

Research paper on the last days of socrates

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On the last days of Socrates, he faces death with courage as he understands the meaning of life and his transition to the other life.

In the last days of Socrates, Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, and Phaedo give an account of his trial and death. They all give an account of events as they had happened with the help of dialogues by Socrates (Tredennick and Tarrant 12). To show the meaning of Socrates' departure, various scholars have analyzed these encounters. Philosophers use the last days of Socrates to teach their students the art of a master and a student. They present themselves as the master comparing to Socrates. Socrates had a philosophical view that he expressed to his followers hoping they would emulate him. It is a shame that at his death trial, some of the followers still have not understood his view.

Phaedo represents the actual death scene as it happens during the trial. Contention arises on two main issues, death and burial. Socrates criticizes death as a transition period from one life to another. He shows that on the other life after death, one is free of limitations that are in the physical world of the body. He wishes to reach this point of transition faster in order to set his soul free. Socrates teachings represent a body as a shell that holds the soul. The self of an individual is the soul and not the visualized physical body. The body is a mortal being, but the soul is immortal. Philosophers should be courageous to face death as it equips them with the power to release the self into a world where it has no bounds.

Socrates emphasizes to Crito that after his death, he will be no more. This is after Crito poses the question of how he would want to be buried. Socrates argues that only the body being buried is not him. In the event of his death,

he says that he leaves this world to go be with the blessed ones. Socrates knows that drinking the poison will not serve as an end to him. He believes of his departure after the transition to another world. He considers the next world as the land of the blessed ones. He refers to the souls as blessed as they are living among the gods in an immortal state. It is for this reason that he asks Crito not to worry about burying him (the self), but his body that he leaves behind.

Phaedo uses confidence to portray the humor with which Socrates faces his trial. Socrates has an attitude that is consistent as expressed by his dialogue with Crito. The philosopher has a will to die and transition. In his final days, he can compare to the supreme Buddha who is beyond fear and doubt (Dillon 529). The followers of Socrates, unlike him, are at a state of emotional distress on his departure. They do not understand the teachings of Socrates and are still emotionally weak. If they had understood, there would be no weeping at the death of their master.

Plato portrays Socrates as devoutly religious with respect to traditional gods. His devout presume that humans obeying god's, and reflect on exactly what the god's require. He believes that what they require is for his own good. He suggests that the god's are the caretakers of humans, and they possess them. Socrates not only understands his purpose in life to do as the god's require (which is for his own benefit), but he also acknowledges them as wise and good masters. In the years of Socrates, philosophers saw the soul as a free agent, not from the gods but free from the physical being of the body. Socrates knew this delve meaning of the soul. He knew that death was the means by which the soul separated from the body. If a philosopher

understands this, he/she would be courageous when about die, and believe in achieving the highest good after death. Socrates believes that it is only when the body releases the soul that it can achieve liberation. A liberated soul is free and pure. In the Phaedo, the philosophers end up agreeing with Socrates that the soul is immortal. They agree that he is heading for a better life. They do not portray this confidence as Socrates does.

Socrates takes poison at the death scene. The poison has a numbing effect on him. It spreads from his legs upwards until it reaches the heart leaving each part cold. This presents a painless death of the philosopher. Phaedo concludes this as an intelligent and just way. Dillon compares this to other ancient and modern accounts of hemlock poisoning. He suggests that its effect is quite the opposite of peaceful. The symptoms include vomiting, speech distortion, and convulsions. Plato visions a perfect death as soul shedding off the body like a coat of skin (Dillon 532).

Socrates believes that grief is misplaced and is a betrayal of his teachings. The difference in style depends on the manner of composition, either oral or literally. Human reactions of weeping and tearing their hair display this wrong teaching. When individuals understand the true meaning of death, the weeping will cease. This relate to how the Buddha enter a final nirvana peacefully. They respond calmly to their death and do not portray their emotions of grief.

Socrates has a positive attitude towards death as he believes in immortality of the soul. Once the soul separates from the body, it becomes truly free of limitations of the physical world. This belief further cultivates his indifference towards the burial process. Crito asks him of how he proposes his burial.

Socrates answers him that if Crito is able to catch him before he escapes, then he can bury him. This follows him saying that he is not the same as the corpse that they will later see. After he dies, he proposes that he will not remain behind but will depart. He asks Crito not to grieve and bear it more easily at his supposed suffering. He insists that at the funeral, they should not state that it is Socrates being buried, but it is his body they are burying. He asks Crito to bury the body in any means he deems necessary and according to the customs.

Socrates teaches in Phaedo that humans have a duty to do two things: to either ascertain the facts; or, if this is impossible to select a theory that the human intelligence achieves. In ascertaining the facts, one can seek instruction or discover personally. This will enable people to make a journey of life full of confidence when they have a divine revelation. The urge for people to ascertain the facts is wake them up from a deep slumber and enable them to grasp the truth. If this fails, they can rely on a theory to explain their being (Quentin 25).

The nature of a soul's rebirth depends on its previous behavior. The souls of different people take different paths towards liberation. Socrates teaches that the souls of inferior people continue to wander until they return once more in the shell of a body. The souls turn into a character developed during life. He continues to add that the souls that cultivated gluttony or assault, instead of bearing the pain of avoiding them, assume the form of perverse animals like donkeys. The souls that did not practice philosophy cannot be pure. This soul has no chance to attain a divine nature and live among the gods. Only the souls that love learning can achieve this divine nature.

Socrates urges Cebes to follow philosophy disassociating him from those who are devoted to the body. Philosophy offers liberation and purification of the soul. Individuals who oppose philosophy do not care for their souls. They base their interest on the body they see missing the mark of liberation offered to the soul. According to Socrates, they cannot attain divine nature. The individuals who seek wisdom can attest that the soul remains imprisoned until the time philosophy takes over. The soul is helpless, attached to the body, and compelled to view a restrained reality through the physical eyes. Philosophy breaks free the soul, allowing it to rise above the desire of the body. It shows that the physical senses abound with deception, and urges the soul not to use them unless when necessary. Philosophy encourages the soul to collect and concentrate itself in isolation, trusting its own isolated judgment upon the realities considered in isolation. The soul should attribute no truth to any other thing viewed in the physical sense. The soul learns that it must not reject an opportunity for release. In order to do this, the soul has to abstain from desires in the physical world.

The teachings by Socrates are to urge individuals to accept philosophy. Philosophy not only liberates, but also purifies the soul. In this state, the soul eliminates its limitations. Philosophy enables an individual to allow time to recollect thoughts, urging the individual to trust only the thoughts. It does not create a theory to follow, but seeks for the soul to understand its origin; an origin that existed before the body.

I believe that the issues of turning into animals and looking forward to transition to another life are misplaced. Philosophy is supposed to enable the soul to understand that as much as the shell of a body bounds it, it can break

free by overriding the desires of the body. According to Socrates agree, the great philosophers attest to this. They believe the soul is able to break free after the introduction of philosophy. The liberation takes place in this life and not after a presumed transition. The soul of a philosopher is able to live free of limitations, which is the purpose of philosophy. With this in mind, philosophers will not grieve that the soul is perishing as someone dies. They know that it is immortal and cannot die. They do not grieve, as they know their soul had the opportunity to experience life while still alive.

The issue of transition to animals is also misplaced. Philosophy suggests that the nature of the soul is like unchanging essence of reality. In the phenomenal world, the body is constantly changing. If the soul is immortal and cannot change, then how can it later turn into confinement when it breaks free from the body?

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