

# [Explain why simmias and cebes are so afraid of death in the phaedo, whereas socra...](https://assignbuster.com/explain-why-simmias-and-cebes-are-so-afraid-of-death-in-the-phaedo-whereas-socrates-is-not-does-socrates-explanation-convince-you-or-are-you-like-simmias-a/)

The action of the dialogue in Phaedo takes place on the eve of Socrates’ death in Athens in 399 B. C. As to be expected in this scenario, the dialogue centers round the significance and nature of death. Socrates, resolute in his own conviction of the immortality of the soul, faces his impending death with, not just equanimity, but eager anticipation. On the other hand, Simmias and Cebes, lacking Socrates’ conviction, fear death. The crux of the dialogue is Socrates’ argument persuading Simmias and Cebes to accept his point of view.   
To the wonder of his disciples, Socrates remains “ noble and fearless in the hour of death” (Plato, 5). Socrates unequivocally asserts that any true philosopher “ will be willing to die” (6). He is convinced that a better life awaits him. Death, as the harbinger of “ the greatest good” (8), is something the true philosopher desires and pursues. Death may be defined as “ the separation of the soul and body” (8). The philosopher is a seeker of truth and lover of wisdom, who pursues the essence of the knowledge of existence. In this pursuit, the body, with its’ lusts, sensual pleasures and physical needs, is “ only a disturbing element, hindering the soul from the acquisition of knowledge” (10). Therefore, the philosopher desires death, which will release “ the soul from the chains of the body” (11) and free the soul to attain the truth. His desire for the truth will be satisfied only by the separation of the soul from the body – that is, by death – which is the purification of the soul. Death is the philosopher’s means to gain wisdom, while the body is his “ enemy” (11). Socrates fearlessly and eagerly anticipates death and is ready “ to depart with joy” (11) from this world.   
Cebes and Simmias acknowledge the truth of Socrates’ word, but continue to fear death, as they are afraid that the soul “ may be destroyed and perish” (12) when she leaves the body, “ vanishing into nothingness” after death. Socrates allays their fears by convincing them of the immortality of the soul. The accepted belief that “ the living spring from the dead” (15) presupposes the prior existence of the soul, in another world, before it assumes human form. As recollection is an essential part of knowledge, this recollection is obviously gained by the intelligent souls’ existence in another place. The rebirth of the soul is proof of the souls’ immortality, as “ everything living is born of the dead” (19). Once it is accepted that the soul is invisible, unchangeable and “ in the very likeness of the divine” (21), it follows that, unlike the body, the pure and noble soul remains indissoluble and immortal. Furthermore, as the soul is the bearer of life, she cannot admit of death, which is the opposite of life. Socrates, who, as a true philosopher, has devoted his life to “ the attainment of the highest virtue and wisdom” (40) and has spurned bodily pleasure, is eager to be “ released from this earthly prison” (45). Death, for him, is not a misfortune but a cause of rejoicing and the means “ to be freed from human ills” (24).   
I must confess that, like Simmias and Cebes, “ there is a child within (me) to whom death is a sort of hobgoblin” (19). Unlike Socrates, who is armed with the conviction that he has resolutely abhorred bodily pleasures and pursued neither power not wealth, but only true wisdom, I am no true philosopher! As such, being “ not devoid of natural feeling” (32), I am justified in fearing death. However, just as Socrates’ argument convinced Simmias and Cebes of the immortality of the soul and of death being but the means to the salvation of that soul, it has convinced me to endeavor to pursue “ temperance, justice, courage, nobility and truth” (45) so that, when my time comes, I too can face death with the fortitude of a philosopher and look forward to “ live in bliss --- and forever dwell --- in company with the gods” (22).   
360 BC   
PHAEDO   
by Plato   
translated by Benjamin Jowett   
PERSONS OF THE DIALOGUE   
PHAEDO, who is the narrator of the dialogue to ECHECRATES of Phlius   
SOCRATES   
APOLLODORUS   
SIMMIAS   
CEBES   
CRITO   
ATTENDANT OF THE PRISON   
PHAEDO   
SCENE: The Prison of Socrates   
PLACE OF THE NARRATION: Phlius   
Echecrates. Were you yourself, Phaedo, in the prison with Socrates   
on the day when he drank the poison?   
Phaedo. Yes, Echecrates, I was.   
Ech. I wish that you would tell me about his death. What did he   
say in his last hours? We were informed that he died by taking poison,   
but no one knew anything more; for no Phliasian ever goes to Athens   
now, and a long time has elapsed since any Athenian found his way to   
Phlius, and therefore we had no clear account.   
Phaed. Did you not hear of the proceedings at the trial?   
Ech. Yes; someone told us about the trial, and we could not   
understand why, having been condemned, he was put to death, as   
appeared, not at the time, but long afterwards. What was the reason of   
this?   
Phaed. An accident, Echecrates. The reason was that the stern of the   
ship which the Athenians send to Delos happened to have been crowned   
on the day before he was tried.   
Ech. What is this ship?   
Phaed. This is the ship in which, as the Athenians say, Theseus went   
to Crete when he took with him the fourteen youths, and was the   
saviour of them and of himself. And they were said to have vowed to   
Apollo at the time, that if they were saved they would make an   
annual pilgrimage to Delos. Now this custom still continues, and the   
whole period of the voyage to and from Delos, beginning when the   
priest of Apollo crowns the stern of the ship, is a holy season,   
during which the city is not allowed to be polluted by public   
executions; and often, when the vessel is detained by adverse winds,   
there may be a very considerable delay. As I was saying, the ship   
was crowned on the day before the trial, and this was the reason why   
Socrates lay in prison and was not put to death until long after he   
was condemned.   
Ech. What was the manner of his death, Phaedo? What was said or   
done? And which of his friends had he with him? Or were they not   
allowed by the authorities to be present? And did he die alone?   
Phaed. No; there were several of his friends with him.   
Ech. If you have nothing to do, I wish that you would tell me what   
passed, as exactly as you can.   
Phaed. I have nothing to do, and will try to gratify your wish.   
For to me, too, there is no greater pleasure than to have Socrates   
brought to my recollection, whether I speak myself or hear another   
speak of him.   
Ech. You will have listeners who are of the same mind with you,   
and I hope that you will be as exact as you can.   
