

**Platon (Eflatun)**

**Sokrates'in Savunması**

**Özgün Adı: Ἀπολογία Σωκράτους  
(The Apology of Socrates)**

**v1**

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# Sokrates'in Savunması<sup>1</sup>

## I. Sokrates'in Savunması

Atinalılar! Beni suçlayanların üzerinizdeki tesirini bilemiyorum; fakat sözleri o kadar kandırıcı idi ki ben kendi hesabıma onları dinlerken az daha kim olduğumu unutuyordum. Böyle olmakla beraber, inanın ki doğru tek söz bile söylememişlerdir. Ancak, uydurdukları birçok yalanlar arasında, beni usta bir hatip diye göstererek sözlerimin belagatine<sup>2</sup> kanmamak için sizi uyanık bulunmaya davet etmelerine çok şaşıtm. Ağzımı açar açmaz hiç de güzel söyleyen bir adam olmadığım meydana çıkacak, yalancılıkları elbette anlaşılacak olduğu halde, bunu söylemek için insan doğrusu çok utanmaz olmalı. Eğer onlar her doğru söyleyen adama hatip diyorlarsa, diyeceğim yok. Bunu demek istiyorlarsa ben hatip olduğumu kabul ederim; ama onların anladığından bambaşka manada. Herhalde, demin de dediğim gibi, söylediklerinde doğru bir taraf hemen hemen yoktur; ben ise size bütün hakikati söyleyeceğim. Fakat Atinalılar, ben onlar gibi baştanbaşa parlak ve gösterişli sözlerle bezenmiş hazır bir nutuk söyleyecek değilim; Tanrı korusun. Hayır, şu anda iyi kötü dilim döndüğü kadar söyleyeceğim; çünkü bütün diyeceklerimin doğru olduğuna inanıyorum. İçinizde kimse benim doğrudan başka bir şey söyleyeceğimi sanmasın. Toy delikanlılarımız gibi huzurunuzda birtakım süslü cümlelerle konuşmak, benim yaşımdaki bir adama yakışmaz. Sizden yalnız şunu dileyceğim: kendimi

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<sup>1</sup> Çeviri: Niyazi Berkes, 1946

<sup>2</sup> Belagat: Konuyu bütün yönleriyle kavrayarak hiçbir yanlış ve eksik anlayışa yer bırakmayan, yorum gerektirmeyen, yapmacıktan uzak, düzgün anlatma sanatı

savunurken öteden beri alışık olduğum gibi konuştuğumu, agorada, sarraf tezgâhlarında, o gibi yerlerde nasıl konuşursam burada da öyle konuştuğumu görürseniz şaşırmayınız, o yüzden de sözümü kesmeyiniz. Çünkü ben yetmişimi aştığım halde ilk defa olarak yargıç huzurunda bulunuyorum; bu yerin diline bütün bütüne yabancıyım. Bunun için, bir yabancının ana dili ile kendi yurdu adetlerine göre konuşmasını nasıl tabii karşılırsanız beni de tıpkı bir yabancı sayarak alışık olduğum gibi konuşmama müsaade ediniz. Bu dileğimi yersiz bulmayacağınızı umarım. Söyleyiş iyi veya kötü olmuş, bundan ne çıkar? Siz yalnız benim doğru söyleyip söylemediğime bakınız, asıl buna önem veriniz. Zaten yargıcın asıl meziyeti<sup>3</sup> buradadır; nasıl ki hatibinki de doğruyu söylemektir.

Atinalılar! Önce bana yönelmiş olan daha eski suçlamalara ve beni çok daha eskiden beri suçlayanlara cevap vermek isterim, bundan sonra daha yenilerine cevap vereceğim.

Çünkü Atinalılar, yıllardan beri haksız yere beni size karşı suçlayıp duran birçok kimseler olmuştur; Anytos ile arkadaşları benim için daha az tehlikeli olmamakla beraber, ben bunlardan daha çok korkarım. Evet, yargıçlarım, bunlar daha tehlikelidirler; çünkü bunlar birçoğunuzun ta çocukluğunuzdan beri yalanlarla kandırarak güya göklerde olup bitenlerle uğraşan, yerin altında neler geçtiğini araştıran, yanlış doğru gibi göstermeyi beceren, Sokrates adlı bir bilgin olduğuna sizi inandırmışlardır. Beni suçlayanlar içinde en çok korktuklarım, işte bu masalı yayanlardır; çünkü bunları dinleyenler, bu gibi meselelerle uğraşanlar tanrılara inanmaz sanıyorlar. İnanınız, bu adamlar çoktur; eskiden beri beni bununla suçluyorlar. Üstelik bunları, çocukluğunuzda olsun, gençliğinizde olsun,

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<sup>3</sup> Meziyet: bir kişiyi (nesneyi) benzerinden üstün gösteren nitelik

daha çok tesir altında kalabileceğiniz çağlarda iken, kulaklarınıza doldurmuşlardı. Hem bu suçlamalar, karşılarında kendilerine cevap verecek kimse olmadan, benim arkamdan oluyordu. Bir komedya yazarını<sup>4</sup> bir yana bırakırsak, ötekilerinin adını ne biliyorum, ne de size söyleyecek durumdayım, işin en korkunç tarafı işte bu. Kıskançlıkları, kötülükleri yüzünden, bazen ilkin kendilerini bile inandırmaya kadar vararak, sizi bütün bu suçlamalara inandıran bu adamlar, uğraşılması en güç olanlardır, çünkü bunları ne buraya getirmek ne de söylediklerini çürütmek mümkündür. Bu yüzden kendimi savunurken sadece gölgelerle çarpışmak, karşımda cevap verecek biri olmadan iddialarının yanlışlığını göstermek zorunda kalıyorum. O halde, demin de dediğim gibi, düşmanlarımdan iki çeşit olduğunu görüyorsunuz: bir beni şimdi suçlayanlar, bir de eskiden suçlamış olanlar. Umarım ki, ilkin ikincilere cevap vermemi siz de yerinde bulursunuz; çünkü bunları hem ötekilerden daha önce, hem de daha sık duymuşsunuzdur.

O halde, Atinalılar, artık savunmama başlayabilirim. Yıllardan beri kafanızda kökleşmiş olan bir suçlamayı kısa bir zamanda söküp atmaya çalışmalıyım. Eğer hakkımda ve hakkınızda hayırlı ise, bunu başarmayı ve kendimi temize çıkarmayı temenni ederim. Ama bunun kolay bir iş olmadığını da iyice biliyorum. Her ne ise, bunu Tanrının buyruğuna bırakalım; bana düşen vazife, kanunun emrine göre kendimi savunmaktır.

Baştan başlayarak, benim kötülenmeme yol açan ve Meletos'u bu davayı aleyhime açmaya cesaretlendiren suçlamanın ne olduğunu araştıralım. Bir defa, bana iftira edenler bakalım ne diyorlar. Beni dava ettiklerini farz ederek bunların suçlamalarını şöyle kısaca bir toplayacağım: "Sokrates kötü bir insandır: yeraltında,

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<sup>4</sup> Bu komedya yazarı, biraz sonra adı geçecek olan Aristophanes'tir.

gökyüzünde olup bitenlere karışıyor, eğriyi doğru diye gösteriyor, bunları başkalarına da öğretiyor.” Suçlamanın aşağı yukarı özü bu. Aristophanes'in komedyasında gördüğünüz gibi: sahnede Sokrates adlı bir adam dolaştırılıyor, havada gezdiğinden, benim hiç ama hiç anlamadığım şeylerden dem vurarak bir sürü saçma sapan sözler söylüyor. Bunu, böyle bir bilgisi olanlar varsa onları küçültmek için söylemiyorum. Meletos'un bana açtığı bu davadan kurtulamayayım ki, Atinalılar, gerçekte benim bunlar üzerinde en küçük bir fikrim bile yoktur. Burada bulunanların çoğu bunun doğruluğuna şahittir, onlara hitap ediyorum: beni dinleyenler, içinizde bu meseleler hakkında şimdiye kadar tek söz söylediğimi bilen varsa buradakilere söylesin. Cevaplarını istiyorsunuz. Suçlamanın bu kısmına verdikleri bu cevap karşısında, geri kalanının doğruluğu hakkında da bir hüküm verebilirsiniz. Bunun gibi, benim para ile ders vermekte olduğuma dair dolaşan sözün de hiç bir temeli yoktur, bu da ötekiler kadar asılsızdır.

