against two."

"Then," said he, "call upon me, your Iolaus,[18] so long as it is still daylight."

"Yes, I shall call upon you," I said, "but I am no Heracles; I am Iolaus calling upon Heracles."

"It will make no difference," he said, "but first let us beware that a particular misfortune does not befall us."

"What?" I asked.

"Let us not become haters of discourse," he said, "just as some people become haters of humanity, for there is no greater evil that could befall a person than developing a hatred of discourse. But hatred of discourse and hatred of humanity both arise in the same manner. The hatred of humanity arises from placing a strong trust in someone without any experience and believing the person to be entirely true, sound and trustworthy, but finding a little later that he is evil and untrustworthy. And if this happens again with someone else, and the man has this experience frequently, especially with people he regards as his closest acquaintances and best friends, he ends up being buffeted so often that he hates everyone and believes that no one is in any way sound at all. Or have you never noticed this happening before?" 89 d 89 e

"I have indeed," I replied.

"Now," he said, "is this not shameful, and is it not obvious that such a person is attempting to deal with humanity without any experience in human affairs? For presumably, if he had any skill when he dealt with them, he would have realised how matters stand, that those who are extremely good 90 a

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17 The men of Argos swore an oath not to let their hair grow until they had defeated the Spartans in battle.

18 Iolaus was the nephew of Heracles, who assisted his uncle in some of his Labours.

and those who are extremely evil are both rare, while those in between are many."

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"Take extremely large and small things as an example. Do you think there is anything rarer than finding an extremely large or extremely small man or dog or any other animal? And does not the same also apply to quick and slow, ugly and beautiful, white and black? Have you not noticed that in all such cases the utmost extremes are rare and few, while those in between are plentiful and numerous?"

"Yes, indeed," I replied.

90 b "Do you not think", he asked, "that if a competition in badness were instituted, very few people would prove to belong in the first rank?"

"Quite likely," I replied.

"Likely indeed," he said, "but arguments are not similar to people in this respect. No, you gave a lead just now and I followed it. The similarity shows itself rather when someone who lacks any skill in relation to arguments believes a particular argument to be true, and then a little later the argument seems to him to be false, and sometimes this is the case and sometimes it is not, and this

90 c happens again and again. And you know that those who have spent a lot of time in disputatious arguments finally decide that they have become the wisest of men, that they alone have realised that there is nothing sound or certain either in the things themselves, or in the arguments, but that all of the things that are, are literally being turned upwards and downwards, as if they were in the strong tides of the Euripus, never constant for a moment."

"Yes, certainly," I replied, "what you are saying is true."

"Now, Phaedo," he said, "would it not be a sad situation if there were, in fact, some true and certain

90 d argument that was capable of being understood, and yet, through encounter with some arguments of this sort, the kind which seem true one moment and false the next, a man were to blame not himself or his own lack of skill, but was finally in such pain that he gladly pushed the blame away from himself, onto the arguments, and spent the rest of his life from then on hating and reviling arguments, and was deprived of the truth and knowledge of things that are?"

"Yes, by Zeus," I replied, "a sad situation indeed."

90 e "Well," he said, "first and foremost we should guard carefully against this, and never allow into our souls the notion that no arguments are sound. Instead, it is much better to accept that we are not yet in a sound condition ourselves, and that we should take courage and be eager to attain a

91 a sound condition, you and the others, for the sake of the rest of your lives, and I for the sake of death itself. Yes, I am unlikely to retain a philosophical approach to this particular issue under the present circumstances, but like highly uneducated folk I may become keen on victory. For whenever such people are debating about something, they do not consider what the argument is about and the status of that. Instead they are eager that whatever they themselves have proposed be accepted by those who are present, and I think that I differ from them only to this extent at present; I am not eager, except incidentally, that what I am saying should seem true to the people here, but

91 b that it should seem as true as possible to me. For I reckon, dear friend, and you should note how greedy I am, that if what I am saying happens to be true, it is really good to be persuaded by it. But if, in fact, there is nothing for people who have died, then in this interval before my own death I shall still be less bothersome to the company with my lamentations, and my ignorance will not persist to the last, for that would have been terrible, but it will come to an end quite soon."

"Well, Simmias and Cebes, I am now fully prepared to embark upon the discussion. You,

91 c however, if you take my advice, should pay little regard to Socrates, and much more regard to the truth, and if I actually seem to you to be saying anything true then you should agree, but if not, you should resist with every possible argument, being careful lest in my eagerness I deceive both myself and yourselves at the same time, and depart like a bee leaving my sting behind.

"Let us proceed then," he said. "First, the two of you should remind me of what you said, in case I have actually forgotten. Yes, I think Simmias had doubts and was afraid lest the soul, even though it is more divine and more beautiful than the body, might perish before it, as it is in a 91 d
kind of attunement. I think Cebes, on the other hand, agreed with me over this, that the soul is longer lasting than the body. But he says that it is not obvious to anyone that the soul, having repeatedly worn out many bodies, will not itself perish when it leaves the last body and this may be death, the destruction of the soul, since the body is always perishing unceasingly. So, Simmias and Cebes, are these the issues we need to consider?"

"They both agreed that these were the issues." 91 e

"Now, do you reject all of the previous arguments or do you accept some and reject others?"

"We accept some and reject others," they replied.

"Well," he said, "what do you say about the argument in which we stated that learning is recollection and, since this is the case, it necessarily follows that our soul existed elsewhere before she was 92 a
imprisoned in the body?"

"I found it wonderfully persuasive at the time," said Cebes, "and I still do now, more than any argument."

"Yes, indeed," said Simmias, "I share the same view, and I would be very surprised if I ever found myself holding a different opinion about it."

And Socrates said, "But you will have to hold a different opinion, my Theban friend, if you persist with the idea that an attunement is a compound entity, and the soul is an attunement constituted from the elements of the body once they are in tune. For I presume you would not accept the suggestion that an attunement may be constituted before there were the elements from which it must 92 b
be composed. Or would you accept this?"

"Not at all, Socrates," he said.

"Now, are you aware," he said, "that these are the consequences of what you propose whenever you assert that the soul exists before it enters the form and body of a human being, and on the other hand, that it is constituted from elements that do not yet exist? For your attunement and what you are comparing it to are not really alike; no, the lyre, strings and sounds come into existence 92 c
first, and they are not tuned at that stage, but the attunement is established last of all, and it is first to perish. So how will this argument be harmonised with the other one, in your view?"

"That is not possible at all," said Simmias.

"But surely an argument about attunement should be harmonious, if any argument should be."

"It should," said Simmias.

"Then your argument is not in harmony. So decide. Which of the arguments do you prefer, that learning is recollection or that the soul is an attunement?"

"I much prefer the former, Socrates," he replied. "For this occurred to me without any proof, 92 d
based upon a certain likelihood and plausibility, which is why most people hold this view. However, I am conscious that arguments which construct their proof on the basis of likelihoods are imposters, and if we are not alert to them they are extremely deceptive, both in geometry and in everything else. But the argument about recollection and learning was expounded through an hypothesis which deserved acceptance. For it was said, I presume, that our soul exists before it enters the body just as surely as its being, bearing the name 'what is', exists. And I am convinced that I have accepted this in an appropriate and correct 92 e
manner. So, for these reasons, it seems that I must not accept my own or anyone else's assertion that soul is an attunement."

"But what about this, Simmias?" he asked. "Do you think it is natural for an attunement, or any 93 a
other compound entity, to be in a different condition than the condition of the elements from which it is constituted?"

"Not at all."

"Nor indeed, I imagine, would the compound do anything or experience anything else besides what the elements either do or experience?"

He concurred.

"So it is natural for an attunement not to lead the elements it is composed of, but to follow them."