Phaed. I remember the strange feeling which came over me at being   
with him. For I could hardly believe that I was present at the death   
of a friend, and therefore I did not pity him, Echecrates; his mien   
and his language were so noble and fearless in the hour of death   
that to me he appeared blessed. I thought that in going to the other   
world he could not be without a divine call, and that he would be   
happy, if any man ever was, when he arrived there, and therefore I did   
not pity him as might seem natural at such a time. But neither could I   
feel the pleasure which I usually felt in philosophical discourse (for   
philosophy was the theme of which we spoke). I was pleased, and I   
was also pained, because I knew that he was soon to die, and this   
strange mixture of feeling was shared by us all; we were laughing   
and weeping by turns, especially the excitable Apollodorus-you know   
the sort of man?   
Ech. Yes.   
Phaed. He was quite overcome; and I myself and all of us were   
greatly moved.   
Ech. Who were present?   
Phaed. Of native Athenians there were, besides Apollodorus,   
Critobulus and his father Crito, Hermogenes, Epigenes, Aeschines,   
and Antisthenes; likewise Ctesippus of the deme of Paeania, Menexenus,   
and some others; but Plato, if I am not mistaken, was ill.   
Ech. Were there any strangers?   
Phaed. Yes, there were; Simmias the Theban, and Cebes, and   
Phaedondes; Euclid and Terpison, who came from Megara.   
Ech. And was Aristippus there, and Cleombrotus?   
Phaed. No, they were said to be in Aegina.   
Ech. Anyone else?   
Phaed. I think that these were about all.   
Ech. And what was the discourse of which you spoke?   
Phaed. I will begin at the beginning, and endeavor to repeat the   
entire conversation. You must understand that we had been previously   
in the habit of assembling early in the morning at the court in   
which the trial was held, and which is not far from the prison.   
There we remained talking with one another until the opening of the   
prison doors (for they were not opened very early), and then went in   
and generally passed the day with Socrates. On the last morning the   
meeting was earlier than usual; this was owing to our having heard   
on the previous evening that the sacred ship had arrived from Delos,   
and therefore we agreed to meet very early at the accustomed place. On   
our going to the prison, the jailer who answered the door, instead   
of admitting us, came out and bade us wait and he would call us.   
" For the Eleven," he said, " are now with Socrates; they are taking off   
his chains, and giving orders that he is to die to-day." He soon   
returned and said that we might come in. On entering we found Socrates   
just released from chains, and Xanthippe, whom you know, sitting by   
him, and holding his child in her arms. When she saw us she uttered   
a cry and said, as women will: " O Socrates, this is the last time that   
either you will converse with your friends, or they with you."   
Socrates turned to Crito and said: " Crito, let someone take her home."   
Some of Critos people accordingly led her away, crying out and   
beating herself. And when she was gone, Socrates, sitting up on the   
couch, began to bend and rub his leg, saying, as he rubbed: " How   
singular is the thing called pleasure, and how curiously related to   
pain, which might be thought to be the opposite of it; for they   
never come to a man together, and yet he who pursues either of them is   
generally compelled to take the other. They are two, and yet they grow   
together out of one head or stem; and I cannot help thinking that if   
Aesop had noticed them, he would have made a fable about God trying to   
reconcile their strife, and when he could not, he fastened their heads   
together; and this is the reason why when one comes the other follows,   
as I find in my own case pleasure comes following after the pain in my   
leg, which was caused by the chain."   
Upon this Cebes said: I am very glad indeed, Socrates, that you   
mentioned the name of Aesop. For that reminds me of a question which   
has been asked by others, and was asked of me only the day before   
yesterday by Evenus the poet, and as he will be sure to ask again, you   
may as well tell me what I should say to him, if you would like him to   
have an answer. He wanted to know why you who never before wrote a   
line of poetry, now that you are in prison are putting Aesop into   
verse, and also composing that hymn in honor of Apollo.   
Tell him, Cebes, he replied, that I had no idea of rivalling him   
or his poems; which is the truth, for I knew that I could not do that.   
But I wanted to see whether I could purge away a scruple which I   
felt about certain dreams. In the course of my life I have often had   
intimations in dreams " that I should make music." The same dream   
came to me sometimes in one form, and sometimes in another, but always   
saying the same or nearly the same words: Make and cultivate music,   
said the dream. And hitherto I had imagined that this was only   
intended to exhort and encourage me in the study of philosophy,   
which has always been the pursuit of my life, and is the noblest and   
best of music. The dream was bidding me to do what I was already   
doing, in the same way that the competitor in a race is bidden by   
the spectators to run when he is already running. But I was not   
certain of this, as the dream might have meant music in the popular   
sense of the word, and being under sentence of death, and the festival   
giving me a respite, I thought that I should be safer if I satisfied   
the scruple, and, in obedience to the dream, composed a few verses   
before I departed. And first I made a hymn in honor of the god of   
the festival, and then considering that a poet, if he is really to   
be a poet or maker, should not only put words together but make   
stories, and as I have no invention, I took some fables of esop, which   
I had ready at hand and knew, and turned them into verse. Tell   
Evenus this, and bid him be of good cheer; that I would have him   
come after me if he be a wise man, and not tarry; and that to-day I am   
likely to be going, for the Athenians say that I must.   
Simmias said: What a message for such a man! having been a   
frequent companion of his, I should say that, as far as I know him, he   
will never take your advice unless he is obliged.   
Why, said Socrates,-is not Evenus a philosopher?   
I think that he is, said Simmias.   
Then he, or any man who has the spirit of philosophy, will be   
willing to die, though he will not take his own life, for that is held   
not to be right.   
Here he changed his position, and put his legs off the couch on to   
the ground, and during the rest of the conversation he remained   
sitting.   
Why do you say, inquired Cebes, that a man ought not to take his own   
life, but that the philosopher will be ready to follow the dying?   
Socrates replied: And have you, Cebes and Simmias, who are   
acquainted with Philolaus, never heard him speak of this?   
I never understood him, Socrates.   
My words, too, are only an echo; but I am very willing to say what I   
have heard: and indeed, as I am going to another place, I ought to   
be thinking and talking of the nature of the pilgrimage which I am   
about to make. What can I do better in the interval between this and   
the setting of the sun?   
Then tell me, Socrates, why is suicide held not to be right? as I   
have certainly heard Philolaus affirm when he was staying with us at   
Thebes: and there are others who say the same, although none of them   
has ever made me understand him.   
But do your best, replied Socrates, and the day may come when you   
will understand. I suppose that you wonder why, as most things which   
are evil may be accidentally good, this is to be the only exception   
(for may not death, too, be better than life in some cases?), and why,   
when a man is better dead, he is not permitted to be his own   
benefactor, but must wait for the hand of another.   