Doğrusu, bir kimsenin insanlara gerçekten bir şey öğretmesi mümkün olsaydı, buna karşılık para alması bence o kimse için bir şeref olurdu. Leontinoili Gorgias<sup>5</sup> gibi, Keoslu Prodikos<sup>6</sup> gibi, Elisli Hippias<sup>7</sup> gibi şehir şehir gezerek ders veren gençlerin kendi hemşerilerinden parasız ders almaları pekâlâ mümkün iken, onları bu hemşerilerinden ayırarak kendilerine çekecek kadar kandıran, dersleri için para almakla kalmayıp üstelik bu parayı lütfen kabul ettiklerinden dolayı bir de teşekkür ettiren kimseler var! Şimdi Atina'da Paroslu bir bilgin

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<sup>5</sup> Leontinoili Gorgias: şüpheli bir filozof ve parlak bir hatipti. Eflatun, Gorgias'ında bu filozofu alaya alır.

<sup>6</sup> Keoslu Prodikos: dil üzerinde duran ve anlam inceliklerine önem veren bir düşünürdür. Eflatun, Protagoras'ında Prodikos'tan alaylı bir şekilde söz eder.

<sup>7</sup> Elisli Hippias: derin bilgisi olmadığı halde, hemen her şeyi bilen bir kimse olarak geçiniyordu.

varmış. Bu adamı öğrenişim şöyle olmuştu: bir gün, bilgicilerin<sup>8</sup> uğruna dünya kadar para harcayan Hipponikos oğlu Kallias'a<sup>9</sup> rastlamıştım: bu zatın iki oğlu olduğunu biliyordum, onun için kendisine sordum: "Kallias, dedim, iki oğlun olacağına iki tavuğun veya buzağın olsaydı, bunları, eline verecek birini bulmakta zorluk çekmezdik; onları kendi tabiatlarının<sup>10</sup> mümkün kıldığı ölçüde yetiştirecek ve olgunlaştıracak bir seyis veya bir çiftçi tutardık; fakat mademki birer insandırlar, onları kimin eline vereceğini biliyor musun? Onları bir insan ve bir yurttaş olarak yetiştirecek biri var mıdır? Herhalde, senin oğulların olduğuna göre bu meseleyi düşünmüşsündür? Ne dersin, böyle bir kimse var mı?" Kallias bana, "evet vardır" dedi. "Öyleyse kim? nereli? Derslerini kaçta veriyor?" diye sorunca, "Paroslu Evenos<sup>11</sup>, dersine beş mina<sup>12</sup> alıyor" cevabını verdi.

O zaman kendi kendime düşündüm ve dedim ki: Evenos gerçekten böyle bir bilgin ise, bu bilgisini bu kadar ucuza öğretiyorsa, doğrusu bahtiyarmış. Bende de böyle bir bilgi olsaydı, gerçekten ben de gurur ve sevinç duyardım; fakat Atinalılar, doğrusu benim böyle bir bilgim yoktur.

Belki içinizden biri bütün bunlara karşı diyecek ki: "Sokrates, bunların hepsi güzel ama uğradığın bu suçlamalar nereden çıkıyor? Herhalde alışılanın dışında bir şey yapmış olacaksın ki aleyhine bu gibi suçlamalar var. Sen de herkes gibi olaydın bütün bu dedi kodular çıkmazdı; o halde, hakkında acele bir hüküm vermemizi istemiyorsan bite bunların sebebini anlat."

Bu itirazın haklı ve yerinde olduğunu kabul ederim;

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<sup>8</sup> Bilgici: sofist

<sup>9</sup> Kallias: zengin bir kimseydi. Sofistler için büyük masraflara girdiği ve eli açık olduğu için bütün servetini kaybetmişti.

<sup>10</sup> Kendi tabiatı: kendi doğası, huyu

<sup>11</sup> Paroslu Evenos: şair ve hatipti. Adı, Eflatun'un Phaedros'unda da geçer.

<sup>12</sup> Mina: Eski Helen parası

onun için ben de size bu kötü şöhretimin nereden çıktığını anlatacağım. Lütfen dikkatle dinleyiniz. Bazılarınız belki şaka ediyorum sanacak; ama inanın ki tamamıyla doğru söylüyorum. Atinalılar, bu şöhret bende bulunan bir nevi bilgiden, sadece ondan çıkmıştır. Bunun ne biçim bir bilgi olduğunu sorarsanız derim ki “bu, herkesin elde edebileceği bir bilgidir” ben de ancak bu manada bilgim olduğunu sanıyorum. Hâlbuki sözünü ettiğim kimselerin bende olmadığı için size anlatamayacağım insanüstü bilgileri var. Benim böyle bir bilgim olduğunu söyleyen yalan söyler, bana iftira eder. Atinalılar, size belki mübalağa<sup>13</sup> ediyorum gibi gelecek, fakat sözümü kesmemenizi dilerim. Çünkü size şimdi söyleyeceğim sözler benim sözlerim değildir. Size güvenilir bir şahit göstereceğim. Benim bir bilgim varsa, bunun nasıl bir bilgi olduğunu Delphoi<sup>14</sup> tanrısından dinleyin Khairephon'u<sup>15</sup> tanırırsınız; çok eski bir arkadaşım, sizin de dostunuzdu, geçen sürgünde o da sizinle birlikteydi, dönerken de birlikte gelmiştiniz. Khairephon'un huyunu bilirsiniz, kafasına koyduğu şeyi muhakkak yapardı. Bir gün Delphoi'ye gitmiş -lütfen sözümü kesmeyiniz-, benden daha bilgin bir kimse olup olmadığını tanrıya çekinmeden sormuş; Pythonlu tanrı-sözcüsü de benden daha bilgin bir adam olmadığını söylemiş. Khairephon bugün sağ değil, ama kardeşi burada mahkemededir, söylediklerimin doğruluğunu tasdik edebilir.

Bunu size sırf bu kötü şöhretimin nereden çıktığını göstermek için söylüyorum. Tanrının bu cevabını öğrenince düşündüm: Tanrı bu sözülle ne demek istemiş? Bu

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<sup>13</sup> Mübalağa: abartı

<sup>14</sup> Delphoi: Delfi, Atina'nın 130 kilometre kadar kuzeybatısında Phokis'te, Parnassos dağında dik bir kayalıkta bulunan tapınak. Tanrıya danışmak isteyen erkekler ya da kadınlar, buraya başvurur; sorularına cevap veren Tanrının sözünü rahipler aracılığı ile öğrenirlerdi. Buraya Python da denir.

<sup>15</sup> Khairephon: hakkında fazla bilgi yoktur. Aristophanes, Bulutlar adlı oyununda, Sokrates gibi onu da alaya almıştır.



muamma nedir? Çünkü az olsun, çok olsun, bende böyle bir bilgi olmadığını biliyorum. Böyle olduğu halde insanların en bilgini olduğumu söylemekle ne demek istiyordu? Tanrı yalan söylemez, yalan onun özü ile uzlaşır bir şey değil. Ne demek istediğini uzun zaman düşündüm; en sonunda işin aslını bir deneyim dedim. Bilgisi belli birini bulup Tanrıya gider, sözünü çürütmek için derim ki: İşte benden daha bilgili bir adam; oysaki sen benim için en bilgili demişsin. Bunun üzerine bilgisi ile ün almış birine gittim, kendisine iyice baktım. Adı lazım değil, denemek için seçtiğim bu adam devlet işleriyle uğraşır. Vardığım sonuç şu oldu: bu adam çok kimselere, hele kendisine bilgin gözüküyor ama gerçekten hiçbir bilgisi yok. Bunun üzerine kendisini bilgin sandığını, hakikatte ise olmadığını anlatmaya çalıştım. Bunun sonucu, onun da, üstelik orada bulunup beni dinleyen birçok kimselerin de düşmanlığını kazanmak oldu. Yanından ayrılırken kendi kendime dedim ki: doğrusu belki ikimizin de iyi, güzel bir şey bildiğimiz yok; ama gene ben ondan bilgini; çünkü o hiçbir şey bilmediği halde bildiğini sanıyor; ben ise bilmiyorum ama bildiğimi de sanmıyorum. Demek ben ondan biraz bilgiliyim, çünkü bilmediklerimi bilirim sanmıyorum. Bundan sonra başka birine, daha da çok bilgili tanınan başka birine gittim. Gene o sonuca vardım; onun da, daha birçoklarının da düşmanlığını kazandım.