He agreed.

"Then an attunement is quite unable to move in opposition, or sound in opposition, or be opposed in any way to its own parts."

"Yes, quite unable."

"What about this? Is not each attunement by nature an attunement as it has been tuned?"

"I do not understand."

93 b "Well, if it had been more tuned or tuned to a greater extent, assuming that can actually happen, it would be more an attunement and an attunement to a greater extent. And if it had been less tuned or tuned to a lesser extent, it would be less an attunement and an attunement to a lesser extent."

"Yes, certainly."

"Now, does this also apply to the soul, so that, however slightly, one soul is more what it is than another? Is it more and to a greater extent, or less and to a lesser extent, a soul?"

"Not in any way."

"Come on then, by Zeus," he said, "do we say that one soul has reason and virtue and is good
93 c while another has ignorance and wickedness and is bad? And is it true to say this?"

"It is true indeed."

"Now, what will any of those who assert that the soul is an attunement say that these things, virtue and the vice, in our souls are? Are they some further separate attunement or non-attunement? And does the attuned soul, the good one, even though it is an attunement, also have another attunement within itself, while the one that is not attuned is just itself and does not have another attunement within it?"

"I cannot tell," said Simmias, "but whoever proposes that hypothesis would obviously be saying something of that sort."

93 d "But we have already agreed that one soul is not more or less a soul than another, and this is the agreement, that one attunement is not more an attunement or an attunement to a greater extent, or less an attunement or an attunement to a lesser extent, than another one. Is this so?"

"Yes, certainly."

"And, being neither more nor less an attunement, it is neither more nor less attuned. Is this the case?"

"It is."

"And does that which is neither more nor less attuned partake of attunement to a greater extent, to a lesser extent, or to an equal extent?"

"Equal."

93 e "Now, since one soul is no more or less what it is than another one, namely a soul, then it is neither more nor less attuned."

"Quite so."

"And if it is characterised in this way, it could not partake of attunement, or lack of attunement, to any greater extent, could it?"

"It could not."

"And what is more, if it is characterised in this way, could one soul partake of virtue or vice to a greater extent than another one, if vice is indeed a lack of attunement and virtue is an attunement?"

"Not to a greater extent, no."

94 a "Rather, Simmias, according to the correct argument, if soul is indeed an attunement, no soul will partake of vice. For, obviously, an attunement, being completely an attunement, would never

partake of lack of attunement."

"No, indeed."

"Nor, of course, would a soul, being completely a soul, partake of vice."

"No, how could it, based upon what we said earlier, at least."

"So, based upon this argument, we find that the souls of all living beings will be equally good, since souls are by nature equally what they are, namely, souls."

"That is how it seems to me anyway, Socrates," he said.

"And do you think this has been well argued, and would the argument have ended up in this predicament if the hypothesis that the soul is an attunement was correct?" 94 b

"Not at all," he replied.

"What about this?" he asked. "Of all the elements in a person, is there anything else that rules, according to you, except soul, especially if it also possesses understanding?"

"I do not think so."

"Now, does it act in agreement with the affections of the body or in opposition to them? I mean, in situations where there is heat or thirst within the body, soul draws it in the opposite direction, away from drinking, and when there is hunger, it draws the hunger away from eating, and presumably we are aware of countless other examples of the soul opposing the affections of the body. 94 c Is this not so?"

"Yes, certainly."

"Furthermore, did we not agree earlier that if the soul is an attunement, it would never strike a note in opposition to the tensions, relaxations, vibrations or any other experiences which its constituents undergo; rather, it would follow them and never act as leader?"

"We did agree," he said, "how could one disagree?"

"But look, do we not now find the soul exemplifying behaviour which is the complete opposite, leading all these elements of which some say it is composed, opposing them throughout life in 94 d almost everything, and dominating them in every way? Sometimes it chastises them more severely with painful processes based upon gymnastics, or medicine, sometimes more gently by threatening and admonishing, talking to the desires, passions and fears as though they constituted a separate entity. I suppose it is like what Homer wrote in the *Odyssey*, where Odysseus says:

He smote his breast and rebuked his heart with the words,
'Endure, my heart, you have endured far worse.'[19]

"Now, do you think he wrote this in the belief that soul is an attunement, the sort of thing which 94 e is led by the affections of the body, rather than leading them and dominating them, as it is a far more divine entity than any attunement?"

"By Zeus, Socrates, I do not think so."

"Then, my excellent friend, it is not at all appropriate for us to state that soul is an attunement, for 95 a it seems we would be disagreeing with the divine poet Homer and with ourselves."

"That is how matters stand," he said.

"In that case," said Socrates, "it seems we have somehow placated the Theban goddess, Harmonia, quite well. But Cebes," he said, "what about Cadmus,[20] how shall we placate him, and with what argument?"

"I think you will find a way," said Cebes. "At least you presented this last argument, the one about attunement, wonderfully, and contrary to what I expected. For while Simmias was describing his difficulty, I really wondered if anyone would be able to come to terms 95 b

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[19] *Odyssey* xx.17-18

[20] Cadmus was the legendary founder of Thebes, and his wife was Harmonia, daughter of Ares and Aphrodite. Socrates plays here upon their reciprocal relationship.

with his argument. So I thought it was remarkable when it failed to withstand the first attack of your argument. Now, I would not be at all surprised if the argument of Cadmus were to suffer the same fate."

"Good man," said Socrates, "do not be boastful in case some malign influence overturns the impending argument. Anyway, God will take care of that while we, grappling like Homeric heroes, should try to find out if you are saying anything significant. And the essence of what you are looking for is this: you are asking to be shown that since our souls are indestructible and immortal, a man who loves wisdom and who is confident when he is about to die will not be demonstrating an irrational and foolish confidence by believing he is going to fare well when he gets there, better than if he died after living a different sort of life. But as for showing that the soul is strong and divine and had a previous existence before we were born as human beings, you say that all these facts may just as easily indicate not immortality, but only that the soul is long lasting and has somehow existed for a considerable period of time and has known and done a great deal. But in fact that did not make it any more immortal. Rather, this entry into a human body was the beginning of its demise, just like a disease, and the soul lives this life in suffering and finally perishes in what we call death.

"You also say that it makes no difference whether it enters a body once or many times, as far as the fear death holds for us is concerned. Indeed, unless he is stupid, it is appropriate for someone to be afraid when he does not know and is unable to uphold in argument that the soul is immortal. So Cebes, I think these are the sort of issues you are raising, and I am deliberately going over them again and again in case anything escapes us, or there is anything you may wish to add or retract."

"No," said Cebes, "there is nothing I need to add or retract at the moment, and these are the issues I am raising."

Socrates paused for a long time, and he was considering something to himself. "Cebes," he said, "the question you are pursuing is not trivial, for it involves comprehensive deliberation about the cause of generation and destruction. I shall recount my own experiences of these topics, if you wish. Then, if anything I say proves helpful to you with regard to the reassurance you are referring to, you may make use of it."

"Well, I certainly want that," said Cebes.

"Then listen to what I am going to say," he said. "When I was young, Cebes, I was extraordinarily eager for that wisdom which they call the science of nature. To me it seemed magnificent to know the causes of each thing, why each thing comes into being, why it perishes and why it is. And I was constantly changing my direction back and forth, asking, firstly: do living creatures develop when hot and cold bring about some fermentation, as some people say? Is it the blood with which we think, or is it air or fire? Or is it actually none of these but rather the brain which provides for the senses of hearing, seeing and smelling, from which arise memory and opinion and once memory and opinion have acquired stability, does knowledge arise on the basis of them? And then going on to consider their corruption, and the things that happen in the heavens and on the earth, I finally deemed myself naturally unsuited to this sort of investigation, almost useless.