By Jupiter! yes, indeed, said Cebes, laughing, and speaking in his   
native Doric.   
I admit the appearance of inconsistency, replied Socrates, but there   
may not be any real inconsistency after all in this. There is a   
doctrine uttered in secret that man is a prisoner who has no right   
to open the door of his prison and run away; this is a great mystery   
which I do not quite understand. Yet I, too, believe that the gods are   
our guardians, and that we are a possession of theirs. Do you not   
agree?   
Yes, I agree to that, said Cebes.   
And if one of your own possessions, an ox or an ass, for example   
took the liberty of putting himself out of the way when you had   
given no intimation of your wish that he should die, would you not   
be angry with him, and would you not punish him if you could?   
Certainly, replied Cebes.   
Then there may be reason in saying that a man should wait, and not   
take his own life until God summons him, as he is now summoning me.   
Yes, Socrates, said Cebes, there is surely reason in that. And yet   
how can you reconcile this seemingly true belief that God is our   
guardian and we his possessions, with that willingness to die which we   
were attributing to the philosopher? That the wisest of men should   
be willing to leave this service in which they are ruled by the gods   
who are the best of rulers is not reasonable, for surely no wise man   
thinks that when set at liberty he can take better care of himself   
than the gods take of him. A fool may perhaps think this-he may   
argue that he had better run away from his master, not considering   
that his duty is to remain to the end, and not to run away from the   
good, and that there is no sense in his running away. But the wise man   
will want to be ever with him who is better than himself. Now this,   
Socrates, is the reverse of what was just now said; for upon this view   
the wise man should sorrow and the fool rejoice at passing out of   
life.   
The earnestness of Cebes seemed to please Socrates. Here, said he,   
turning to us, is a man who is always inquiring, and is not to be   
convinced all in a moment, nor by every argument.   
And in this case, added Simmias, his objection does appear to me   
to have some force. For what can be the meaning of a truly wise man   
wanting to fly away and lightly leave a master who is better than   
himself? And I rather imagine that Cebes is referring to you; he   
thinks that you are too ready to leave us, and too ready to leave   
the gods who, as you acknowledge, are our good rulers.   
Yes, replied Socrates; there is reason in that. And this   
indictment you think that I ought to answer as if I were in court?   
That is what we should like, said Simmias.   
Then I must try to make a better impression upon you than I did when   
defending myself before the judges. For I am quite ready to   
acknowledge, Simmias and Cebes, that I ought to be grieved at death,   
if I were not persuaded that I am going to other gods who are wise and   
good (of this I am as certain as I can be of anything of the sort) and   
to men departed (though I am not so certain of this), who are better   
than those whom I leave behind; and therefore I do not grieve as I   
might have done, for I have good hope that there is yet something   
remaining for the dead, and, as has been said of old, some far   
better thing for the good than for the evil.   
But do you mean to take away your thoughts with you, Socrates?   
said Simmias. Will you not communicate them to us?-the benefit is   
one in which we too may hope to share. Moreover, if you succeed in   
convincing us, that will be an answer to the charge against yourself.   
I will do my best, replied Socrates. But you must first let me   
hear what Crito wants; he was going to say something to me.   
Only this, Socrates, replied Crito: the attendant who is to give you   
the poison has been telling me that you are not to talk much, and he   
wants me to let you know this; for that by talking heat is   
increased, and this interferes with the action of the poison; those   
who excite themselves are sometimes obliged to drink the poison two or   
three times.   
Then, said Socrates, let him mind his business and be prepared to   
give the poison two or three times, if necessary; that is all.   
I was almost certain that you would say that, replied Crito; but I   
was obliged to satisfy him.   
Never mind him, he said.   
And now I will make answer to you, O my judges, and show that he who   
has lived as a true philosopher has reason to be of good cheer when he   
is about to die, and that after death he may hope to receive the   
greatest good in the other world. And how this may be, Simmias and   
Cebes, I will endeavor to explain. For I deem that the true disciple   
of philosophy is likely to be misunderstood by other men; they do   
not perceive that he is ever pursuing death and dying; and if this   
is true, why, having had the desire of death all his life long, should   
he repine at the arrival of that which he has been always pursuing and   
desiring?   
Simmias laughed and said: Though not in a laughing humor, I swear   
that I cannot help laughing when I think what the wicked world will   
say when they hear this. They will say that this is very true, and our   
people at home will agree with them in saying that the life which   
philosophers desire is truly death, and that they have found them   
out to be deserving of the death which they desire.   
And they are right, Simmias, in saying this, with the exception of   
the words " They have found them out"; for they have not found out what   
is the nature of this death which the true philosopher desires, or how   
he deserves or desires death. But let us leave them and have a word   
with ourselves: Do we believe that there is such a thing as death?   
To be sure, replied Simmias.   
And is this anything but the separation of soul and body? And   
being dead is the attainment of this separation; when the soul   
exists in herself, and is parted from the body and the body is   
parted from the soul-that is death?   
Exactly: that and nothing else, he replied.   
And what do you say of another question, my friend, about which I   
should like to have your opinion, and the answer to which will   
probably throw light on our present inquiry: Do you think that the   
philosopher ought to care about the pleasures-if they are to be called   
pleasures-of eating and drinking?   
Certainly not, answered Simmias.   
And what do you say of the pleasures of love-should he care about   
them?   
By no means.   
And will he think much of the other ways of indulging the body-for   
example, the acquisition of costly raiment, or sandals, or other   
adornments of the body? Instead of caring about them, does he not   
rather despise anything more than nature needs? What do you say?   
I should say the true philosopher would despise them.   
Would you not say that he is entirely concerned with the soul and   
not with the body? He would like, as far as he can, to be quit of   
the body and turn to the soul.   
That is true.   
In matters of this sort philosophers, above all other men, may be   
observed in every sort of way to dissever the soul from the body.   
That is true.   
Whereas, Simmias, the rest of the world are of opinion that a life   
which has no bodily pleasures and no part in them is not worth having;   
but that he who thinks nothing of bodily pleasures is almost as though   
he were dead.   
That is quite true.   
What again shall we say of the actual acquirement of knowledge?-is   
the body, if invited to share in the inquiry, a hinderer or a   
helper? I mean to say, have sight and hearing any truth in them? Are   
they not, as the poets are always telling us, inaccurate witnesses?   
and yet, if even they are inaccurate and indistinct, what is to be   
said of the other senses?-for you will allow that they are the best of   
them?   