Böylece, kendime birçok düşmanlar edindiğimi bile bile, birini bırakıp ötekine gidiyor, gittikçe umutsuzlaşıyor ve kederleniyordum. Artık boynumun borcu oldu, her şeyden önce tanrının sözünü göz önünde tutmalıyım, diyordum. Bilgili denen kim varsa ona başvurarak Tanrının ne demek istediğini anlamam gerekti. Size doğruyu

söylemeliyim. Atinalılar, köpek hakkı için<sup>16</sup>, bütün o araştırmalarım da baktım, asıl bilgisizler, bilgilidir diye tanınmış olanlar! Boştur denenlerde ise daha çok akıl var. Size bütün o dolaşıp durmalarımı anlatayım, Atinalılar: o kadar didindim, tanrının sözünü çürütemedim. Devlet adamlarından sonra tragedya yazarlara, Dithyrambos şairlerine<sup>17</sup>, her çeşidinden şairlere başvurdum. Kendi kendime, artık bu sefer göreceksin, kendinin onlardan çok daha bilgisiz olduğunu anlayacaksın, diyordum. Yazılarından bence en işlenmiş parçaları seçtim, ne demek istemiş olduklarını gidip kendilerinden sordum, bir şey öğreneceğimi umuyordum. Yargıçlar, inanır mısınız? Doğruyu söylemeye utanıyorum; ama söylemeliyim. O şairlerin, eserleri hakkında dedikleri, orada bulunan hemen herkesin diyebileceğinden daha iyi değildi. O zaman anladım ki şairler eserlerini bilgilerinden değil, bir çeşit içgüdü ile Tanrıdan gelme bir ilhamla yazıyorlar, tıpkı bir sürü güzel şeyler söyleyip de dediklerinden bir şey anlamayan tanrı-sözcüleri, biliciler gibi. Şairler için de öyle olduğunu gördüm; üstelik onlar, kendilerinde şairlik var diye, bilmedikleri şeylerde de insanların en bilgini olduklarını sanıyorlar. Yanlarından ayrılırken anlamıştım ki, devlet adamları karşısında nasıl bir üstünlüğüm varsa, onlardan da böylece üstünüm.

En son, ustalara gittim: çünkü kendimin bir şey bilmediğimin farkında olduğum gibi, onların da hem çok, hem iyi şeyler bildiklerine emindim. Bu sefer aldanmamışım; onlar benim bilmediğim birçok şeyleri gerçekten biliyorlardı ve bunda hiç şüphesiz benden daha

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<sup>16</sup> Köpek hakkı için: Bu andın, kâhin ve büyücü Orpheus'un kurduğu dine bağlı geleneklerde yer aldığı sanılmaktadır. Aristophanes'in "Eşekarıları" adlı eserinde, köle Ksanthias da "köpek" adına and içer. Sokrates'in bu andı kullanmasının alaycı bir hava taşıdığını söylemek gerekir.

<sup>17</sup> Dithyrambos şairleri: Dionysos adına şiir yazarlar; Dionysos törenleriyle ilgili olan ve elli kadar şarkıcının koro halinde okuduğu şiirlere Dithyrambos denir.

bilgin idiler. Ama Atinalılar, gördüm ki iyi ustalarda da şairlerdeki kusur var; kendi işlerinin eri oldukları için en yüksek şeylerden de anladıklarını sanıyorlar, böyle sandıkları için de asıl bilgileri gölgede kalıyordu, o kadar ki Tanrının sözüne geldim, onlar gibi bilgin, onlar gibi de bilgisiz olmaktansa, bilgilerini de, bilgisizliklerini de edinmeyip olduğum gibi kalmak daha iyi değil mi? diye düşündüm; gerek kendime, gerek Tanrı sözüne cevap vererek, benim için olduğum gibi kalmak daha iyi, dedim.

Atinalılar, bütün bu araştırmalarım birçok düşmanlar, hem de en kötü, en tehlikeli soyundan düşmanlar edinmeme sebep oldu; birçok iftiralara yol açtı; adım bilge diye çıktı, çünkü beni dinleyenler, başkalarında bulunmadığını gösterdiğim bilginin bende bulunduğunu sandılar. Asıl bilen, Atina yargıçları, belki yalnız Tanrıdır; o sözü ile de insan bilgisinin büyük bir şey olmadığını, hatta hiçbir şey olmadığını göstermek istemiştir; Sokrates demiş olması ancak bir söz gelişidir; "ey insanlar! Aranızda en bilgisi, Sokrates gibi bilgeliğinin gerçekte bir hiç olduğunu bilendir" demek istemiş. İşte böylece Tanrının sözünü düşünerek yer yer dolaşıyor, yurttaş olsun, yabancı olsun, bilge sandığım kimi bulursam konuşup soruyorum; bilge olmadıklarını anlayınca da, Tanrı sözüne hak vererek bilge olmadıklarını kendilerine gösteriyorum. Bu iş bütün vaktimi alıyor, bu yüzden devlet işleriyle de, kendi işlerimle de iyice uğraşacak vakit bulamıyorum; o kadar ki, Tanrıya hizmet edeyim diye yoksul kaldım.

Dahası var: birtakım gençler kendiliklerinden başıma toplanıyor; babaları zengin, vakitleri bol; ben önüme aldığım adama sorular sorarken durup dinliyorlar; üstelik bilgiçlerin sorguya çekilmesini dinlemekten hoşlanıyorlar, çok defa bana benzeyerek kendileri de başkalarını denemeye kalkışıyorlar; az bir bilgiyle hatta büsbütün

bilgisiz, kendilerini bilgin sananlar sayısız: bunu o delikanlılar da buluyorlar. Sıkıştırdıkları adamlar kendilerine kızacaklarına bana kızıyor, “ah!... bu alçak Sokrates! gençleri baştan çıkarıyor!...” diyorlar.

Hâlbuki biri çıkıp da kendilerine sorsa “peki ama bunun için ne yapıyor? Ne öğretiyor?” dese ne cevap vereceklerini bilmezler; fakat şaşkınlıklarını belli etmemek için de her zaman filozoflara karşı çevrilen “bulutlarda, yerin dibinde olup bitenleri öğretmek”, “tanrılara inanmamak”, “iyiyi kötü göstermek” gibi beylik sözleri sayıp dökerler; çünkü bir şey bilmedikleri halde biliyor görünmek istemelerinin açığa vurulduğunu söylemeğe bir türlü dilleri varmaz. Onlar ille iyi tanınacağız, sözümüz geçecek diyen, hem de kalabalık insanlardır; benim sözüm açılınca, bir ağızdan konuşup karşılardakini kandırmayı bildikleri için, öteden beri, ağır iftiralarla kulaklarımızı doldurdular, gene de dolduruyorlar. Meletos'a Anytos'a, Lykon'a, bana saldırmak cesaretini veren, işte bu iftiralardır. Meletos, şairlerin, Anytos, ustalarla politikacıların, Lykon da hatiplerin kinlerine tercüman olmuştur. Sözüme başlarken de dediğim gibi, böyle kök salmış bir iftiradan kendimi böyle az bir zamanda temize çıkarabileceğimi ummam. İşte, Atinalılar, size doğruyu söyledim; büyük, küçük, bir şeyi saklamadım, bir şeyi değiştirmedim. Biliyorum ki bu yüzden yine garazlarına uğrayacağım; bu da gösterir ki ben doğruyu söylüyorum, bana iftira ediliyor, sebebi de budur. Simdi arayın, sonra arayın, bulacağınız hep budur.

Beni suçlayanların birincilerine karşı bu kadar savunma yeter; şimdi ikincilere dönüyorum. Bunların başında Meletos, kendi sözüyle, iyi, yurdunu gerçekten seven Meletos var. Bunlara karşı da kendimi savunmaya çalışacağım. Nelerden şikâyet ettiklerini bir okuyalım. Aşağı yukarı şöyle deniyor: Sokrates, gençleri doğru yoldan

ayırmakla, devletin tanrılarına inanmamakla, bunların yerine yeni yeni tanrılar koymakla suçludur. İşte bana yükledikleri suçlar; bunların hepsini ele alalım.