"I will give you enough evidence as follows: before this, there were certain things I knew quite well, or so it seemed to me and to others, but later on I was so utterly blinded by this investigation that I unlearned what I previously thought that I knew about many other matters, and even about why a person grows. Before this, I thought it was obvious to everyone that this is due to eating and drinking. For from the food that is eaten, flesh is added to flesh, bone to bone, and through the same process, their own substance is also added to the other parts, and eventually the lesser bulk becomes greater and this is how the small person becomes big. That is what I thought at the time. Does that sound reasonable to you?"

"To me, yes," said Cebes.

"Then consider this too. I used to regard it as acceptable for me to think that whenever a man standing beside a small man appears large, it is on account of the head itself that he is larger, and 96 e
the same goes for horses. And it seemed even more evident to me that the ten is greater than the eight because the two is added to them, and the two cubits are greater than the one cubit because it exceeded it by half its length."

"Yes, but what do you think about these matters now?" asked Cebes.

"By Zeus," he said, "I am far from convinced that I know any of the causes of these things, when I cannot even accept for myself that whenever someone adds one to one, either the one to which it is added has become two, or that the added one and the one to which it is added became two, 97 a
due to the addition of the former to the latter. For I am amazed that when each of them was apart from the other, each was somehow one and neither then was two, and yet, once they drew near to one another, this was, in itself, somehow the cause of their becoming two, this coming together in which they are placed near one another.

"Nor can I ever persuade myself that if someone divides one, this division is itself the cause of its becoming two. For this cause of its becoming two turns out to be the opposite of the previous 97 b
cause. Previously it was because they were drawn together, close to one another, and were added to each other, but now it is because they are drawn apart, and separated from each other. Neither can I ever persuade myself that I know how one arises, nor for that matter how anything else comes into being, or perishes, or is, based upon this manner of approach. No, I do not accept this at all, and instead I somehow devise an alternative manner of approach of my own.

"But one day I heard someone reading from a book which he said was by Anaxagoras, 97 c
which was saying that reason is what sets things in order and is the cause of everything. Now, I was pleased with this explanation, and it somehow seemed appropriate to me that reason is the cause of all, and I decided that if this is the case then reason, as it is ordering everything, orders and arranges each thing in the best possible manner. Therefore, if someone should wish to discover the cause according to which each thing comes into being, perishes, or is, then he needs to discover the best way for that thing to be, or undergo, or enact anything at all. And so, based on this account, 97 d
a person should consider nothing else about himself or about anything else, except what is most excellent and best. And then the same person necessarily knows what is worse, for the knowledge concerned with both is the same.

"As I reflected on all this, I was delighted to think I had found a teacher of the cause of the things that are, whose reasoning was in accord with my own. I thought Anaxagoras would also tell me first whether the earth was flat or round, and when he had told me that, he would also 97 e
explain the cause and necessity thereof, describing what is best and why it was better for the earth to be like that. And if he said it was in the centre, he would go on to explain that it was better for it to be in the centre. And if he could clarify these issues for me, I had resolved not to long for any 98 a
other kind of cause. What is more, I had resolved to conduct an enquiry into the sun and the moon and the other stars in the same manner, their speed relative to one another, their inclinations and their other characteristics, and the precise way in which it is better for each of them to behave as they do, and to undergo whatever happens to them. Indeed, once he had stated that these are ordered by reason, I never thought he would attribute any other cause to them, except that it is best for them to be in the state they are actually in. Therefore, I thought that in assigning the cause to each 98 b
of the things and to all of them together, he would go on to explain what is best for each of them, and good for all of them together. And I would not have traded these hopes for anything. No, I acquired the books eagerly and read them as quickly as I could, so that I would know the best and the worst as quickly as I could.

"Well, my friend, my wonderful hope was wrenched away from me when I continued with

my reading and beheld a man neither having recourse to reason nor assigning to it any responsi-
98 c bility for the ordering of things but assigning responsibility to air and ether and water and numerous other oddities. And he seemed to me to be behaving just like someone who says that anything Socrates does is done on account of reason. But then, when he tries to state the causes of each action I perform, he might say, firstly, that the explanation for my sitting in this place now is that my body is constituted from bones and sinews, and the bones are hard and have joints separating
98 d them from one another, while the sinews, which can be tensed and relaxed, surround the bones, as does the flesh and the skin which encloses them. Well, since the bones are dangling in their own sockets, the tightening and loosening of the sinews now enables me somehow to bend my limbs, and this is the cause of my sitting here with my legs bent. And likewise with regard to our conversation, he might also propose other causes of this sort, describing sounds, air currents,
98 e auditory experience and countless other such factors as causes, neglecting to mention the true causes, that once the Athenians had decided it was better to condemn me, I in turn decided it was indeed better for me to sit here, because it was more just to remain and submit to whatever penalty
99 a they might dictate. Since, by the dog, I am sure these bones and sinews would have been in Megara or Boeotia long ago, impelled by an opinion about what was best, if I had not thought it more just and noble to submit to whatever penalty the city might impose, rather than taking flight and running away.

"But to refer to such factors as causes is most absurd. And yet, if anyone were to say that without having such things as bones and sinews, and anything else I possess, I would be unable to do whatever I decide to do, he would be speaking the truth. To say, however, that I do what I do because of these, and that I also perform them on account of reason, and not on account of choosing
99 b what is best, would show a very great disregard for the argument. Imagine being unable to make the distinction between the actual cause, on the one hand, and that in the absence of which the cause would never be a cause, on the other hand. Yes, it seems to me that most people are groping about in the dark, and making use of an inappropriate name, when they refer to this as a cause. And on this basis, some place a vortex about the earth, and make the earth remain in place on
99 c account of the heavens, while others support the earth just like a flat dish resting upon air. But the power by which these are now situated in the best way that they could have been placed is a power which they neither look for nor credit with any divine strength. Instead they believe they will eventually discover some Atlas[21] who is stronger and more immortal than this, who will do a better job of encompassing them all, and it never occurs to them that, in truth, the good and the right bind and encompass. Now, I would gladly have become the pupil of anyone at all in order to learn the precise nature of such a cause as this. However, since this was denied me and I proved unable either to find it myself or learn from someone else, would you like me, Cebes, to give an exposition
99 d of how I undertook the second sailing in search of the cause?" he asked.

"Yes, I would like that very much," he replied.

"Well, after this, since I was exhausted from studying the things that are, it seemed to me that I should beware lest I suffer the fate of those who look at the sun and study it during an eclipse. For some of them, as you know, destroy their eyes unless they study its image in water or something
99 e of that sort. I also arrived at a similar understanding, and I was afraid that my soul might be totally blinded by looking at things with the eyes and trying to grasp them with each of the senses. So it seemed to me that I should take refuge in arguments, and study in these the truth of the things that
100 a are. Now, perhaps my comparison is in a sense inappropriate, for I do not really agree that someone who studies the things that are, through arguments, has more recourse to images than someone who studies them in actualities.

"Anyway, I set about this in the following manner. In each case, I hypothesise an account which I judge to be the strongest, and I regard as true anything which seems to me to be in harmony

with this, whether it concerns a cause or anything else at all, and I regard anything which does not, as untrue. But I would like to explain what I am saying to you more clearly for I do not think you understand at the moment."

"No, by Zeus," said Cebes, "not completely."

"Well, this is what I mean," he said. "It is nothing new. No, it is just what I have been constantly 100 b
repeating, both in the argument which has just been presented and on other occasions. Indeed, I am going to attempt to show you the kind of cause I have worked on, and I am going back again to topics which have been discussed repeatedly, and I am starting from those, proposing that there is beauty just by itself, and good, and largeness, and all the others. And if you grant me these and agree that they exist, I hope, from these, to show you the cause and to confirm that the soul is immortal."