Certainly, he replied.   
Then when does the soul attain truth?-for in attempting to   
consider anything in company with the body she is obviously deceived.   
Yes, that is true.   
Then ust nmot existence be revealed to her in thought, if at all?   
Yes.   
And thought is best when the mind is gathered into herself and   
none of these things trouble her-neither sounds nor sights nor pain   
nor any pleasure-when she has as little as possible to do with the   
body, and has no bodily sense or feeling, but is aspiring after being?   
That is true.   
And in this the philosopher dishonors the body; his soul runs away   
from the body and desires to be alone and by herself?   
That is true.   
Well, but there is another thing, Simmias: Is there or is there   
not an absolute justice?   
Assuredly there is.   
And an absolute beauty and absolute good?   
Of course.   
But did you ever behold any of them with your eyes?   
Certainly not.   
Or did you ever reach them with any other bodily sense? (and I speak   
not of these alone, but of absolute greatness, and health, and   
strength, and of the essence or true nature of everything). Has the   
reality of them ever been perceived by you through the bodily   
organs? or rather, is not the nearest approach to the knowledge of   
their several natures made by him who so orders his intellectual   
vision as to have the most exact conception of the essence of that   
which he considers?   
Certainly.   
And he attains to the knowledge of them in their highest purity   
who goes to each of them with the mind alone, not allowing when in the   
act of thought the intrusion or introduction of sight or any other   
sense in the company of reason, but with the very light of the mind in   
her clearness penetrates into the very fight of truth in each; he   
has got rid, as far as he can, of eyes and ears and of the whole body,   
which he conceives of only as a disturbing element, hindering the soul   
from the acquisition of knowledge when in company with her-is not this   
the sort of man who, if ever man did, is likely to attain the   
knowledge of existence?   
There is admirable truth in that, Socrates, replied Simmias.   
And when they consider all this, must not true philosophers make a   
reflection, of which they will speak to one another in such words as   
these: We have found, they will say, a path of speculation which seems   
to bring us and the argument to the conclusion that while we are in   
the body, and while the soul is mingled with this mass of evil, our   
desire will not be satisfied, and our desire is of the truth. For   
the body is a source of endless trouble to us by reason of the mere   
requirement of food; and also is liable to diseases which overtake and   
impede us in the search after truth: and by filling us so full of   
loves, and lusts, and fears, and fancies, and idols, and every sort of   
folly, prevents our ever having, as people say, so much as a   
thought. For whence come wars, and fightings, and factions? whence but   
from the body and the lusts of the body? For wars are occasioned by   
the love of money, and money has to be acquired for the sake and in   
the service of the body; and in consequence of all these things the   
time which ought to be given to philosophy is lost. Moreover, if there   
is time and an inclination toward philosophy, yet the body   
introduces a turmoil and confusion and fear into the course of   
speculation, and hinders us from seeing the truth: and all   
experience shows that if we would have pure knowledge of anything we   
must be quit of the body, and the soul in herself must behold all   
things in themselves: then I suppose that we shall attain that which   
we desire, and of which we say that we are lovers, and that is wisdom,   
not while we live, but after death, as the argument shows; for if   
while in company with the body the soul cannot have pure knowledge,   
one of two things seems to follow-either knowledge is not to be   
attained at all, or, if at all, after death. For then, and not till   
then, the soul will be in herself alone and without the body. In   
this present life, I reckon that we make the nearest approach to   
knowledge when we have the least possible concern or interest in the   
body, and are not saturated with the bodily nature, but remain pure   
until the hour when God himself is pleased to release us. And then the   
foolishness of the body will be cleared away and we shall be pure   
and hold converse with other pure souls, and know of ourselves the   
clear light everywhere; and this is surely the light of truth. For   
no impure thing is allowed to approach the pure. These are the sort of   
words, Simmias, which the true lovers of wisdom cannot help saying   
to one another, and thinking. You will agree with me in that?   
Certainly, Socrates.   
But if this is true, O my friend, then there is great hope that,   
going whither I go, I shall there be satisfied with that which has   
been the chief concern of you and me in our past lives. And now that   
the hour of departure is appointed to me, this is the hope with   
which I depart, and not I only, but every man who believes that he has   
his mind purified.   
Certainly, replied Simmias.   
And what is purification but the separation of the soul from the   
body, as I was saying before; the habit of the soul gathering and   
collecting herself into herself, out of all the courses of the body;   
the dwelling in her own place alone, as in another life, so also in   
this, as far as she can; the release of the soul from the chains of   
the body?   
Very true, he said.   
And what is that which is termed death, but this very separation and   
release of the soul from the body?   
To be sure, he said.   
And the true philosophers, and they only, study and are eager to   
release the soul. Is not the separation and release of the soul from   
the body their especial study?   
That is true.   
And as I was saying at first, there would be a ridiculous   
contradiction in men studying to live as nearly as they can in a state   
of death, and yet repining when death comes.   
Certainly.   
Then, Simmias, as the true philosophers are ever studying death,   
to them, of all men, death is the least terrible. Look at the matter   
in this way: how inconsistent of them to have been always enemies of   
the body, and wanting to have the soul alone, and when this is granted   
to them, to be trembling and repining; instead of rejoicing at their   
departing to that place where, when they arrive, they hope to gain   
that which in life they loved (and this was wisdom), and at the same   
time to be rid of the company of their enemy. Many a man has been   
willing to go to the world below in the hope of seeing there an   
earthly love, or wife, or son, and conversing with them. And will he   
who is a true lover of wisdom, and is persuaded in like manner that   
only in the world below he can worthily enjoy her, still repine at   
death? Will he not depart with joy? Surely he will, my friend, if he   
be a true philosopher. For he will have a firm conviction that there   
only, and nowhere else, he can find wisdom in her purity. And if   
this be true, he would be very absurd, as I was saying, if he were   
to fear death.   
He would, indeed, replied Simmias.   
And when you see a man who is repining at the approach of death,   
is not his reluctance a sufficient proof that he is not a lover of   
wisdom, but a lover of the body, and probably at the same time a lover   
of either money or power, or both?   
That is very true, he replied.   
There is a virtue, Simmias, which is named courage. Is not that a   
special attribute of the philosopher?   
Certainly.   
Again, there is temperance. Is not the calm, and control, and   
disdain of the passions which even the many call temperance, a quality   
belonging only to those who despise the body and live in philosophy?   