Gençleri doğru yoldan ayırmak suçunu işliyormuşum, ben de iddia ediyorum ki Meletos ciddi şeyleri alaya alarak herkesle eğlenmekten, gerçekte üzerinde hiç uğraşmadığı işlere güya taassup<sup>18</sup> ve ilgi göstererek herkesi mahkemeye sürüklemekten suçludur. Bunun böyle olduğunu size ispata çalışacağım.

Meletos, şöyle gel, bana cevap ver:

–Gençlerimizin mümkün olduğu kadar erdemli olmalarına çok önem veriyorsun, değil mi?

– Tabii veriyorum.

– O halde, onları daha iyi kılanın kim olduğunu da yargıçlara söyle. Mademki onları doğru yoldan ayıranı meydana çıkarmak zahmetine katlanmışsın ve yargıçların karşısında beni göstererek bu suçlunun ben olduğumu iddia ediyorsun, o halde şunu da bilmen gerekecektir. Onları terbiye edenler kim yargıçlara adları ile söyle... Gördün mü Meletos, susuyorsun işte. Bir şey söylemiyorsun ama bu susman, senin için utanılacak bir şey değil mi? Mesele ile hiçbir ilişkinin yoktur dememin bu, açık bir kanıtı değil mi? Söyle dostum, söyle, gençleri daha iyi kılan nedir?

– Kanunlar.

– Fakat, delikanlım, bu benim soruma cevap değil ki. Ben şunu bilmek istiyorum: her şeyden önce bu kanunları bilen kim?

– İşte bu mahkemedeki yargıçlar. Sokrates.

– Ne dedin? Nasıl, Meletos? Onlar gençleri yetiştirebilir, daha iyi kılar mı diyorsun?

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<sup>18</sup> Taassup: bağnazlık, tutuculuk

– Elbette.

– Hepsi mi, yoksa bazıları mı?

– Hepsi.

– Ira<sup>19</sup> hakkı için ne güzel söz! Demek gençleri daha iyi kılanlar birçok kimselermiş. O halde, söyle bakalım, burada bizi dinleyenler de gençliği terbiye ediyorlar mı?

– Evet onlar da.

– Peki, ya bu<sup>20</sup> üyeleri?

– Onlar da.

– Acaba ekklesia'da<sup>21</sup> toplanan yurttaşlar gençliği doğru yoldan ayırıyorlar mı, yoksa onlar da terbiye mi ediyorlar dersin?

– Onlar da terbiye ediyorlar.

– O halde, benden başka, bütün Atinalılar onları güzel ve iyi kılıyorlar; onları yalnız ben doğru yoldan ayırıyorum. İddian bu değil mi?

– Tam işte bu.

– Sen haklı isen, ben gerçekten, çok bahtsız bir adamım. Ama tut ki sana şöyle bir şey soruyorum; acaba sana göre atlar için de böyle mi? Atlara da herkesin, iyilik ettiğine, yalnız bir kimsenin kötülük ettiğine inanıyor musun? Hakikat bunun tam yersi değil mi? Atları, bir veya birkaç kişi, yani seyisler terbiye edebiliyor; kullananlar ise onları bozuyorlar, değil mi? Atlar için de, başka hayvanlar için de böyledir, değil mi Meletos? Bu, şüphesiz böyledir; Anytos ile sen ne dersiniz deyiniz, gençleri yalnız bir kişinin yanlış yola sürüklediği, ondan başka herkesin daha

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<sup>19</sup> Ira: Hera, Zeus'un kız kardeşi, evli kadınların ve evliliğin koruyucusudur. Sokrates, çoğunlukla Tiera adına and içer. Bu, genellikle kadınlar arasında yaygındır. Erkekler ise, Zeus ya da Herakles adına and içerlerdi.

<sup>20</sup> Bule: Atina senatosu, dış işlerine, mali konulara bakan, resmi görevlileri denetleyen ve halk meclisine kanun tasarısı hazırlayan kuruldu.

<sup>21</sup> Ekklesia: Halk meclisi, Atina'da bütün hür yurttaşların kuruluydu. Devletin en önemli işlerine bakardı.

iyi kıldığı doğru olsaydı, bu onlar için gerçekten eşsiz bir bahtiyarlık olurdu. Ama hayır Meletos, gençler üzerinde hiç kafa yormadığını yetecek kadar gösterdim; senin kayıtsızlığın, bana karşı çevirdiğin şeyleri hiç umursamamış olmandan da açıkça anlaşılıyor.

Şimdi sana bir sorum daha var, Zeus hakkı için cevap ver; Sence kötü kimselerle birlikte yaşamak mı, yoksa iyi kimselerle birlikte yaşamak mı daha iyi?... Cevap versene dostum; zor bir şey sormuyorum. İyi insanlar yanlarındakilere hep iyilik, kötüler de kötülük ederler, değil mi?

– Şüphesiz.

– Şimdi, bir arada yaşadığı kimselerden, faydalanan çok zarar görmek isteyen var mı?... Cevap ver, dostum, kanun, cevap vermeni emrediyor. Zarar görmek isteyecek kimse var mıdır?

– Elbette yoktur.

– Peki, gençleri doğru yoldan çıkarıyor, kötülüğe götürüyor diye beni suçluyorsun; Bence ben bu suçu bilerek mi, bilmeyerek mi isliyorum?

– Bilerek diyorum.

– Demek ki, Meletos, iyilerin, yanlarındakilere iyilik, kötülerin ise kötülük ettikleri şu genç yaşında senin yüksek zekânca bilinen bir gerçek olduğu halde, ben bu yasımda, birlikte yaşamak zorunda olduğum bir kimseyi doğru yoldan ayırırsam, ondan bana zarar geleceğini bilmeyecek kadar karanlık ve bilgisizlik içindeyim; hem de bunu, iddiana göre, bile bile yapıyorum. Meletos, buna ne beni inandırabilirsin, ne de başkalarını.

Öyleyse ya ben onları doğru yoldan çıkarmıyorum yahut da çıkarıyorsam bunu bilmeyerek yapıyorum; her iki halde de yalan söylüyorsun. Bundan başka, işlediğim suç

bilmeyerek işlenmişse, kanun onu suç tanımaz; beni bir kenara çekerek ayrıca hatırlatman ve öğüt vermen gerekirdi; çünkü öğütle, bilmeyerek işlediğim suçu herhalde işlemekten vazgeçerdim; hâlbuki sen benimle konuşmaktan, bana öğretmekten kaçındın; bunu istemedin; beni mahkemeye, kanunun, aydınlatılması gerekenleri değil, cezalandırılması gerekenleri gönderdiği mahkemeye sürükledin.

Atinalılar, artık anlaşılıyor ki Meletos bu işlerle, az olsun çok olsun, kafa yormamıştır; ama Meletos sen gene söyle; ben gençleri nasıl yanlış yola sürüklüyorum? Yazdığın suçlamadan anladığıma göre, gençlere devletin tanıdığı tanrıları tanımamayı, onların yerine başka tanrılara inanmayı öğretiyormuşum; gençleri bozan derslerim bunlardır, diyorsun, değil mi?

– Evet, bunu bütün kuvvetimle iddia ediyorum.

– Öyleyse, Meletos, sözünü ettiğimiz tanrılar hakkı için ne demek istediğini bana ve bu yargıçlara daha açıkça anlat. Sence ben birtakım tanrılara inanmayı öğretiyormuşum; öyle ise o tanrılara ben kendim de inanıyorum, demek ki büsbütün tanrı bilmez değilim, böyle bir suç işlememişim; şimdi sunu anlayalım: sen beni devletin tanrılarını bırakıp başka tanrılara inanmakla mı suçluyorsun yoksa tanrılara büsbütün inanmayıp bunu başkalarına da aşılamaqla mı?

– Evet, ben senin hiçbir tanrıya inanmadığını söylüyorum.

– Şaşılacak şey! Meletos, bunu nereden çıkarıyorsun? Herkes gibi, güneşin veya ayın tanrılığına inanmadığımı mı söylemek istiyorsun?

– Emin olun, yargıçlar, inanmaz; çünkü güneşin taş, ayın toprak olduğunu söylüyor.



– Fakat, dostum Meletos, sen beni Anaksagoras<sup>22</sup> sanmışsın da buraya çıkarmışsın. Buradaki yargıcları Klazomenaili Anaksagoras'ın yazılarının bu kuramlarla dolu olduğunu bilmeyecek kadar boş ve cahil mi sanıyorsun? Gençler bu yazıları orkestrada<sup>23</sup> en çok bir drahmiye satın alabilirlerse, Sokrates de bu fikirleri kendine mal edince delikanlılar onunla pekâlâ alay edebilirlerse, bunları neden gelip benden öğrensinler? Doğru söyle Meletos, sen gerçekten benim hiçbir tanrıya inanmadığımı mı sanıyorsun?