"Well, in that case," said Cebes, "you may assume that I grant you this and you should lose 100 c
no time in proceeding with the account."

"Then consider the consequences of these admissions," he said, "and whether they seem to you as they do to me. For it appears to me that, if anything else is beautiful except beauty itself, then it is beautiful because it partakes of that beauty and for no other reason. And I say the same about all the others. Do you accept this sort of cause?"

"I accept it," he replied.

"Well, then," he said, "I no longer understand, nor am I able to recognise those other wise causes, but if someone says to me that anything at all is beautiful because of the bright colour it has, or its 100 d
shape, or anything else of that sort, I dismiss the others, for I am confused by them all. And I myself maintain, simply, plainly, and perhaps foolishly, that nothing else makes it beautiful, except the presence of that beauty or communion with it, regardless of the manner or means by which these occur, for I am not making a definite assertion about this yet. But I do assert that all beautiful things are beautiful on account of beauty. And this seems to me the safest answer to give to myself or anyone else, and once I hold to this, I believe I shall never fall. Rather, it is safe for me or anyone 100 e
at all to answer that beautiful things become beautiful on account of beauty. Or does it not seem that way to you?"

"That is how it seems."

"And so, are large things large, and larger things larger on account of largeness, and smaller things smaller on account of smallness?"

"Yes."

"Then you would not accept it if someone were to say that one person is larger than another on account of a head, and the smaller person is smaller on account of this same thing. Instead, you 101 a
would affirm that you are only saying that everything which is larger than another is larger on account of nothing except largeness, and is larger because of this, because of largeness; and the smaller is smaller on account of nothing else but smallness, and is smaller because of this, because of smallness. I think you would be afraid in case some counter-argument might oppose you, if you were to state that someone is larger or smaller on account of a head: firstly, because you say the larger is larger and the smaller is smaller on account of the same thing; and secondly, because you say the larger is larger on account of the head which is small, and of course it is preposterous that 101 b
anyone is large on account of something small. Would you not be afraid of these responses?"

Cebes laughed and replied, "I would, indeed."

"Would you not be afraid", he said, "to state that ten is more than eight on account of two, and exceeds it because of this cause, rather than on account of quantity, and because of quantity? And that the two cubits are greater than the one cubit on account of half, and not on account of large-

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[21] Atlas was a Titan who was condemned to hold up the sky for all eternity after the Titans were defeated in their war against the Olympians.

ness? Yes, I presume you would have the same fear."

"Very much so," he replied.

"What about this? Would you not beware of saying that if one is added to one, the cause of their
101 c becoming two is the addition, or in the case where it is divided, the division? Instead, you would shout loudly that you know no other way that each arises except by participating in the being particular to each of those in which it participates. And in the examples we are discussing, you know no other cause of becoming two except by participation in duality, and whatever is to be two must participate in this, and whatever is to be one must participate in unity. But those divisions and additions and other subtleties of that kind you would set aside, leaving it to those who are wiser than you are to
101 d give those answers. Instead, you would be afraid, as they say, of your own shadow and of your inexperience, and would adhere to that safe hypothesis and would answer based upon that.

"Yet, if someone were to adhere to the hypothesis itself, you would ignore him and would not respond, until you had considered whether the consequences of that were, in your view, concordant or discordant with one another. And when you had to give an account of the hypothesis itself, you would do so in the same way, by proposing another further hypothesis which seems
101 e best of those which are higher, until you arrive at something adequate. But you would not confuse matters, as the disputatious people do, by discussing the principle, and the consequences of it at the same time, if you really wanted to discover any of the things that are. Indeed, these fellows do not have a single scruple or concern about this, for they are enabled by their wisdom to jumble everything together, and yet they are still able to be content with themselves. But you, if you really
102 a are among the lovers of wisdom, will, I believe, do as I suggest."

"What you are saying is completely true," said Simmias and Cebes together.

ECHECRATES: By Zeus, Phaedo, of course Simmias and Cebes did. Indeed, I think he has explained this with extraordinary clarity to anyone with even a little intelligence.

PHAEDO: Yes, certainly, Echecrates, and everyone who was present thought so too.

ECHECRATES: Yes, and so do those who were absent but are listening to you now. Well, what else was said after all this?

102 b PHAEDO: As I recall, when these points had been conceded to him and it was agreed that each of the forms is something and the other things have acquired the names of the forms themselves by partaking of them, he proceeded to ask the following:

"Now," said Socrates to Cebes, "if you describe matters in this way and you say that Simmias is larger than Socrates and smaller than Phaedo, are you not then saying that both largeness and smallness are in Simmias?"

"I am, indeed."

"More to the point," he said, "are you agreeing with the statement 'Simmias is taller than Socrates',
102 c when the words used do not actually express the truth? For presumably Simmias is not, by nature, taller than I am on account of being Simmias, but on account of the largeness he happens to possess. Nor, again, is he taller than Socrates because Socrates is Socrates, but because Socrates has smallness relative to Simmias' largeness."

"True."

"Nor again, is he less tall than Phaedo because Phaedo is Phaedo, but rather because Phaedo has largeness relative to Simmias' smallness."

"That is it."

"So in this way Simmias is referred to as being both large and small, as he is between both of
102 d them, allowing the smallness to be exceeded by the greatness of one person, and presenting to the other the greatness that exceeds that man's smallness." And he smiled at this and said, "I seem to

be speaking like a legal document, but anyway the situation is certainly as I am describing it."

Simmias agreed.

"Now, I am saying this for the following reason, I want you to hold the same opinion as I do. For it appears to me not only that the large itself never consents to being large and small at the same time, but also that the large in us never admits the small, nor consents to being exceeded. Instead, there are two possible outcomes, either it departs and withdraws whenever its opposite, the small, 102 e approaches, or else it perishes once the small arrives. But it never consents to being different from the very thing that it is, by waiting about and admitting smallness. Just as I, having admitted and endured smallness, and still being just what I am, I, this same person, am small. But that large has never ventured to be small, and in like manner, the small that is in us never consents to become large or to be so, nor do any of the other opposites, while still being just what they are, also become and be opposite. No, in that circumstance they either depart or perish." 103 a

"Entirely so," said Cebes, "that is how it appears to me."

And having heard this, one of the company – I do not remember exactly who it was – said, "By the gods, in our earlier discussions, did we not agree the very opposite of what we are now saying? Did we not say that the greater arises from the lesser and the lesser from the greater, and in short, the actual generation of opposites is from opposites? But now I think we are saying that this would never happen."

Having turned his head to listen, Socrates said, "You have been very brave to remind us. 103 b However, you are not recognising the difference between what we are saying now and what we said then. For we were saying then that the opposite thing arises from the opposite thing. Now, however, we are saying that the opposite itself, be it in us or in nature, would not ever become opposite to itself. For then, my friend, we were talking about whatever possessed the opposites, referring to them by the name of the appropriate opposites. Now, however, we are discussing the opposites themselves, whose name the objects bear because those opposites are within them. And 103 c we are saying that the opposites themselves would never be prepared to undergo conversion into one another."

And at that point he looked at Cebes, and said, "What about you, Cebes? I presume you were not bothered by any aspect of what our friend here said?"

"No," said Cebes, "that's not how I feel just now, though I am not denying that there are numerous issues bothering me."

"So we have agreed without reservation," said Socrates, "that the opposite will never be opposite to itself."

"Entirely so," he replied.

"Then consider whether you also agree with me about the following. Do you call something hot or cold?"

"I do."

"And are they identical with fire and snow?"