That is not to be denied.   
For the courage and temperance of other men, if you will consider   
them, are really a contradiction.   
How is that, Socrates?   
Well, he said, you are aware that death is regarded by men in   
general as a great evil.   
That is true, he said.   
And do not courageous men endure death because they are afraid of   
yet greater evils?   
That is true.   
Then all but the philosophers are courageous only from fear, and   
because they are afraid; and yet that a man should be courageous   
from fear, and because he is a coward, is surely a strange thing.   
Very true.   
And are not the temperate exactly in the same case? They are   
temperate because they are intemperate-which may seem to be a   
contradiction, but is nevertheless the sort of thing which happens   
with this foolish temperance. For there are pleasures which they   
must have, and are afraid of losing; and therefore they abstain from   
one class of pleasures because they are overcome by another: and   
whereas intemperance is defined as " being under the dominion of   
pleasure," they overcome only because they are overcome by pleasure.   
And that is what I mean by saying that they are temperate through   
intemperance.   
That appears to be true.   
Yet the exchange of one fear or pleasure or pain for another fear or   
pleasure or pain, which are measured like coins, the greater with   
the less, is not the exchange of virtue. O my dear Simmias, is there   
not one true coin for which all things ought to exchange?-and that   
is wisdom; and only in exchange for this, and in company with this, is   
anything truly bought or sold, whether courage or temperance or   
justice. And is not all true virtue the companion of wisdom, no matter   
what fears or pleasures or other similar goods or evils may or may not   
attend her? But the virtue which is made up of these goods, when   
they are severed from wisdom and exchanged with one another, is a   
shadow of virtue only, nor is there any freedom or health or truth   
in her; but in the true exchange there is a purging away of all   
these things, and temperance, and justice, and courage, and wisdom   
herself are a purgation of them. And I conceive that the founders of   
the mysteries had a real meaning and were not mere triflers when   
they intimated in a figure long ago that he who passes unsanctified   
and uninitiated into the world below will live in a slough, but that   
he who arrives there after initiation and purification will dwell with   
the gods. For " many," as they say in the mysteries, " are the thyrsus   
bearers, but few are the mystics,"-meaning, as I interpret the   
words, the true philosophers. In the number of whom I have been   
seeking, according to my ability, to find a place during my whole   
life; whether I have sought in a right way or not, and whether I   
have succeeded or not, I shall truly know in a little while, if God   
will, when I myself arrive in the other world: that is my belief.   
And now, Simmias and Cebes, I have answered those who charge me with   
not grieving or repining at parting from you and my masters in this   
world; and I am right in not repining, for I believe that I shall find   
other masters and friends who are as good in the world below. But   
all men cannot believe this, and I shall be glad if my words have   
any more success with you than with the judges of the Athenians.   
Cebes answered: I agree, Socrates, in the greater part of what you   
say. But in what relates to the soul, men are apt to be incredulous;   
they fear that when she leaves the body her place may be nowhere,   
and that on the very day of death she may be destroyed and   
perish-immediately on her release from the body, issuing forth like   
smoke or air and vanishing away into nothingness. For if she could   
only hold together and be herself after she was released from the   
evils of the body, there would be good reason to hope, Socrates,   
that what you say is true. But much persuasion and many arguments   
are required in order to prove that when the man is dead the soul   
yet exists, and has any force of intelligence.   
True, Cebes, said Socrates; and shall I suggest that we talk a   
little of the probabilities of these things?   
I am sure, said Cebes, that I should gready like to know your   
opinion about them.   
I reckon, said Socrates, that no one who heard me now, not even if   
he were one of my old enemies, the comic poets, could accuse me of   
idle talking about matters in which I have no concern. Let us, then,   
if you please, proceed with the inquiry.   
Whether the souls of men after death are or are not in the world   
below, is a question which may be argued in this manner: The ancient   
doctrine of which I have been speaking affirms that they go from   
this into the other world, and return hither, and are born from the   
dead. Now if this be true, and the living come from the dead, then our   
souls must be in the other world, for if not, how could they be born   
again? And this would be conclusive, if there were any real evidence   
that the living are only born from the dead; but if there is no   
evidence of this, then other arguments will have to be adduced.   
That is very true, replied Cebes.   
Then let us consider this question, not in relation to man only, but   
in relation to animals generally, and to plants, and to everything   
of which there is generation, and the proof will be easier. Are not   
all things which have opposites generated out of their opposites? I   
mean such things as good and evil, just and unjust-and there are   
innumerable other opposites which are generated out of opposites.   
And I want to show that this holds universally of all opposites; I   
mean to say, for example, that anything which becomes greater must   
become greater after being less.   
True.   
And that which becomes less must have been once greater and then   
become less.   
Yes.   
And the weaker is generated from the stronger, and the swifter   
from the slower.   
Very true.   
And the worse is from the better, and the more just is from the more   
unjust.   
Of course.   
And is this true of all opposites? and are we convinced that all   
of them are generated out of opposites?   
Yes.   
And in this universal opposition of all things, are there not also   
two intermediate processes which are ever going on, from one to the   
other, and back again; where there is a greater and a less there is   
also an intermediate process of increase and diminution, and that   
which grows is said to wax, and that which decays to wane?   
Yes, he said.   
And there are many other processes, such as division and   
composition, cooling and heating, which equally involve a passage into   
and out of one another. And this holds of all opposites, even though   
not always expressed in words-they are generated out of one another,   
and there is a passing or process from one to the other of them?   
Very true, he replied.   
Well, and is there not an opposite of life, as sleep is the opposite   
of waking?   
True, he said.   
And what is that?   
Death, he answered.   
And these, then, are generated, if they are opposites, the one   
from the other, and have there their two intermediate processes also?   
Of course.   
Now, said Socrates, I will analyze one of the two pairs of opposites   
which I have mentioned to you, and also its intermediate processes,   
and you shall analyze the other to me. The state of sleep is opposed   
to the state of waking, and out of sleeping waking is generated, and   
out of waking, sleeping, and the process of generation is in the one   
case falling asleep, and in the other waking up. Are you agreed   
about that?   
Quite agreed.   
Then suppose that you analyze life and death to me in the same   
manner. Is not death opposed to life?   
Yes.   
And they are generated one from the other?   
Yes.   
What is generated from life?   
Death.   
And what from death?   
I can only say in answer-life.   
Then the living, whether things or persons, Cebes, are generated   
from the dead?   
That is clear, he replied.   