– Zeus'a yemin ederim ki, hiç, hiçbir tanrıya inanmıyorsun.

– Buna kimse inanmayacak. Atinalılar, bu Meletos azgının, küstahın biri; beni suçlaması da gençliğinden, hakaret olsun diye. Kim bilir, belki de beni denemek için bu muammayı<sup>24</sup> uydurmuştur. Belki de, kendi kendine, "bakalım bilgin Sokrates işi alaya alıp birbirini tutmaz sözler söylediğimi bulacak, meydana çıkaracak mı, yoksa onu da bizi dinleyenleri de aldatabilecek miyim?" demiştir. Bana öyle geliyor ki suçlamasında bir dediği bir dediğini tutmuyor. Sanki şöyle demiş; "Sokrates, tanrıların varlığına inanmamaktan, tanrılar olduğuna da inanmaktan suçludur". Buna düpedüz alay derler.

Atinalılar, Meletos'un düştüğü tutmazlıkları benimle beraber gözden geçirin ve sen Meletos, bize cevap ver. Siz de benim ta baştaki dileğimi hatırlayın da alışık olduğum gibi söz söylersem, ses çıkarmayın. Dünyada bir kimse var mıdır ki, Meletos, insanlık işler olduğuna inansın da insanlar bulunduğuna inanmasın? Şunu söyleyin Atinalılar,

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<sup>22</sup> Anaksagoras: ünlü bir Grek filozofudur. Perslerle işbirliği yapmakla ve dinsizlikle suçlanmış, yakın dostu olan Perikles tarafından kurtarılmıştı. Güneşin ve Ayın, Yeryüzünden kopmuş ve büyük bir hızla döndükleri için akkor hale gelmiş parçalar olduğunu ileri sürmüştür.

<sup>23</sup> Orkestra: Açık hava tiyatrosunda, sahnenin önünde bulunan ve koronun dans ettiği çember biçimindeki bölümdür. Bu kelime aynı zamanda çarşının (agora) bir bölümünü de belirtir.

<sup>24</sup> Muamma: bilmece, bilinmez, bulmaca

kaçamaklı yollara sapmadan bana cevap versin. Bir adam bulunur mu ki at yoktur ama atın kullanıldığı işler vardır, flavtacılar<sup>25</sup> yoktur ama flavtacılık vardır desin? Bulunmaz, dostum, bulunmaz. Mademki sen cevap vermekten kaçınıyorsun, sana da buradakilere de cevabı ben vereyim; ama hiç olmazsa şuna cevap ver; bir kimse var mıdır ki tanrılık işlere inansın da tanrılara inanmasın? Daimonlara<sup>26</sup> inanmasın da Daimonların kuvvetine inansın?

– Hayır, yoktur.

– Çok şükür, yargıçların zoruyla ağızından bu cevabı alabildim. Demek daimonluk işlere, bu işler yeni olsun eski olsun, inandığımı ve bunları öğrettiğimi iddia ediyorsun. O halde, söylediğine göre, ben daimonluk işlere inanıyorum. Suçlamanda buna yemin bile ediyorsun. Bu işlere inanıyorsam, onların var varlığına da ister istemez inanmam gerekir, öyle değil mi? Hiç şüphesiz, cevap vermediğine göre senin de aynı fikirde olduğunu kabul ediyorum. Peki, Daimonları tanrı veya tanrı okulları olarak alabiliriz, değil mi?

– Evet, şüphesiz.

– Öyle ise, söylediğim gibi, Daimonların varlığına inanıyorsam, öte yandan da, ne adla olursa olsun, Daimonlar bir nevi tanrı iseler, muammalar çıkarıyorsun ve bizimle eğleniyorsun demekte haksız mıyım? Hem tanrılara inanmadığımı iddia ediyorsun, hem de biraz sonra Daimonlara inandığımı söylemekle tanrılara inandığımı kabul etmiş oluyorsun! Denildiği gibi Daimonlar, tanrıların nymphaları<sup>27</sup> veya başka analardan doğan piçleri iseler, tanrılar olmadığı halde, tanrıların çocukları olduğuna kim

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<sup>25</sup> Flavta: flüt

<sup>26</sup> Daimonlar: ruhlar ve cinler, *demons*, iblisler; en eski Yunan dininde, eşyayı ve insanları etkilediği kabul edilen doğaüstü varlıklar

<sup>27</sup> Nympha: *nymph*, su perisi; Yunan mitolojisinde, dere, ağaç, dağ gibi tabiat parçalarını kişileştiren, güzel ve dişi varlıklar

inanabilir? Bu katırın, eşekle atın çocuğu olduğuna, fakat eşeğin de atın da var olduğuna inanmamak kadar yersiz olur. Hayır, Meletos, sen bütün bu saçmaları ya beni denemek için kasten çıkarmışsındır yahut da bana karşı ciddi bir suç bulamadığından suçlamana koydun. Fakat inan ki, aynı bir kimsenin daimonluk işlere inandığı halde, Daimonlara, tanrılara, kahramanlara inanmayacağına biraz anlayışı olan hiçbir kimseyi inandıramazsın.

Meletos'un suçlamalarına yeter ölçüde cevap verdim sanıyorum, daha fazla savunmama gerek yoktur. Bununla beraber, üzerime ne kadar çok kin çekmiş olduğumu düşünüyorum ve hüküm giymem gerekirse, beni yok edecek olanın bu olduğunu, onun Meletos, Anytos değil, şimdiye kadar birçok iyi insanların ölümüne sebep olmuş, belki ileride de olacak olan iftira ve çekememezlik olduğunu düşünüyorum; çünkü bu kurbanların sonuncusu herhalde ben olmasam gerek.

Belki biri şöyle diyecek: “Sokrates, seni böyle vakitsiz bir sona sürükleyen bir ömürden utanç duymuyor musun? Bana bunu soracak olana açıkça cevap verebilir ve diyebilirim ki: dostum, yanıyorsun. Değeri olan bir kimse, yaşayacak mıyım yoksa ölecek miyim diye düşünmemelidir; bir iş görürken yalnız doğru mu eğri mi hareket ettiğini, cesaretli bir adam gibi mi yoksa tabansızca mı hareket ettiğini, düşünmelidir. Hâlbuki sizin özünüzde, Troia'da ölen kahramanların, hele namussuzluğa karşı her türlü tehlikeyi küçümseyen Thetis'in oğlunun<sup>28</sup> bir değeri olmaması lazım. Hektor'u öldürmek için sabırsızlanırken, anası tanrı ona, yanılmıyorsa, aşağı yukarı şu sözleri söylemişti: “Oğlum, arkadaşın Patroklos'un öcünü alacak ve Hektor'u öldüreceksin, ancak bil ki onun arkasından sen de hemen öleceksin; çünkü tanrı hükmü böyle emrediyor”. Hâlbuki o,

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<sup>28</sup> Thetis'in oğlu: Akhilleus

bu öğüde aldırmayıp her şeyi göze alarak, arkadaşının öcünü almadan namussuzca yaşamaya, ölümü ve tehlikeyi üstün gördü: “Burada şu eğri gemilerin yanında, dünyaya lüzumsuz bir yük olarak, maskara gibi durmaktansa, düşmanımdan öcümü alayım, arkasından da öleyim.” dedi. Onun bu hareketinde hiç ölüm ve tehlike korkusu var mıydı? En doğru hareket, Atinalılar, bir kimsenin yeri neresi olursa olsun, ister kendinin seçtiği, ister komutanının gösterdiği yer olsun, tehlike karşısında direnmek; ölümü veya başka tehlikeleri değil, ancak namusu göz önünde bulundurmaktır.

