

Episode Thirty-Nine - The Mind And Spirit Are Not Supernatural But Parts of A Man Just Like The Head and Foot

Post by "Cassius" of October 11, 2020 at 8:52 AM

[Important points from Phaedo](#) - How Plato "Proved" the Immortality of the Soul

The following comes from the latter part of Plato's argument, after Plato has backed away from his initial more superficial arguments in favor of immortality, and he has begun to respond to the objections raised against his initial statement. Those objections included the "harmony" argument (in which it is argued that the harmony cannot exist when its parts are destroyed) and the "newer cloak" argument (in which the soul, though durable enough to outlast many worn-out cloaks in life, does not outlast the cloak that the man obtains shortly before his death). Plato proceeds with these as part of his concluding arguments:

1. Harmony admits of degrees, but in the soul there are no degrees;

1. I mean to say that a harmony admits of degrees, and is more of a harmony, and more completely a harmony, when more truly and fully harmonized, to any extent which is possible; and less of a harmony, and less completely a harmony, when less truly and fully harmonized.
2. True.
3. But does the soul admit of degrees? or is one soul in the very least degree more or less, or more or less completely, a soul than another?
4. Not in the least.
5. Yet surely of two souls, one is said to have intelligence and virtue, and to be good, and the other to have folly and vice, and to be an evil soul: and this is said truly?
6. Yes, truly.

2. If the ideas have an absolute existence the soul is immortal.

1. There is nothing new, he said, in what I am about to tell you; but only what I have been always and everywhere repeating in the previous discussion and on other occasions: I want to show you the nature of that cause which has occupied my thoughts. I shall have to go back to those familiar words which are in the mouth of every one, and first of all assume that there is an absolute beauty and goodness and greatness, and the like; grant me this, and I hope to be able to show you the nature of the cause, and to prove the immortality of the soul.
2. Cebes said: You may proceed at once with the proof, for I grant you this.
3. Well, he said, then I should like to know whether you agree with me in the next step; for I cannot help thinking, if there be anything beautiful other than absolute

beauty should there be such, that it can be beautiful only in so far as it partakes of absolute beauty—and I should say the same of everything. Do you agree in this notion of the cause?

4. Yes, he said, I agree.

3. All things exist by participation in general ideas.

1. He proceeded: I know nothing and can understand nothing of any other of those wise causes which are alleged; and if a person says to me that the bloom of colour, or form, or any such thing is a source of beauty, I leave all that, which is only confusing to me, and simply and singly, and perhaps foolishly, hold and am assured in my own mind that nothing makes a thing beautiful but the presence and participation of beauty in whatever way or manner obtained; for as to the manner I am uncertain, but I stoutly contend that by beauty all beautiful things become beautiful. This appears to me to be the safest answer which I can give, either to myself or to another, and to this I cling, in the persuasion that this principle will never be overthrown, and that to myself or to any one who asks the question, I may safely reply, That by beauty beautiful things become beautiful. Do you not agree with me?

2. I do.

3. And that by greatness only great things become great and greater greater, and by smallness the less become less?

4. True.

4. The merely verbal truth may be replaced by a higher one.

1. And now, he said, let us begin again; and do not you answer my question in the words in which I ask it: let me have not the old safe answer of which I spoke at first, but another equally safe, of which the truth will be inferred by you from what has been just said. I mean that if any one asks you 'what that is, of which the inherence makes the body hot,' you will reply not heat (this is what I call the safe and stupid answer), but fire, a far superior answer, which we are now in a condition to give. Or if any one asks you 'why a body is diseased,' you will not say from disease, but from fever; and instead of saying that oddness is the cause of odd numbers, you will say that the monad is the cause of them: and so of things in general, as I dare say that you will understand sufficiently without my adducing any further examples.

2. Yes, he said, I quite understand you.

3. Tell me, then, what is that of which the inherence will render the body alive?

5. We may now say, not life makes alive, but the soul makes alive; and the soul has a life-giving power which does not admit of death and is therefore immortal.

1. The soul, he replied.

2. And is this always the case?

3. Yes, he said, of course.

4. Then whatever the soul possesses, to that she comes bearing life?

5. Yes, certainly.

6. And is there any opposite to life?

7. There is, he said.
8. And what is that?
9. Death.
10. Then the soul, as has been acknowledged, will never receive the opposite of what she brings.
11. Impossible, replied Cebes.
12. And now, he said, what did we just now call that principle which repels the even?
13. The odd.
14. And that principle which repels the musical or the just?
15. The unmusical, he said, and the unjust.
16. And what do we call that principle which does not admit of death?
17. The immortal, he said.
18. And does the soul admit of death?
19. No.
20. Then the soul is immortal?
21. Yes, he said.
22. And may we say that this has been proven?
23. Yes, abundantly proven, Socrates, he replied.