Then the inference is, that our souls are in the world below?   
That is true.   
And one of the two processes or generations is visible-for surely   
the act of dying is visible?   
Surely, he said.   
And may not the other be inferred as the complement of nature, who   
is not to be supposed to go on one leg only? And if not, a   
corresponding process of generation in death must also be assigned   
to her?   
Certainly, he replied.   
And what is that process?   
Revival.   
And revival, if there be such a thing, is the birth of the dead into   
the world of the living?   
Quite true.   
Then there is a new way in which we arrive at the inference that the   
living come from the dead, just as the dead come from the living;   
and if this is true, then the souls of the dead must be in some   
place out of which they come again. And this, as I think, has been   
satisfactorily proved.   
Yes, Socrates, he said; all this seems to flow necessarily out of   
our previous admissions.   
And that these admissions are not unfair, Cebes, he said, may be   
shown, as I think, in this way: If generation were in a straight   
line only, and there were no compensation or circle in nature, no turn   
or return into one another, then you know that all things would at   
last have the same form and pass into the same state, and there   
would be no more generation of them.   
What do you mean? he said.   
A simple thing enough, which I will illustrate by the case of sleep,   
he replied. You know that if there were no compensation of sleeping   
and waking, the story of the sleeping Endymion would in the end have   
no meaning, because all other things would be asleep, too, and he   
would not be thought of. Or if there were composition only, and no   
division of substances, then the chaos of Anaxagoras would come again.   
And in like manner, my dear Cebes, if all things which partook of life   
were to die, and after they were dead remained in the form of death,   
and did not come to life again, all would at last die, and nothing   
would be alive-how could this be otherwise? For if the living spring   
from any others who are not the dead, and they die, must not all   
things at last be swallowed up in death?   
There is no escape from that, Socrates, said Cebes; and I think that   
what you say is entirely true.   
Yes, he said, Cebes, I entirely think so, too; and we are not   
walking in a vain imagination; but I am confident in the belief that   
there truly is such a thing as living again, and that the living   
spring from the dead, and that the souls of the dead are in existence,   
and that the good souls have a better portion than the evil.   
Cebes added: Your favorite doctrine, Socrates, that knowledge is   
simply recollection, if true, also necessarily implies a previous time   
in which we learned that which we now recollect. But this would be   
impossible unless our soul was in some place before existing in the   
human form; here, then, is another argument of the souls immortality.   
But tell me, Cebes, said Simmias, interposing, what proofs are given   
of this doctrine of recollection? I am not very sure at this moment   
that I remember them.   
One excellent proof, said Cebes, is afforded by questions. If you   
put a question to a person in a right way, he will give a true   
answer of himself; but how could he do this unless there were   
knowledge and right reason already in him? And this is most clearly   
shown when he is taken to a diagram or to anything of that sort.   
But if, said Socrates, you are still incredulous, Simmias, I would   
ask you whether you may not agree with me when you look at the   
matter in another way; I mean, if you are still incredulous as to   
whether knowledge is recollection.   
Incredulous, I am not, said Simmias; but I want to have this   
doctrine of recollection brought to my own recollection, and, from   
what Cebes has said, I am beginning to recollect and be convinced; but   
I should still like to hear what more you have to say.   
This is what I would say, he replied: We should agree, if I am not   
mistaken, that what a man recollects he must have known at some   
previous time.   
Very true.   
And what is the nature of this recollection? And, in asking this,   
I mean to ask whether, when a person has already seen or heard or in   
any way perceived anything, and he knows not only that, but   
something else of which he has not the same, but another knowledge, we   
may not fairly say that he recollects that which comes into his   
mind. Are we agreed about that?   
What do you mean?   
I mean what I may illustrate by the following instance: The   
knowledge of a lyre is not the same as the knowledge of a man?   
True.   
And yet what is the feeling of lovers when they recognize a lyre, or   
a garment, or anything else which the beloved has been in the habit of   
using? Do not they, from knowing the lyre, form in the minds eye an   
image of the youth to whom the lyre belongs? And this is recollection:   
and in the same way anyone who sees Simmias may remember Cebes; and   
there are endless other things of the same nature.   
Yes, indeed, there are-endless, replied Simmias.   
And this sort of thing, he said, is recollection, and is most   
commonly a process of recovering that which has been forgotten through   
time and inattention.   
Very true, he said.   
Well; and may you not also from seeing the picture of a horse or a   
lyre remember a man? and from the picture of Simmias, you may be led   
to remember Cebes?   
True.   
Or you may also be led to the recollection of Simmias himself?   
True, he said.   
And in all these cases, the recollection may be derived from   
things either like or unlike?   
That is true.   
And when the recollection is derived from like things, then there is   
sure to be another question, which is, whether the likeness of that   
which is recollected is in any way defective or not.   
Very true, he said.   
And shall we proceed a step further, and affirm that there is such a   
thing as equality, not of wood with wood, or of stone with stone,   
but that, over and above this, there is equality in the abstract?   
Shall we affirm this?   
Affirm, yes, and swear to it, replied Simmias, with all the   
confidence in life.   
And do we know the nature of this abstract essence?   
To be sure, he said.   
And whence did we obtain this knowledge? Did we not see equalities   
of material things, such as pieces of wood and stones, and gather from   
them the idea of an equality which is different from them?-you will   
admit that? Or look at the matter again in this way: Do not the same   
pieces of wood or stone appear at one time equal, and at another   
time unequal?   
That is certain.   
But are real equals ever unequal? or is the idea of equality ever   
inequality?   
That surely was never yet known, Socrates.   
Then these (so-called) equals are not the same with the idea of   
equality?   
I should say, clearly not, Socrates.   
And yet from these equals, although differing from the idea of   
equality, you conceived and attained that idea?   
Very true, he said.   
Which might be like, or might be unlike them?   
Yes.   
But that makes no difference; whenever from seeing one thing you   
conceived another, whether like or unlike, there must surely have been   
an act of recollection?   
Very true.   
But what would you say of equal portions of wood and stone, or other   
material equals? and what is the impression produced by them? Are they   
equals in the same sense as absolute equality? or do they fall short   
of this in a measure?   
Yes, he said, in a very great measure, too.   
And must we not allow that when I or anyone look at any object,   
and perceive that the object aims at being some other thing, but falls   
short of, and cannot attain to it-he who makes this observation must   
have had previous knowledge of that to which, as he says, the other,   
although similar, was inferior?   
Certainly.   