"By Zeus, I do not think so." 103 d

"Rather the hot is something different from fire, and the cold something different from snow."

"Yes."

"Then I presume you appreciate that, as we said earlier, being snow it will not ever admit heat and still be just what it is, snow, and also hot. Instead, at the approach of heat it either withdraws from it or perishes."

"Certainly."

"And fire also either slips away or perishes when cold approaches, but it will never venture to admit the coldness and still be just what it was, fire, and also cold."

"What you are saying is true." 103 e

"Then," he said, "in some cases like this, the position is that the form itself is not the only thing that always merits the same name forever, but there is also something else which is not that form but always possesses a feature of that form whenever it exists. But perhaps what I mean will be even clearer with this example, for presumably the odd must always be assigned this name which we are now using. Is this not so?"

"Certainly."

104 a "But is this the only thing that is assigned this name? That is my question. Or is there something else which is not identical with the odd, but which nevertheless must always be referred to by this name along with its own name, because by nature it is never devoid of the odd? I am referring, for instance, to how the number three and many others are characterised. Think about the number three. Does it not seem that you must always refer to it by its own name and by the name of the odd, although the odd is not identical with the number three? But nevertheless, three, five, and
104 b half of all numbers, although they are not identical with the odd, each of them is always odd. And furthermore, two, four, and all the other series of numbers, are nevertheless always even in each case, though they are not identical with the even. Do you agree or not?"

"How could I disagree?" said Cebes.

"Then take note of what I am trying to show you. It is as follows. It is evident, not only that those opposites do not admit one another, but also that whatever things are not opposite to one another, but always contain opposites, seem not to admit that form which is opposite to the form they contain. Rather, when it approaches, they either perish or withdraw. Or shall we deny that the number
104 c three would prefer to perish or suffer any other fate rather than wait about, still being three, and become even?"

"It certainly will," said Cebes.

"And yet, two," he said, "is not the opposite of three."

"Definitely not."

"So it is not only the opposite forms that do not wait about as they approach one another, but some other things also do not wait about as the opposites approach."

"What you are saying is very true."

"Now, would you like us, if we are able, to define what sort these are?"

"Very much so."

104 d "Well, Cebes, would they be those which always compel whatever they take hold of to adopt not only their own form, but also the form of some additional opposite?"

"What do you mean?"

"Just what we were saying a moment ago, for you know of course, that whatever the form of three takes hold of, it must not only be three but also odd."

"Certainly."

"Then we are saying that the opposite form to the form that produces this would never come to something of this sort."

"It would not."

"Now, does oddness produce this property?"

"Yes."

"And is the form of the even the opposite of this?"

104 e "Yes."

"So the form of the even will never come to the number three."

"Certainly not."

"Then the number three has no share in the even."

"No share."

"So the number three is uneven."

"Yes."

"Well, I said we were to define the sort of things which, although not opposite to something, nevertheless do not admit it, the opposite. For example, the number three, although it is not opposite to the even, does not admit the even to any extent, for three always imposes the opposite of the even, and two imposes the opposite of the odd, fire the opposite of cold, and there is a whole range 105 a of other instances. Now, decide whether they are defined in this way: not only does an opposite not admit an opposite, but there is also that which imposes some opposite upon whatever it approaches, and that imposer itself will never admit the opposite of that which it imposes. But let me remind you again, as it is not a bad idea to hear this very often. The number five will not admit the even, nor will its double, ten, admit the odd. Now, double itself is also the opposite of something, but nevertheless it will not admit the form of the odd, nor will one-and-a-half and other such 105 b numbers, like the half and the third, and all numbers of that sort, admit the form of the whole. Do you follow and do you agree that this is the case?"

"Yes, I agree most emphatically," Cebes replied, "and I am following."

"Then recount this to me once more from the beginning," he said. "And do not answer on the basis of my question, but by imitating what I am doing. I am saying that beyond the first answer I gave, the safe one, I see another safe answer emerging from the present discussion. For if you were to ask me, by the presence of what will the body be hot, I shall not give you the safe answer, 105 c the stupid one, that it is by the presence of heat, but a more subtle answer based on this discussion, that it is by the presence of fire. And if you should ask, by the presence of what will the body be ill, I shall not reply that it is by the presence of illness, but by the presence of fever. Nor would I say that a number is made odd by the presence of oddness, but by the presence of a unit, and so on for the other instances. But let us check at this stage whether you understand adequately what I mean."

"Very adequately," Cebes said.

"Then answer this question," he said, "by the presence of what will the body be alive?"

"By the presence of soul," he replied.

"Is this not always the case?" 105 d

"How could it be otherwise?" he said.

"Then soul, whatever it takes hold of, always arrives bringing life to it?"

"Yes, that is how it arrives," he said.

"And is there or is there not something opposite to life?"

"There is," he replied.

"What?"

"Death."

"Now, based on what we agreed earlier, is it not the case that soul will never admit the opposite of that which it imposes?"

"It certainly will not," said Cebes.

"Well then, what did we call that which does not admit the form of the even a moment ago?"

"Uneven," he said.

"And that which does not admit the just, and that which does not admit the musical?"

"Unmusical, and unjust," he said. 105 e

"So be it. And what shall we call that which does not admit death?"

"Immortal," he said.

"Now, soul does not admit death, does it?"

"No."

"Then soul is immortal."

"Immortal."

"So be it," he said. "Now, may we say that this has been proved? How does it seem to you?"

"Yes, very adequately, Socrates."

106 a "What about this, Cebes?" he asked. "If it were also necessary for the uneven to be imperishable, could the number three be anything other than imperishable?"

"No, how could it be?"

"And if it were also necessary for the 'un-hot' to be imperishable, whenever someone brought heat to bear upon snow, would not the snow withdraw, intact and un-melted? For it could not be destroyed, nor again could it wait about and admit the hotness?"

"What you are saying is true."

"And in the very same way, I presume, if the un-coolable was indestructible, then whenever something cool approached fire, fire could never be extinguished, nor could it perish, but would depart intact and go away."

"It must," he said.

106 b "And must we not also say the same thing about the immortal?" he asked. "If the immortal is also imperishable, it is impossible for soul to perish whenever death approaches her. For as we said earlier, it will not admit death nor will it be dead, just as we said the number three will not be even, nor for that matter, will the odd be even, nor will fire be cold, and neither will the heat within the fire. But someone might say the odd does not become even at the approach of the even. We have

106 c agreed this, but why could it not perish and the even arise in place of the odd? To someone who says this, we would not be able to contend that it does not perish, for the uneven is not imperishable. Indeed, if this point were conceded to us, we could easily have contended that once the even approaches, the odd and the number three depart and are gone, and we could offer a similar contention about fire and heat and the other instances. Is this not so?"

"Yes, certainly."

"And therefore, in the present discussion about the immortal, if it were conceded to us that it is

106 d also imperishable, then soul too would be imperishable as well as being immortal, but otherwise some other argument would be required."

"But no other argument is required for this purpose," he said, "for if the immortal, being everlasting, is going to admit destruction, nothing else could avoid admitting destruction at all."

"Yes," said Socrates, "and I think it would be agreed by everyone that God, and the form of life itself and anything else that is immortal, will never perish."

"Yes, by Zeus," he said, "by every human being, and in my opinion, even more so by the gods."

106 e "Now, since the immortal is also indestructible, wouldn't the soul, if it happens to be immortal, be imperishable too?"

"It simply must be."

"So when death comes to a person, it seems that the mortal part dies, while the immortal departs and goes on its way intact and indestructible, giving way to death."

"So it appears."

107 a "So we have all the more reason to accept, Cebes, that soul is immortal and imperishable, and, in truth, our souls will exist in Hades."