Atinalılar, benim için de bundan başka türlü hareket etmek gerçekten çok garip olurdu; çünkü Potidaia'da, Amphipolis'te, Delion'da<sup>29</sup> seçtiğiniz komutanların gösterdikleri yerde, her türlü ölüm tehlikesi karşısında bütün cesaretiyle duran ben, şimdi, kendi fikir ve sanımca, Tanrı tarafından, kendimi ve başkalarını denemek için filozofluk vazifesi ile gönderildiğim zaman, ölüm veya başka bir şey korkusu ile vazifemi bırakıp nasıl kaçırdım? Böyle bir hareket gerçekten ağır bir suç olurdu. Kendimi bilge sanarak ölüm korkusu ile Tanrı sözüne baş eğmeseydim, o zaman mahkemeye pek haklı olarak çağrılabilir, tanrıların varlığını inkârdan suçlanabilirdim. Çünkü yargıçlar, ölüm korkusu, gerçekte bilge olmadığı halde kendini bilge sanmak değil midir? Bilinmeyeni bilmek iddiası değil midir? İnsanların, korkularından en büyük kötülük saydıkları ölümün en büyük iyilik olmadığını kim bilir? Bilmediğimiz bir şeyi bildiğimizi sanmak gerçekten utanılacak bir bilgisizlik değil midir? İşte yargıçlar, ancak bu noktada başkalarından farklı olduğuma inanıyorum. Belki de onlardan daha bilge olduğumu iddia edebilirim: Ben, öteki dünyada olup bitenler hakkında pek az bir şey

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<sup>29</sup> Potidaia, Amphipolis, Delion: Peloponnessos savaşlarının geçtiği üç önemli yer

bildiğim halde, bir şey bildiğime inanmıyorum, fakat tanrı olsun, insan olsun, belki, kendinden daha iyi olanlara haksızlık ve itaatsizlik etmenin bir kötülük, bir namussuzluk olduğunu biliyorum; ben, kötülük olduğunu iyice bildiğim şeylerden korkarım, ama iyilik olmadığını kestirmedığım şeylerden ne korkar, ne de sakınırım. Onun için siz beni şimdi serbest bırakıp; Anytos'un size: "Sokrates mademki böyle bir suçla suçludur, ona herhalde ölüm cezasını vermek gerekiyor, yoksa bütün çocuklarınız onun öğütlerini dinleyerek büsbütün bozulacaklardır" demesine bakmayarak, "Sokrates, biz Anytos'un fikirlerine inanmak istemiyoruz, seni serbest bırakacağız ama bir şartla: artık bir daha böyle herkesi sorguya çekmeyeceğine ve filozofluk etmeyeceğine söz vermek şartıyla; bunları yapmakla bir daha suçlandırılırsan, öleceksin" dersiniz, kurtulmam için ileri sürülebilecek böyle bir şarta karşı derim ki: Atinalılar, size saygı ve sevgim vardır; ancak, ben size değil, yalnız Tanrıya baş eğirim; ömrüm ve kuvvetim oldukça da iyi biliniz ki, felsefe ile uğraşmaktan, karşıma çıkan herkesi buna yöneltmekten, felsefeyi öğretmekten vazgeçmeyeceğim; karşıma çıkana, her zaman dediğim gibi gene şöyle diyeceğim: "Sen ki, dostum, Atinalısın, dünyanın en büyük, kudretiyle, bilgeliğiyle en ünlü şehrinin hemşerisisin; paraya, şerefe, üne bu kadar önem verdiğin halde bilgeliğe, akla, hiç durmadan yükseltilmesi gereken ruha bu kadar az önem vermekten sıkılmaz mısın? Kendisiyle münakaşa ettiğim bir adam bu saydıklarımın önem verdiğini söylerse, yakasını bırakacağımı ve salıvereceğimi sanmayınız; hayır, gene soracağım, onu gene sorguya çekeceğim, onunla gene münakaşa edeceğim; erdemli olduğunun bir sözden başka bir şey olmadığını anlarsam, kendisini, değeri büyük olana az değer verdiğinden değeri küçük olana çok değer

verdiğinden ötürü utandıracağım Aynı sözleri genç, ihtiyar, yurttaş, yabancı, her kese, hele benim kardeşlerim olduklarından dolayı bütün hemşerilerime tekrarlayacağım. Çünkü biliniz, bu bana Tanrının bir buyruğudur; şuna inanıyorum ki şehrimizde, şimdiye kadar Tanrıya benim bu hizmetimden daha büyük bir iyilik edilmemiştir. Çünkü ben, genç, ihtiyar, hepinizi, vücudunuza, paranıza değil, her şeyden önce ruhun en yüksek terbiyesine önem vermeniz gerektiğine kandırmaktan başka bir şey yapmıyorum. Evet, benim vazifem, size para ile erdemin elde edilemeyeceğini, paranın da, genel olsun, özel olsun, her türlü iyiliğin de, ancak erdemden geldiğini söylemektir. Ben bunları öğretmekle gençler doğru yoldan ayırıyorsam, zararlı bir insan olduğumu kabul ederim. Ama biri gelip öğrettiğim şeylerin bunlar olmadığını iddia ederse yalan söylemiş olur. Bu noktada, Atinalılar Anytos'a ister inanın ister inanmayın, hakkımda ister beraat hükmü verin, ister vermeyin; herhalde, iyice bilin ki, bir değil bin kere ölmem gerekse bile, yolumu asla değiştirmeyeceğim.

Atinalılar, sözümü kesmeyiniz, beni dinleyiniz; sonuna kadar dinleyeceğinize söz vermiştiniz, söyleyecek bir şeyim daha kaldı, öyle bir şey ki işitince, korkarım, haykırmak isteyeceksiniz; fakat beni dinlemek sizin için daha hayırlı olacaktır, onun için, çok yalvarırım, sakın olunuz. Bilmelisiniz ki, benim gibi bir adamı öldürmekle, beni değil kendinizi cezalandıracaksınız. Bana kimse, ne Meletos ne de Anytos, zarar verebilir; kötü bir kimse iyi bir adamı nasıl zarara sokabilir? Ancak kendine zarar vermiş olur. Onlarda şüphesiz beni öldürtmek, süründürmek veya hemşerilik haklarından yoksun bırakmak imkânı vardır; onlar herkesle beraber böyle bir cezanın bana karşı büyük bir kötülük olduğunu sanabilirler. Fakat burada onlarla bir düşünemem; çünkü onların şimdi yaptıkları gibi, başka bir

kimsenin hayatını haksız yere yok etmek daha büyük bir kötülüktür.

O halde, Atinalılar, siz Tanrının bir vergisi olan beni mahkûm etmekle ona karşı bir günah işlemeyiniz dediğim zaman, sizin sandığınız gibi kendimi değil, sizi düşünüyorum. Çünkü gülünç bir benzetmeye müsaade edin, beni öldürürseniz, hem büyük, hem cins, ama büyüklüğünden dolayı ağır ve dürtülmek isteyen bir ata benzeyen devleti yerinden oynatmak için, Tanrının musallat ettiği benim gibi bir at sineğine kolay kolay bir halef<sup>30</sup> bulamazsınız, ben Tanrının, devletin başına musallat ettiği bir at sineğiyim, her gün her yerde sizi dürtüyor, kandırıyor, azarlıyorum; peşinizi bırakmıyorum. Benim gibi bir kimseyi kolay kolay bulamayacaksınız; onun için, size kendinizi benden yoksun bırakmamanızı tavsiye ederim. Belki de, ansızın uykusundan uyandırılan biri gibi, canınız sıkılarak, Anytos'un öğüdüne uyar, beni kolayca vurup öldürebileceğinizi sanır ve Tanrı size acıyıp başka bir at sineği gönderinceye kadar, hayatınızın geri kalanında gene uykuya dalarsınız. Size Tanrı tarafından gönderildim demenin ispatını mı istiyorsunuz? Ben başkaları gibi olsaydım, yıllarca sizi erdeme yeltmekle<sup>31</sup>, bir baba, bir ağabey gibi teker teker sizin meselelerinizle uğraşmakla, kendi işlerimi savsamaz, onlara sabırlı bir seyirci kalmazdım; böyle bir hal, sanırım ki, insan tabiatına uyan bir şey değildir. Bundan bir şey kazansaydım yahut yol gösterme ve aydınlatmalarımın karşılığında para alsaydım, bu hareketimin belki bir anlamı olurdu; fakat şimdi, kendiniz de görüyorsunuz ki, beni suçlayanların küstahlığı bile bir kimseden para aldığımı veya almak istediğimi söylemeye varamıyor; çünkü bunu hiçbir vakit

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<sup>30</sup> Halef: birinin yerine geçen kimse, ardıl

<sup>31</sup> yeltmek: yöneltmek



görmemişlerdir. Bu sözümün doğruluğuna, yetecek kadar şahitlik edecek bir şeyim var: fakirliğim.