And has not this been our case in the matter of equals and of   
absolute equality?   
Precisely.   
Then we must have known absolute equality previously to the time   
when we first saw the material equals, and reflected that all these   
apparent equals aim at this absolute equality, but fall short of it?   
That is true.   
And we recognize also that this absolute equality has only been   
known, and can only be known, through the medium of sight or touch, or   
of some other sense. And this I would affirm of all such conceptions.   
Yes, Socrates, as far as the argument is concerned, one of them is   
the same as the other.   
And from the senses, then, is derived the knowledge that all   
sensible things aim at an idea of equality of which they fall short-is   
not that true?   
Yes.   
Then before we began to see or hear or perceive in any way, we   
must have had a knowledge of absolute equality, or we could not have   
referred to that the equals which are derived from the senses-for to   
that they all aspire, and of that they fall short?   
That, Socrates, is certainly to be inferred from the previous   
statements.   
And did we not see and hear and acquire our other senses as soon   
as we were born?   
Certainly.   
Then we must have acquired the knowledge of the ideal equal at   
some time previous to this?   
Yes.   
That is to say, before we were born, I suppose?   
True.   
And if we acquired this knowledge before we were born, and were born   
having it, then we also knew before we were born and at the instant of   
birth not only equal or the greater or the less, but all other   
ideas; for we are not speaking only of equality absolute, but of   
beauty, goodness, justice, holiness, and all which we stamp with the   
name of essence in the dialectical process, when we ask and answer   
questions. Of all this we may certainly affirm that we acquired the   
knowledge before birth?   
That is true.   
But if, after having acquired, we have not forgotten that which we   
acquired, then we must always have been born with knowledge, and shall   
always continue to know as long as life lasts-for knowing is the   
acquiring and retaining knowledge and not forgetting. Is not   
forgetting, Simmias, just the losing of knowledge?   
Quite true, Socrates.   
But if the knowledge which we acquired before birth was lost by us   
at birth, and afterwards by the use of the senses we recovered that   
which we previously knew, will not that which we call learning be a   
process of recovering our knowledge, and may not this be rightly   
termed recollection by us?   
Very true.   
For this is clear, that when we perceived something, either by the   
help of sight or hearing, or some other sense, there was no difficulty   
in receiving from this a conception of some other thing like or unlike   
which had been forgotten and which was associated with this; and   
therefore, as I was saying, one of two alternatives follows: either we   
had this knowledge at birth, and continued to know through life; or,   
after birth, those who are said to learn only remember, and learning   
is recollection only.   
Yes, that is quite true, Socrates.   
And which alternative, Simmias, do you prefer? Had we the   
knowledge at our birth, or did we remember afterwards the things which   
we knew previously to our birth?   
I cannot decide at the moment.   
At any rate you can decide whether he who has knowledge ought or   
ought not to be able to give a reason for what he knows.   
Certainly, he ought.   
But do you think that every man is able to give a reason about these   
very matters of which we are speaking?   
I wish that they could, Socrates, but I greatly fear that   
to-morrow at this time there will be no one able to give a reason   
worth having.   
Then you are not of opinion, Simmias, that all men know these   
things?   
Certainly not.   
Then they are in process of recollecting that which they learned   
before.   
Certainly.   
But when did our souls acquire this knowledge?-not since we were   
born as men?   
Certainly not.   
And therefore previously?   
Yes.   
Then, Simmias, our souls must have existed before they were in the   
form of man-without bodies, and must have had intelligence.   
Unless indeed you suppose, Socrates, that these notions were given   
us at the moment of birth; for this is the only time that remains.   
Yes, my friend, but when did we lose them? for they are not in us   
when we are born-that is admitted. Did we lose them at the moment of   
receiving them, or at some other time?   
No, Socrates, I perceive that I was unconsciously talking nonsense.   
Then may we not say, Simmias, that if, as we are always repeating,   
there is an absolute beauty, and goodness, and essence in general, and   
to this, which is now discovered to be a previous condition of our   
being, we refer all our sensations, and with this compare   
them-assuming this to have a prior existence, then our souls must have   
had a prior existence, but if not, there would be no force in the   
argument? There can be no doubt that if these absolute ideas existed   
before we were born, then our souls must have existed before we were   
born, and if not the ideas, then not the souls.   
Yes, Socrates; I am convinced that there is precisely the same   
necessity for the existence of the soul before birth, and of the   
essence of which you are speaking: and the argument arrives at a   
result which happily agrees with my own notion. For there is nothing   
which to my mind is so evident as that beauty, goodness, and other   
notions of which you were just now speaking have a most real and   
absolute existence; and I am satisfied with the proof.   
Well, but is Cebes equally satisfied? for I must convince him too.   
I think, said Simmias, that Cebes is satisfied: although he is the   
most incredulous of mortals, yet I believe that he is convinced of the   
existence of the soul before birth. But that after death the soul will   
continue to exist is not yet proven even to my own satisfaction. I   
cannot get rid of the feeling of the many to which Cebes was   
referring-the feeling that when the man dies the soul may be   
scattered, and that this may be the end of her. For admitting that she   
may be generated and created in some other place, and may have existed   
before entering the human body, why after having entered in and gone   
out again may she not herself be destroyed and come to an end?   
Very true, Simmias, said Cebes; that our soul existed before we were   
born was the first half of the argument, and this appears to have been   
proven; that the soul will exist after death as well as before birth   
is the other half of which the proof is still wanting, and has to be   
supplied.   
But that proof, Simmias and Cebes, has been already given, said   
Socrates, if you put the two arguments together-I mean this and the   
former one, in which we admitted that everything living is born of the   
dead. For if the soul existed before birth, and in coming to life   
and being born can be born only from death and dying, must she not   
after death continue to exist, since she has to be born again?   
surely the proof which you desire has been already furnished. Still   
I suspect that you and Simmias would be glad to probe the argument   
further; like children, you are haunted with a fear that when the soul   
leaves the body, the wind may really blow her away and scatter her;   
especially if a man should happen to die in stormy weather and not   
when the sky is calm.   
Cebes answered with a smile: Then, Socrates, you must argue us out   
of our fears-and yet, strictly speaking, they are not our fears, but   
there is a child within us to whom death is a sort of hobgoblin; him   
too we must persuade not to be afraid when he is alone with him in the   
dark.   
Socrates said: Let the voice of the charmer be applied daily until   
you have charmed him away.   
And where shall we find a good charmer of our fears, Socrates,   
when you are gone?   
