

Read phaedo-wisdom  
and the soul and  
socrates about to die  
in plato: the last  
days...



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2 April Phaedo-Wisdom and the Soul and Socrates about to Die in Plato- The Last Days of Socrates Of all the living souls in the universe, contemplation of thoughts and propensity to reason is the prodigy of the only few. Since ages philosophers have been striving to decipher mental capabilities of man and his power of reasoning interpreting extent of the same in each individual and what separates them apart. At the time of death, Socrates thoughts tap those moments of our life when we have to choose between our senses and our soul. The dialogue takes place at Peloponnesian, small town of Phlius, which was home to Echebrates. Phaedo, one of the followers of Socrates is a visitor to the place and becomes a witness to the death of Socrates and the dialogue that ensues between him and Crito. The execution of Socrates has been postponed as the ritual of sending the ship to Delos was in process. It was a tradition among Athenians to send the decorated ship to Delos to commemorate their victory over Minotaur and to honor the god Apollo, and during this period no execution could take place. The philosophical discourse takes place between Socrates and Crito as he is confined in his cell waiting for the death sentence and all his friends are near him. Socrates explains that life of the true philosopher is spent in the “ practice of dying”, aspiring to achieve wisdom and rational thoughts “ for release from the confining pressures of the body and its appetites (Cottingham 127).” And if relieved entirely from the palatable desires and physical pleasures, it will allow the soul to become truly itself. Against the background of the Orphic and Pythagorean faith, Socrates believes in the immortality of soul and physical death as a means of liberation. People are considered as the chattels of God, and are not considered as free to enter into the afterlife by killing themselves. When Crito asks him in what way he would like to be buried, <https://assignbuster.com/read-phaedo-wisdom-and-the-soul-and-socrates-about-to-die-in-plato-the-last-days-of-socrates/>

Socrates replies, he could be buried in any way as liked by him but with the condition that he would hold him and not let him walk away. Socrates comments it is only his body that would be buried but his soul would be taken into the heavenly bliss. He then proceeds into the bath chamber to wash himself for relieving women the task of washing his dead body. During the whole conversation, Socrates draws fine distinction between the ever changing mortal objects and pleasurable things and eternal knowledge and understanding. As the soul is related to the latter, so it cannot be ignored that it is eternal too. One of the participants, Simmias, at this point objects to the discourse of the immortality of the soul as he says that "soul might depend on the organization of the materials of the body (Cottingham 127)", and makes a comparison with the tuned instrument, which is no doubt very beautiful and divine but is still dependent on the strings for the display of the magic of music. To this, Socrates objects as he says soul never goes in conjunction to our senses and physical pangs making it almost impossible to show its harmonization with our physical self. Satiated and blessed life awaits those who have been able to relieve themselves from all the physical pains and purified their souls. Following this discourse Socrates drinks hemlock to finally enter into the immortal life. His last words were, "Crito, I owe a cock to Aesculapius; will you remember to pay the debt (Plato 142)." These words show the feeling of the debt Socrates believed he owed to the God of Medicine, Aesculapius, as he had just drunk the cup of hemlock.

Works Cited Cottingham, John. *Western Philosophy: An Anthology*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1996. Print. Plato. *Dialogues of Plato Containing the Apology of Socrates, Crito, Phaedo and Protagoras*. Trans. Benjamin Jowett. Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2004. Print.

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