Devlet işlerine girerek fikirlerimi oradan söylemek varken herkese ayrı ayrı öğüt vermeye, başkalarının işlerine karışmaya kalkışmam belki size şaşılacak bir şey gibi gelebilir. Bunun sebebini de söyleyeceğim. Bir tanrının veya tanrısal bir ruhun bana görüldüğünden, çok kere ve birçok yerde söz ettiğimi işitmişsinizdir. Meletos'un, suçlamasında, bununla alay ettiğini de bilirsiniz. Bir nevi ses olan bu işaret, bana çocukluğumda gelmeye başlamıştı; bu ses beni hep göreceğim işlerden alıkor, ama yap! diye hiçbir vakit emretmezdi. İşte beni siyasete girmekten alıkoyan da budur. Bu alıkoymanın da çok yerinde olduğuna inanıyorum. Çünkü Atinalılar, ben siyaset ile uğraşsaydım, besbelli ki çoktan yok olurdum, ne size ne de kendime, hiç bir iyilikte bulunamazdım. Canınız sıkılmasın ama hakikat sudur ki, devlette görülen birçok kanunsuz, haksız işlere karşı doğrulukla savaşıyor size veya herhangi başka bir kurula karşı giden hiçbir kimse ölümden kurtulamıyor. Evet, ancak hak yolunda çalışan bir kimsenin, kısa bir zaman olsun yaşayabilmesi için devlet adamı değil, sadece yurttaş olarak kalması gerekiyor.

Size, -hem yalnız sözle değil, daha çok değer verdiğiniz işle- söylediklerimi ispat edebilirim. Size başımdan geçen bir olayı anlatayım, o zaman ölüm korkusu yüzünden haksızlığa hiçbir vakit boyun eğmemiş, eğmeye ölümü üstün tutmuş bir adam olduğumu görürsünüz. Size mahkemeler hakkında, belki pek önemli gözükmeyen, ama gerçekten olmuş olan bir şeyi anlatacağım. Atinalılar! Şimdiye kadar üzerime aldığım biricik devlet memurluğu, halk kurulu üyeliği olmuştur: Mensup olduğum Antiokhis oymağı, deniz savaşından sonra ölenlerin cesetlerini



toplamayan on komutanın duruşmasında Prytaneia<sup>32</sup> makamında bulunuyordu; hepinizin sonraları kabul ettiğiniz gibi, kanuna aykırı olarak onları toptan muhakeme etmeyi ileri sürmüştünüz; o zaman kanuna aykırı olan bu harekete karşı koyan biricik üye ben olmuş, oyumu sizin tarafınıza vermemiştim; hatipler beni suçlamakla, hapse sokmakla korkuttukları zaman, sizler bağırıp çağırdığınız zaman, ben ne hapsolmaktan ne de öldürülmekten korkarak haksızlıklara ortak olmaktansa kanun ve doğruluğun tarafında tehlikeye atılmaya karar vermiştim. Bu olay, şehrimizin demokratlıkla yönetilmekte olduğu zamanlarda olmuştu. Otuzların<sup>33</sup> oligarşiliği, iktidarı ele alınca benimle birlikte öbür dört kişiyi Tholos'a çağırarak, öldürmek istedikleri Salaminli Leon'u Salamin'den getirmemizi istediler. Bu, onların, işledikleri cinayetlerden ellerinden geldiği kadar çok kişiyi sorumlu kılmak için verilmiş emirlerinden biriydi. O zaman bu şartlar altında, sözüm caizse, ölüme kıl kadar önem vermediğimi, en çok hatta biricik önem verdiğim şeyin haksızlıktan, günah işlemekten sakınmak olduğunu yalnız sözle değil, edimle de gösterdim. Bu zorlu idarenin kuvvetli kolu haksızlık işletecek kadar beni korkutamadı; Tholos'tan çıkar çıkmaz öteki dört kişi Salamin'e gidip Leon'u getirdikleri halde, ben sadece evime döndüm. Belki çok geçmeden Otuzların idaresi sona ermeseydi, bu hareketimi hayatımla ödeyecektim. Bu sözlerin doğruluğuna size birçok kimse şahitlik eder.

O halde, siyaset hayatına girdiğim halde, iyi bir adam gibi hep hak gözetir ve tabii olarak doğruluğu her şeyden üstün tutsaydım, şimdiye kadar sağ kalabilir miydim, sanırsınız? Hayır, Atinalılar, hayır; bu ne bana, ne de başka bir kimseye nasip olurdu. Hâlbuki bütün hayatımda; özel

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<sup>32</sup> Prytaneia: bule yönetim koltuğu, *prytanes*; Bule'nin yürütme kurulu

<sup>33</sup> Otuzlar: Sparta'nın yardımıyla demokratlara başkaldıran azınlık zengin sınıfın diktatörlüğünü kuran kimselerdir. Yunanlılar bu yönetime "Oligarkhlik" demişlerdir.

olsun, genel olsun, bütün hareketlerimde hiç deęişmedim, öğretiliklerimi lekeleyenlere de başkalarına da, doğruluktan ayrılarak, alçakçasına boyun eğmedim. Devamlı öğrencilerim olduęu iddiası da doğru deęildir. Ben, bana düşeni yerine getirmeye çalışırken, genç, ihtiyar, beni dinlemek isteyenleri geri çevirmedim.

Bana yalnız para verenlerle konuşmadım; zengin, fakir, herkes bana sorabilir, cevap verebilir, sözlerimi dinleyebilir; fakat bundan sonra, o kimse iyi yahut kötü bir insan olmuş, her ikisini de bana yüklemek haksızlık olur, çünkü ben ona ne bir şey öğrettim, ne de öğreteceğime söz verdim. Bir kimse benden başkalarının işitmedięi, ayrı bir şey öğrendiğini veya işittiğini ileri sürerse, biliniz ki, yalan söylüyor.

Öyleyse, birçok kimsenin benimle konuşmak için birçok zamanlarını vermekten hoşlanmalarına sebep nedir? Bunun asıl sebebini, Atinalılar, açıkça size söyledim: bu kimseler hiçbir bilgelikleri olmadığı halde, bilge olduklarını iddia eden kimselerin sorguya çekilmesini dinlemekten hoşlanıyorlar, gerçekten bu pek tatsız bir şey de deęildir. Başkalarını sorguya çekmeyi bana Tanrı emretmiştir, bu yol bana Tanrı sözleriyle, gözüme gözüken hayallerle, Tanrı iradesinin insanlara görüldüğü her vasıta ile gösterilmiştir. Atinalılar, bu sözüm gerçektir; öyle olmasaydı şimdiye kadar karşıtı ispat olunurdu. Ben gençleri bozmuşsam, hala da bozuyorsam, şimdiye kadar büyümüş olanlar, gençliklerinde kendilerine kötü öğütler verdiğimi anlamış olanlar ortaya çıkarak beni suçlar, benden öç alırlardı. Bunu yapmak istemezlerse bile, hiç olmazsa yakınlarından biri, babaları, kardeşleri veya hısımları benim yüzümden ailelerinin ne felaketlere uğradığını söylerdi. Şimdi tam zamanıdır. Onların birçoğunu burada görüyorum. İşte çocukluk arkadaşım, benim bölgemden olan Kriton, işte

oğlu Kritobulos. Sonya, Aeskhines'in babası da, Sphettoslu Lysanias da burada; bunlardan başka, Epigenes'in babası Kephisialı Antiphon'u ve benimle beraber bulunmuş olan birçok kimsenin kardeşlerini de görüyorum. Theozotides'in oğlu ve Theodotos'un kardeşi Nikostrates, Theodotos şimdi sağ değil, onun için o mani olamaz, Demodokos'un oğlu ve Theages'in kardeşi Paralos, Ariston'un oğlu ve şurada gördüğünüz Eflatun'un kardeşi Adeimantos hazır bulunuyor, Apollodoros'la kardeşi Aiantodoros'u da görüyorum. Daha birçoklarını sayabilirim. Meletos bunların bazılarını, suçlamasında şahit göstermeliydi. Unutmuşsa şimdi yapsın, kendisine yol gösteriyorum. Bu çeşitten, istediği şahidi gösterebilir. Fakat Atinalılar, hakikat bunun tam tersidir. Çünkü bunların hemen hepsi Meletos'la Anytos'un iddiasına göre arkadaşlarını bozmuş, bastan çıkarmış olan benden yana şahitlik edeceklerdir; hem yalnız bozulan gençler değil, benden yana şahitlik etmelerine hiç sebep olmayan bozulmamış daha yaşlı akrabaları da. Bunlar şahitlikte niçin benim tarafımı tutarlar? Herhalde, yalnız hakikatin, doğruluğun hatırı için, doğru söylediğimi, Meletos'un yalan söylediğini bildikleri için.