Hellas, he replied, is a large place, Cebes, and has many good   
men, and there are barbarous races not a few: seek for him among   
them all, far and wide, sparing neither pains nor money; for there   
is no better way of using your money. And you must not forget to   
seek for him among yourselves too; for he is nowhere more likely to be   
found.   
The search, replied Cebes, shall certainly be made. And now, if   
you please, let us return to the point of the argument at which we   
digressed.   
By all means, replied Socrates; what else should I please?   
Very good, he said.   
Must we not, said Socrates, ask ourselves some question of this   
sort?-What is that which, as we imagine, is liable to be scattered   
away, and about which we fear? and what again is that about which we   
have no fear? And then we may proceed to inquire whether that which   
suffers dispersion is or is not of the nature of soul-our hopes and   
fears as to our own souls will turn upon that.   
That is true, he said.   
Now the compound or composite may be supposed to be naturally   
capable of being dissolved in like manner as of being compounded;   
but that which is uncompounded, and that only, must be, if anything   
is, indissoluble.   
Yes; that is what I should imagine, said Cebes.   
And the uncompounded may be assumed to be the same and unchanging,   
where the compound is always changing and never the same?   
That I also think, he said.   
Then now let us return to the previous discussion. Is that idea or   
essence, which in the dialectical process we define as essence of true   
existence-whether essence of equality, beauty, or anything else: are   
these essences, I say, liable at times to some degree of change? or   
are they each of them always what they are, having the same simple,   
self-existent and unchanging forms, and not admitting of variation   
at all, or in any way, or at any time?   
They must be always the same, Socrates, replied Cebes.   
And what would you say of the many beautiful-whether men or horses   
or garments or any other things which may be called equal or   
beautiful-are they all unchanging and the same always, or quite the   
reverse? May they not rather be described as almost always changing   
and hardly ever the same either with themselves or with one another?   
The latter, replied Cebes; they are always in a state of change.   
And these you can touch and see and perceive with the senses, but   
the unchanging things you can only perceive with the mind-they are   
invisible and are not seen?   
That is very true, he said.   
Well, then, he added, let us suppose that there are two sorts of   
existences, one seen, the other unseen.   
Let us suppose them.   
The seen is the changing, and the unseen is the unchanging.   
That may be also supposed.   
And, further, is not one part of us body, and the rest of us soul?   
To be sure.   
And to which class may we say that the body is more alike and akin?   
Clearly to the seen: no one can doubt that.   
And is the soul seen or not seen?   
Not by man, Socrates.   
And by " seen" and " not seen" is meant by us that which is or is   
not visible to the eye of man?   
Yes, to the eye of man.   
And what do we say of the soul? is that seen or not seen?   
Not seen.   
Unseen then?   
Yes.   
Then the soul is more like to the unseen, and the body to the seen?   
That is most certain, Socrates.   
And were we not saying long ago that the soul when using the body as   
an instrument of perception, that is to say, when using the sense of   
sight or hearing or some other sense (for the meaning of perceiving   
through the body is perceiving through the senses)-were we not   
saying that the soul too is then dragged by the body into the region   
of the changeable, and wanders and is confused; the world spins   
round her, and she is like a drunkard when under their influence?   
Very true.   
But when returning into herself she reflects; then she passes into   
the realm of purity, and eternity, and immortality, and   
unchangeableness, which are her kindred, and with them she ever lives,   
when she is by herself and is not let or hindered; then she ceases   
from her erring ways, and being in communion with the unchanging is   
unchanging. And this state of the soul is called wisdom?   
That is well and truly said, Socrates, he replied.   
And to which class is the soul more nearly alike and akin, as far as   
may be inferred from this argument, as well as from the preceding one?   
I think, Socrates, that, in the opinion of everyone who follows   
the argument, the soul will be infinitely more like the unchangeable   
even the most stupid person will not deny that.   
And the body is more like the changing?   
Yes.   
Yet once more consider the matter in this light: When the soul and   
the body are united, then nature orders the soul to rule and govern,   
and the body to obey and serve.   
Now which of these two functions is akin to the divine? and which to   
the mortal? Does not the divine appear to you to be that which   
naturally orders and rules, and the mortal that which is subject and   
servant?   
True.   
And which does the soul resemble?   
The soul resembles the divine and the body the mortal-there can be   
no doubt of that, Socrates.   
Then reflect, Cebes: is not the conclusion of the whole matter   
this?-that the soul is in the very likeness of the divine, and   
immortal, and intelligible, and uniform, and indissoluble, and   
unchangeable; and the body is in the very likeness of the human, and   
mortal, and unintelligible, and multiform, and dissoluble, and   
changeable. Can this, my dear Cebes, be denied?   
No, indeed.   
But if this is true, then is not the body liable to speedy   
dissolution?   
and is not the soul almost or altogether indissoluble?   
Certainly.   
And do you further observe, that after a man is dead, the body,   
which is the visible part of man, and has a visible framework, which   
is called a corpse, and which would naturally be dissolved and   
decomposed and dissipated, is not dissolved or decomposed at once, but   
may remain for a good while, if the constitution be sound at the   
time of death, and the season of the year favorable? For the body when   
shrunk and embalmed, as is the custom in Egypt, may remain almost   
entire through infinite ages; and even in decay, still there are   
some portions, such as the bones and ligaments, which are   
practically indestructible. You allow that?   
Yes.   
And are we to suppose that the soul, which is invisible, in   
passing to the true Hades, which like her is invisible, and pure,   
and noble, and on her way to the good and wise God, whither, if God   
will, my soul is also soon to go-that the soul, I repeat, if this be   
her nature and origin, is blown away and perishes immediately on   
quitting the body as the many say? That can never be, dear Simmias and   
Cebes. The truth rather is that the soul which is pure at departing   
draws after her no bodily taint, having never voluntarily had   
connection with the body, which she is ever avoiding, herself gathered   
into herself (for such abstraction has been the study of her life).   
And what does this mean but that she has been a true disciple of   
philosophy and has practised how to die easily? And is not   
philosophy the practice of death?   
Certainly.   
That soul, I say, herself invisible, departs to the invisible   
worldto the divine and immortal and rational: thither arriving, she   
lives in bliss and is released from the error and folly of men,   
their fears and wild passions and all other human ills, and forever   
dwells, as they say of the initiated, in company with the gods. Is not   
this true, Cebes?   
Yes, said Cebes, beyond a doubt.   
But the soul which has been p