

# Socrates discourse

Philosophy



Socrates Dis Plato's Apology is not merely the frustrated babblings of a convict condemned to death penalty, but rather the emphatic outpourings of an enlightened soul delving on the quintessential aspects of life. In the very beginning of his apology, Socrates does away with an immediate rancor against his oppressors, by declaring the charges attributed to him as the outcome of a timeless conflict of ideas and values, thereby elevating his trial to a level much above the task of meting out justice to a common convict. In that context Socrates classifies his oppressors to be as much enshrined in the machinations of the past as in the present. Socrates unravels the ploys of his detractors to attribute his fame and name to some esoteric ability to perform mysterious and unnatural feats. As per Socrates, his fame could be deemed to be the direct outcome of a wisdom that is natural and human and therefore not beyond the aspirations of any human. As per the words of Socrates, his present plight originated from his honest and bold audacity to question the validity and truthfulness of the elites of his times, be it the politicians, seers, poets, artisans or teachers. The trial of Socrates originated not from some personal sin or crime, but rather from the daring of the accused to indulge in a free play of ideas, thereby making the populace see through their proponents' so called wisdom and sensibility. As per the Apology, the only crime Socrates seems to have committed is to challenge the status quo of the elites of his times. In his attempt to invalidate the Oracle of Delphi in a spirit of personal humility and wisdom, Socrates somehow ended up puncturing the vanities of the elites, who made their limited wisdom go a long way by prophesying themselves to be the possessors of all that needed to be learnt and acquired in the realm of wisdom. Socrates added fuel to this fire of hatred and anguish by

interpreting verdict of the Oracle of Delphi in a symbolic context, thereby declaring true wisdom to be inherent in the realization of the shortcomings and limitations of the human intellect. What enervated the enemies of Socrates was his ability to speak the truth and his courage to come heavily on false pretensions and professions of scholarship. So his enemies do believed that he had a calumnious influence on the youth of Athens in the sense that he encouraged them to question the old order and the way things existed. In his arguments with Meletus in the Apology, Socrates makes the audience see through the shallowness and irresponsibility of the charges leveled against him by his enemies, which are motivated by pure personal self interest, having nothing to do directly with the wellbeing and instruction of the Athenian youth. Socrates not only makes the citizens of Athens see the inconsistency inherent in Meletus' responses, but establishes beyond doubt that he is not an atheist, but rather his faith was a natural evolution of the beliefs of the ancients, approaching the commonalities inherent in the universal human creed. Above all, Socrates boldly professes his desire to embrace death rather than to accept a life imbued with evil and dishonor. Socrates pledges his vocation to be a true philosopher with a divine responsibility to look into the real nature of things, thereby taking life and death in the same sense, as the human wisdom tends to be oblivious to the deeper intricacies of both. As per Socrates, the only thing he taught to the youth of Athens was that spiritual awareness ought to precede material well being as spiritual awareness was the fountainhead of prosperity. Socrates argues that his life is precious in the sense that he stands to be the voice of reason and inquiry in Athens that dares to speak the truth without getting entrapped in personal gains and privileges, unlike his accusers. In that

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context Socrates hints at the false benevolence of his audience, sans selfish considerations and his zeal to do well irrespective of personal gains and interests. In the climax of the Apology, when the jury condemns Socrates to death, Socrates refers to his sacred responsibility of adhering to the truth as he perceived and understood it, rather than being scared into complacency by the fear of death. It goes without saying that in the Apology; Socrates not only shatters the flimsy accusations and aspersions of his detractors, but also comes out as being a voice of integrity and reason. References Plato. Apology. Retrieved December 6, 2011 from: <http://www2.hn.psu.edu/faculty/jmanis/plato/apology.pdf>