"Well, Socrates," he said, "I do not have anything else to say against these arguments, nor do I doubt them in any respect. But of course, if Simmias or anyone else here has anything to say he had better not remain silent. Because if someone wants to say or hear anything about such matters, I do not know of any other occasion to which he can postpone the present opportunity."

"And yet," said Simmias, "I too have no further grounds for doubt on the basis of

what is being said. However, on account of the vast subject that the arguments are dealing with, and being wary of human weakness, I am bound to harbour additional doubts within 107 b
myself in relation to what has been said."

"Not only are you right," said Socrates, "to say that, Simmias, but you should examine the initial hypotheses in greater clarity in any case, even if you believe them yourselves. And if you analyse them properly, I think you will follow the argument to the greatest extent that anyone can follow it. And once this has become clear, you will seek nothing further."

"What you are saying is true," he said.

"But my friends," he said, "it is right to bear in mind that if, in fact, the soul is immortal, it requires 107 c
care, not only for the sake of the interval of time which we call 'life' but for the sake of all time, and, indeed, if anyone should neglect the soul the danger now seems to be terrible. For if death were an escape from everything, it would be a god-send for the wicked to die, and be freed from the body, and their own wickedness along with the soul. Now, however, since the soul turns out to be immortal, there would be no escape from evils or any salvation for it, apart from becoming as 107 d
good and wise as possible. For the soul goes to Hades, possessing nothing else except its education and its nurture, which are indeed said to afford the greatest benefit or harm to the person who has died, at the very outset of the journey to that place.

"And accordingly, it is said that when each person dies, the daimon of that person, which has been assigned throughout life, is responsible for leading them to some place where those who are gathered, having undergone judgement, must journey to Hades along with that guide who has been 107 e
given the task of conducting people from this place to that place. But once they are there and have met what they needed to meet and have remained for as long as necessary, another guide brings them back here again over numerous lengthy cycles of time. So, the journey is not as Aeschylus' *Telephos*[22] describes it. For he says that a simple path leads to Hades, but to me it appears to be nei- 108 a
ther simple nor single. If it were simple, no guide would be required, for presumably no one could go wrong anywhere if there were only one path. But it now seems that it has many forks and crossroads, and I think this is evident from the sacrifices and rituals which are offered in this world.

"Now, the orderly and wise soul follows the guide and is not unaware of its surroundings, while the soul which is possessed of desires of the body, as we said before, flutters around the body and about the visible region for a long time. After much resistance and a lot of affliction, the 108 b
soul is led away forcibly and reluctantly by its appointed daimon and it departs. Now, the soul which is unpurified and has acted in that sort of manner, having engaged in unjust killings or other activities of the kind which are akin to these, and are the deeds of kindred souls, does arrive where the others are. But everyone shuns the soul and turns away from it, and has no desire to become its travelling companion or its guide. Instead the soul wanders in utter perplexity until certain peri- 108 c
ods of time have elapsed, and when these are over, it is borne by necessity to the abode appropriate to it. But each soul that has spent a life in purity and measure encounters gods as its travelling companions and guides, and inhabits the region appropriate to it.

"Now, someone has convinced me that the regions of the earth are many and wondrous, and it has neither the qualities nor the extent presumed by those who usually describe it."

And Simmias asked, "What do you mean, Socrates? Of course I have heard a great deal 108 d
about the earth myself, but not these descriptions which have convinced you. So I would love to hear them."

"Well, Simmias, I do not think the skill of Glaucus[23] is needed to describe, in detail, what they are. However, it appears to me that it is beyond even the skill of Glaucus to show that they are

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[22] Aeschylus' work *Telephos* no longer survives.

[23] A common adage of uncertain origin.

true, and what is more, perhaps I might be unable to do it. And even if I had the knowledge, I do not think my own life is now long enough for such a lengthy discourse. Yet there is nothing to stop
108 e me from describing the form which I am convinced the earth has, and the regions it possesses."

"But even that much is sufficient," said Simmias.

"Well," he said, "I am convinced, firstly, that if the earth is in the centre of the universe and is
109 a round, it does not need anything to prevent it from falling, either air or any other constraint of that sort. Rather, the homogeneity of the universe itself with itself in every direction and the even balance of the earth itself are sufficient to hold it. For an evenly balanced object placed in the centre of something homogeneous will not be able to turn more in one direction than in another. Instead, being in a situation of homogeneity, it remains motionless. So that is the first thing I am convinced of," he said.

"And rightly so," said Simmias.

109 b "Now, the next point is that it is absolutely enormous, and we who dwell between the Pillars of Heracles and the river Phasis[24] inhabit a tiny part of it, living around the sea like ants or frogs around a pool, while many others dwell elsewhere in lots of other regions of this sort, for there are numerous hollows all over the earth of various forms and sizes, into which water, mist, and air have gathered together. But the earth itself is pure and it rests in the pure region of the universe where the stars are situated, the region which most people who usually discuss such matters call
109 c the ether.

"In fact, water, mist, and air are the sediment of ether, and they constantly flow together into the hollows of the earth. But we are unaware that we are living in its hollows and think we inhabit the upper surface of earth. It is as if someone living down in the depths of the ocean were to think he was living on the sea, and beholding the sun and the other stars through the water,
109 d believed that the sea was the sky. Due to his lethargy and weakness he would never get to the sea's surface, nor would he behold how much purer and more beautiful is this region than that of his fellows by coming to the top of the water and popping out his head, nor would he hear about this from someone else who had seen it. Well, our predicament is the same as his, for we inhabit some hollow of the earth and believe that we are dwelling on its surface, and we refer to the air as the heaven because the stars move through this as if it were a heaven.

109 e "But, in fact, due to our weakness and lethargy, we are unable to make our way to the furthest extremity of air. Yet if someone were to get to its upper limit, or became winged and flew there, he could stick his head up and have a look, and just as fishes who stick their heads out of the sea can behold whatever is in this region, he would likewise view whatever is in that region. And if his nature were up to the task of sustaining the observation, he would realise that this is the
110 a true heaven, the true light, and the true earth. For this earth here, and the stones and the entire region we are in are corrupted and eroded just as objects in the sea are affected by the brine, and nothing worthy of note grows in the sea, and almost nothing is perfect there. Rather, there are caverns and sand and huge amounts of mud and mire wherever there is any earth, and nothing at all is worthy of comparison with the beauties of our region. But those beauties would, in turn, prove to be superior to the beauties of our realm to an even greater extent. And now, if it is appropriate
110 b to tell a story, it is worth hearing, Simmias, what the things upon the earth, that is beneath the heaven, happen to be like."

"In that case, Socrates," said Simmias, "we would be glad to hear this story."

"Well then, my friend, it is said, firstly, that if anyone views the earth itself from above, it looks just like those balls made from twelve pieces of leather, painted with distinct colours, of which
110 c the colours in our region are just like the samples used by painters. But in that place, the earth is entirely composed of such colours, and of colours that are much brighter and purer than those. For one part is purple and its beauty is wondrous, another is golden, and anything white is whiter than

chalk or snow, and the earth is composed of other colours in the same way, colours even more numerous and more beautiful than all we have seen. What is more, those hollows themselves, being filled with water and air, exhibit a kind of colour, glistening amidst the variety of other 110 d
colours, so that the earth appears as one continuous variegated surface.

"But since that is what this earth is like, whatever grows there grows in conformity with this principle, be they plants, flowers or fruits. And what is more, in like manner, mountains and stones, in conformity with the same principle, have smoothness and transparency and more beautiful colours, and the pebbles which are prized among us – sards, jaspers, emeralds and all the like – are fragments of those, but in that place there are no stones that are not like those and even 110 e
more beautiful than those. And the reason for this is that the stones there are pure and have not been corroded and corrupted like ours by filth and brine, due to everything that flows into this place, influxes which bring deformity to stones, earth and the like, and diseases to plants and animals. But that earth itself has been adorned with all these beauties, and also with gold and silver 111 a
and other materials of that sort, for these are naturally in evidence as they are plentiful, large, and they are everywhere upon the earth. Consequently, to behold that earth is a vision which is a blessing to those who look upon it. And there are many other creatures there, and humans too, some dwelling inland, others living close to the air, just as we live close to the sea, some on islands surrounded by air, and close to the mainland. And in short, as we have recourse to water 111 b
and the sea, so do they have recourse to air, and as we have recourse to air, so do they have recourse to the ether.

"Their seasons are so temperate that the people are free from disease, and their span of life is much longer than it is here, and in sight, and hearing, and wisdom, and in everything of that sort, they exceed us to the same extent that air exceeds water, and ether exceeds air, in respect of purity. And in fact, they have sacred groves and temples in which the gods really do reside, and utterances, prophecies, awareness of the gods, and any communion of that sort is conducted by them directly with the gods themselves. And the sun, moon, and stars are seen by them just as they 111 c
actually are, and their general blessedness is a consequence of these blessings.

"Now, although the entire earth and the details thereof are thus by nature, there are in fact many regions within it corresponding to the hollows it has all around its entire surface. Some are deeper and wider than the place in which we are dwelling, others are deeper but they have a lesser expanse than our region, and there are others too which are shallower in depth and broader than 111 d
ours. These are all interconnected beneath the earth in various ways, by channels, some narrow, some wider, and these have outlets from which lots of water pours from one region into the other, as if it were flowing into mixing bowls. And there are enormously large, ever-flowing rivers of both hot and cold water beneath the earth. And there is a great deal of fire and huge rivers of fire and of molten earth, some of which are even more filthy, like the rivers of mud which flow in front 111 e
of the lava in Sicily, while others are purer, like the lava itself. And in fact, each of the regions is filled by these as the circular flow happens to arrive at each in turn. These all move upwards and downwards just like a kind of seesaw present within the earth. The nature of the oscillation itself is something like this: one of the chasms in the earth happens to be particularly large and it is bored right through the entire earth. This is the one Homer refers to when he says, 'Far off in the lowest 112 a
depth beneath the earth...'[25]

"And elsewhere, he and many other poets have named it Tartarus. For all of the rivers flow into this chasm and flow out again from this, and each becomes like the kind of earth through

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[24] The Pillars of Heracles refers to promontories that frame the entrance to the Strait of Gibraltar. The River Phasis is situated in modern-day Georgia and flows into the Black Sea.

[25] *Iliad* viii.14, 481.

112 b which they flow. But the reason why all the streams flow in and flow out of there is that this liquid has no bottom or base, so it oscillates and surges up and down, and the air and the wind associated with it do the same. For they follow the liquid whenever it gushes to the remote parts of the earth or to these parts. And just as those who are breathing continually inhale and exhale the flowing breath, so also does the wind there oscillate along with the liquid, giving rise to terrible and enor-
112 c mous gales as it goes in and goes out.

"Now, whenever the water withdraws to the region which we call lower, it flows through the earth into the channels that are there and fills them as if it were being pumped. And whenever it leaves there again and surges back here, the streams here are filled once more, and once they have been filled they flow through the channels and through the earth, and when each arrives at the region to which it has been given passage, it makes seas, lakes, rivers and springs. And from
112 d there they dive beneath the earth, and when some have gone around the more numerous larger regions, and others have gone around the less numerous smaller regions, they discharge once more into Tartarus, some far below, others a little below where they were pumped out. But they all flow in below where they flowed out, although some flow in directly opposite to the point where they left, others below the same point. There are some that go around in a complete circle, coiling around the earth either once or even many times, like snakes, and having descended as low as pos-
112 e sible, they discharge once more. It is possible to descend in either direction as far as the centre but no further, because to both streams the part on either side is uphill.

"Now, these streams are numerous, large and variegated, but among this multiplicity are four in particular and the largest and outermost of these, flowing around in a circle, is called Oceanus. Directly opposite to this, flowing in the opposite direction, is Acheron which flows
113 a through various desert places, but more significantly, it flows under the earth reaching the Acherusian lake where most souls of the dead arrive and abide for an allotted time, longer in some cases but shorter in others, and are sent back once more to be born as living creatures.

"The third river issues forth midway between these two, and close to its point of exit it emerges into a vast region burning with a lot of fire, and it makes a lake of boiling water and mud
113 b larger than the sea in our region. It proceeds in a circle from there, foul and muddy, winding about through the earth in various places and arrives at the shores of the Acherusian lake without commingling with its waters. After many windings under the earth, it discharges beneath Tartarus and this is the river they refer to as Periphlegethon, and from this the lava streams shoot forth their branches from the earth in a random manner.

"Directly opposite to this the fourth river issues forth, initially into a terrible and wild region
113 c which is said to be entirely coloured like lapis lazuli and is referred to as the Stygian region, and the lake made by the discharging river is the Styx. Now, once it has poured in there and has acquired formidable powers in the water, it dives beneath the earth and proceeds to circle about in the opposite direction to Periphlegethon and meets it in the Acherusian lake coming from the opposite side. Neither does it mingle with the waters of the lake, rather this river goes around in a circle and discharges into
113 d Tartarus opposite Periphlegethon. And the name of this, according to the poets, is Cocytus.[26]

"This is the nature of these regions. Once those who have died arrive in the region to which the daimon guides each one, they first submit to judgement, some having lived in a noble and sacred manner, others not. Now, those who are judged to have lived middling lives, proceed to the Acheron, get on board vessels which are somehow provided for them, and arrive at the lake on these. There they dwell, and if anyone has done any injustice he is purified of the injustices, makes
113 e retribution and is freed from them. And they receive the rewards of their good deeds, each according to their deserts. But those who are judged incurable because of the magnitude of their trans - gressions, having carried out numerous and grave sacrilegious acts, or many unjust killings contrary to law, or any other deeds of that sort, these people the appropriate fate casts into Tartarus never

to emerge again. But those who are judged curable, though they committed great transgressions such as doing some violence in anger to a father or mother, and living the rest of their lives in repentance, or being involved in homicides under similar circumstances, these people necessarily 114 a
fall into Tartarus. Once they have fallen in and spent a year there, the surge sends forth the homicides along the Cocytus and those who have assaulted father or mother along the Periphlegethon. They are carried along, and whenever they get to the Acherusian lake they shout and cry out in that place to the people they have slain or the people they have assaulted. With their cries, they plead and beg that they be allowed to come out into the lake and to be accepted, and if they per- 114 b
suade these people, out they come and that is the end of their afflictions. But if they do not persuade them, they are carried again into Tartarus and from there they enter the rivers once more, and this happens to them unceasingly until they persuade the people they have wronged. For this particular penalty has been imposed upon them by the judges. But the people who are judged to have lived with exceptional holiness, are the ones who are set free from those places beneath the earth as 114 c
though they are being released from prisons. They arrive above in the pure abode and they dwell upon the earth. Of these people, the ones who have purified themselves sufficiently through philosophy live thereafter without bodies for all time, and they arrive at dwellings even more beautiful than those, which are not easy to describe, nor is there enough time just now. But as a consequence of everything we have been discussing, Simmias, we must make all efforts to partake of virtue and wisdom in this life, for the reward is beautiful and the hope is great.

"Now, it would not be appropriate for a man of intelligence to insist that matters are as I 114 d
have recounted them. But that these considerations, or something like them, are applicable to our souls and their dwelling places, in view of the fact that the soul turns out to be immortal, seems to me a hazard worth taking, for the hazard is beautiful and appropriate to someone who holds this view of the soul. And he should chant to himself as though they were charms and that is why I have been lengthening the story just now.

"So, these are the reasons why a man should be confident about his own soul once he has 114 e
bidden farewell, in this life, to the various pleasures and adornments associated with the body because they are alien. And realising they are more inclined to have the opposite effect, has busied himself with learning and adorned the soul, not with an alien adornment but with its own, with sound-
mindedness, justice, courage, freedom and truth. And in this condition he awaits the journey to 115 a
Hades, ready to make that journey whenever destiny may call. Well, Simmias and Cebes," he said, "you and the others will each in turn make the journey at some stage, but now, as someone in a tragedy might say, 'Destiny is already calling me', and it is almost time for me to make my way to the bath. Indeed, I think it best to drink the poison after bathing and not give to the women the task of washing a corpse."

Well, once he had said all this, Crito said, "So be it, Socrates, but what directions do you have for 115 b
these men or for me concerning either your children or anything else? What is the greatest service we could perform for you?"

"I shall say what I always say, Crito, nothing new, that in caring for yourselves you will be doing a service to me and mine and to yourselves, whatever actions you may perform, even if you make no promises now. But if you do not care for yourselves, and are not prepared to live your life based upon the path which accords with the declarations we have made now and on previous occasions, even if you make a lot of fervent promises now, you will accomplish nothing." 115 c

"In that case," he said, "we shall strive earnestly to do as you ask. But in what way should we bury you?"

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[26] The geography of the underworld is drawn from Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, especially *Odyssey* x.511 ff, xi.157.

"Any way you like," he replied, "that is if you can catch me and I do not escape you." With this he laughed gently, looked towards us and said, "Friends, I cannot persuade Crito that I am this Socrates who is conversing with you right now and arranging each topic of discussion. Instead, he
115 d thinks I am the one he will see in a short time as a corpse, and he asks how he should bury me. I presented extensive arguments a while ago, that once I drink the poison I shall no longer remain with you, but shall depart and be gone to some delights of the blessed. But I think these have been spoken to him in vain, while consoling both yourselves and myself at the same time. Therefore, give an assurance about me to Crito," he said, "the opposite assurance to the one he gave the jurors. For he assured them that I would remain but you must assure him that I shall not remain after I die
115 e but will depart and be gone, so that Crito may bear this more easily. And when he sees my body being burned or buried, he may not be troubled on my account as though I am being treated dreadfully, or say at the funeral that Socrates lies before us or is borne to the grave or buried. For mark my words well, excellent Crito, speaking improperly is not only wrong in itself, but it also engenders an evil in our souls. Instead, you must take heart and say that you are burying my body and
116 a bury it as you please and as you deem most appropriate."

Having said this, he got up and went to another room in order to bathe. Crito followed him but he told us to wait. So we waited conversing among ourselves about what had been said and considering it once more, and then we went on to recount the extent of the misfortune which had befallen us, literally believing that we had been deprived of a father and would spend the rest of
116 b our lives as orphans. Once he had bathed the children were brought to him, for he had two small sons and a big one, and the women of his household arrived and he conversed with them, in Crito's presence, and gave the instructions he wished to give. He then asked the women and children to depart and he himself returned to us.

Now, at that stage the sun was almost setting for he had spent a lot of time within. When he came back after bathing he sat down, but not much was discussed after that, and the servant of
116 c The Eleven arrived, stood before him and said, "Socrates, I shall not find in you the fault I find in others, whereby they are angry with me and curse me when, on the instructions of the Archons, I order them to drink the poison. During your time here I have known you as the noblest, gentlest, most excellent man who ever arrived in this place. What is more, I know quite well that you are not angry with me now but with them, for you realise who is responsible. Now then, since you
116 d know what I have come to announce, fare you well and try to bear what must be as lightly as you can." And with this he began to weep, turned away and departed. And Socrates looked toward him and said, "Fare you well too. We shall do as you ask." Then he said to us, "What a courteous man! Throughout my time here he has visited me and conversed with me sometimes and has been the best of men, and now, see how genuinely he weeps for me. But come now, Crito, let us pay heed to him. Let someone bring the poison if it has been pressed and if not, the man should press it."

116 e And Crito said, "Socrates, I think the sun is still upon the hills and has not yet set. What is more, I know that others have drunk the poison very late, whenever the announcement has been made to them. They have feasted and drunk quite a lot, some of them even fraternising with people they happen to enjoy. So do not rush, there is still time."

And Socrates replied, "Crito, it is quite reasonable for these people to do this, the people you describe, for they think there is benefit in doing so. And it will be reasonable for me not to do
117 a so, as I think there is no benefit in drinking the poison a little later, apart from becoming a figure of fun to myself by clinging to life and sparing what is already spent. So come on," he said, "heed me and do not refuse me."

And when Crito heard this he nodded to his servant who was standing nearby and the boy went out, was gone for quite some time, and returned bringing the man who was going to administer the poison, carrying it already pressed in a cup. When Socrates saw the man, he said, "So be

it, best of men, since you are knowledgeable about these matters, what should I do?"

"Nothing," he said, "except drink this and walk about until your legs become heavy, then 117 b
lie down and in this way the poison will act by itself." And as he said this he held out the cup to Socrates. And having taken it most graciously, Echecrates, without fear or any change of colour or expression, but looking at the man wide-eyed, as usual, he said, "What do you say about pouring a libation to someone from this cup? Is that permitted or not?"

"Socrates," he replied, "we only press the amount we think you need to drink."

"I understand," he said, "but it is permitted and indeed necessary to pray to the gods that 117 c
my change of abode from here to there be graced with good fortune, and so I pray that this may be so." And as he said this, he put the cup to his lips and very calmly and without flinching, he drank it down. Up to then most of us were able to restrain our tears fairly well, but when we saw him drinking and saw that he had drunk it, we could do so no longer. In spite of myself, my own tears flowed in a torrent, and so I hid my face, weeping not for him but for myself and my own 117 d
misfortune at being deprived of such a companion. And even before that, when Crito was unable to restrain his tears, he had moved away. But Apollodorus, who had been weeping incessantly before then, broke out at this stage into such wailing and grieving that none of the company could help breaking down, except Socrates himself.

"Strange men," he said, "what a way to behave! I sent the women away mainly so that they would not cause such a tumult, for I have also heard that it is necessary to die in reverent silence. 117 e
So keep quiet and endure."

And when we had heard this we felt ashamed and refrained from weeping. He walked around until he said that his legs were becoming heavy, then he lay flat on his back as the man had instructed, and this man who had administered the poison began examining him, and when some time had passed he probed his feet and legs and then he pinched his foot hard and asked if he could feel it. He said, "No." And after this the man felt his shin once more, and working upwards in this 118 a
way he showed us that he was going cold and stiff. And again, he touched him and said that when it reached the heart, he would then be gone.

Now, once the coldness was somewhere in the region of his groin he uncovered his face, for it had been covered, and said, and this was his final utterance, "Crito, we owe a cock to Asclepius,[27] so pay the debt without fail."

"Yes, it shall be done," said Crito, "but see if you have something else to ask for."

To this question he did not even reply. After a short time he shuddered and the man uncovered him, and his eyes were fixed. And when Crito saw this he closed the mouth and the eyes.

Such was the end, Echecrates, of our companion, a man whom we would say was the best, the wisest too, and the most just of any we have ever known.

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[27] Asclepius, the son of Apollo, born a mortal but deified after his death, was the god of healing. Sick people who slept in his sanctuary, having been cured, would often sacrifice a cock to him.