Sözün kısası, Atinalılar, savunmam için bütün söyleyeceklerim, buna ve buna benzer şeylere varır, Bir sözüm daha var. Belki, içinizde, buna benzer, hatta bundan daha az önemli bir sorunda kendisinin, gözyaşları dökerek yargıçlara yalvarıp yakardığını, yargıçları yumuşatmak için çocuklarını bir sürü hısım ve dostlarıyla birlikte mahkemeye getirdiğini hatırlayarak kızan biri olacaktır; hâlbuki ben, belki de hayatım tehlikede olduğu halde, bunların hiçbirini yapmadım. Bunun tam tersine hareket ettiğimi görünce, belki bu kızgınlıkla oyunu benden yana vermeyecektir.

Aranızda böyle biri varsa -muhakkak vardır demiyorum- ona açıkça cevap verip derim ki: Dostum,

herkes gibi ben de bir insanım; Homeros'un dediđi gibi, tahtadan veya taştan deđil, etten, kandan yapılmıř bir varlıđım; benim de çoluđum, çocuđum vardır; evet Atinalılar, biri hemen hemen yetiřmiř, erkek olmuř, ikisi henüz çocuk, üç ođlum vardır; böyle olduđu halde, sizden beraatımı dilemeleri için, hiçbirini buraya getirmeyeceđim. Niçin? Küstahlıktan yahut size karřı saygısızlıktan dolayı deđil. Ölümden korkup korkmadıđım da ayrı bir mesele, řimdi bundan söz açacak deđilim. Ancak, bence böyle bir hareket, kendimin, sizin ve bütün devletin řerefine aykırıdır. Benim yařıma gelmiř, bilgeliđi ile tanınmıř bir kimsenin böyle bir ařırılıđa düřmemesi gerekir. Her halde, herkes Sokrates'in řu veya bu bakımdan başkalarından ayrı olduđuna inanıyor, halkın bu fikri bana uyuyormuř, uymuyormuř, bunu burada arařtırmıyorum. Aranızda bilgeliđi, cesareti yahut herhangi bir erdemi ile sivrilmiř olduđu söylenen kimselerin böyle ařađı bir harekete düřmeleri ne kadar utanılacak bir řeydir. Hüküm giydikleri zaman garip garip birtakım hareketlerde bulunan nice tanınmıř adamlar gördüm; bunlar, sanki ölümlle korkunç bir ıstıraba gideceklerini, sanki sadece yařamalarına izin verilmekle ölmez olacaklarını sanıyorlar. Fikrimce bu gibi řeyler devlete karřı saygısızlıktır; bunların bu gibi hareketleri dıřarıdan gelen bir yabancıya, Atina'nın en ünlü adamlarının, gene kendi hemřerilerinin ün ve mevki verdiđi bu kimselerin, kadınlar kadar bile yürekli olmadıkları kanaatini verir. O halde, Atinalılar, bu gibi řeyleri hiç olmazsa bizim gibi ünlü kimselerin bařarmaması gerekir; bařarılarsa sizin de onlara göz yummanız; sođukkanlılık göstereceđi yerde, acıklı sahneler hazırlayarak řehri gülünç bir hale sokan bu gibi kimseleri daha řiddetle mahkûm etmek istediđinizi göstermeniz gerekir.

Bundan başka, -halkın düşüncesi meselesini bırakalım-

yargıcı aydınlatmak ve kanıksatmak yerine, onun lütfunu rica ederek beraat kazanmak da doğru bir şey değildir. Çünkü yargıcın vazifesi, doğruluğu bağışlamak değil, herkesin hakkını ölçerek hüküm vermek; kendi keyfine göre değil, kanunlara göre hüküm vermektir. Yalan yere ant içmeye alışarak sizi tesir altında bırakmamalıyız, siz de buna göz yummamalısınız; bu, dine uymaz bir hareket olur.

O halde, Atinalılar, -hele şimdi, Meletos'un ileri sürdüğü iddiaya göre, burada dinsizlikten muhakeme edildiğim bir sırada- şerefsiz, dine uymaz, yanlış saydığım bir şeyi yapmamı benden beklemeyiniz. Çünkü sizi rica kuvvetiyle kandırmaya, yeminlerinizi bozmağa çalışsaydım, tanrıların olmadığına inanmayı size öğretmiş, kendimi müdafaa ederken, tanrıları inkâr etmek ithamına karşı yalnız kendi kendimi kandırmış olurdum. Fakat hakikat büsbütün bunun tersidir; ben, tanrıların varlığına, ey Atinalılar, bütün beni suçlayanların inandığından daha yüksek bir anlamda inanırım; bundan dolayıdır ki sizin için ve benim için hayırlısı ne ise ona karar vermek üzere davamı size ve tanrıya bırakıyorum."

## **II. Karar sonrası ceza konusundaki önerisi**

Atinalılar, benim için verdiğiniz mahkûmiyet kararına üzülmeişimin birçok sebepleri var. Bunun böyle olacağını bekliyordum, yalnız, oyların birbirine bu kadar denk denecek derecede ikiye ayrılmış olmasına şaşıtm; çünkü benim aleyhimde olan çokluğu daha büyük sanıyordum. Hâlbuki şimdi, öbür tarafa otuz oy gitmiş olsaydı beraat kazanmış olacaktım. Bu yüzden diyebilirim ki, Meletos'un suçlamasından beraat kazanmış sayılırım; hatta üstelik Anytos ile Lykon beni suçlamak için buraya gelmeselerdi,

kanunun istediği gibi, oyların beşte birini kazanmayarak bin drahmi para cezasına da mahkûm olacaktı.

O şimdi ölüm cezası teklif ediyor. Bense kendi hesabıma neyi ileri süreyim Atinalılar? Şüphesiz değerim neyse onu. O halde hakkım nedir? Bütün hayatında herkesin düşkün olduğu birçok şeylere, zenginliğe, aile bağlarına, askerlik rütbelerine, halk kurullarında nutuklar vermeğe, başkanlıklara, taraflara hiç aldırmamış bir adama verilecek karşılık ne olabilir? Ben bir siyaset adamı olmak için fazla dürüst olduğumu düşünerek, size ve kendime iyilik etmeme engel olacak hiç bir yola sapmadım! Tam tersine, hepinize iyilik etmemi mümkün kılan bir yola girdim, herkesin kendini düşünmekten, kendi işlerinin peşinde koşmaktan önce erdemi bilgeliği araması gerektiğini, devletin sırtından faydalanmaya bakmazdan önce devlete bakması lazım geldiğini sizlere kabul ettirmeye çalıştım. Böyle bir kimseye ne yapılır Atinalılar, herhalde, ona bir mükâfat verilmek lazımsa, iyi bir şey verilmeli ve bu iyilik ona yakışır bir şey olmalıdır. Sizi yetiştiren, sizi aydınlatmak için işini gücünü bırakmayı her şeyden üstün gören fakir bir adama yakışan mükâfat ne olabilir? Atinalılar, ona Prytaneion'da<sup>34</sup> beslemekten daha yakışan bir mükâfat olamaz; böyle bir mükâfat, Olympia'da at yarışlarında, bilmem kaç atılı araba yarışlarında mükâfat kazanan bir yurttaştan çok ona yaraşır. Çünkü ben fakirim, hâlbuki onun yetecek kadar geliri vardır: o size yalnız bahtiyarlığın görünüşlerini bense gerçeği veriyorum. Bana vereceğiniz cezanın uygun ve yerinde bir ceza olması isteniyorsa, diyeceğim ki, bana Prytaneion'da beslenmek en doğru bir karşılıktır.

Belki, daha önce, gözyaşları ve yalvarmalar hakkında

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<sup>34</sup> Prytaneion: bule meclisi merkezi, *prytaneum*; İşlerini kesintiye uğratmamak için Prytaneion üyeleri sürekli toplantı halinde bulunurlar ve bu sırada devlet hesabına yiyip içerlerdi.

söylediğim gibi, bu sözlerimle de size boyun ekmediğimi göstermek istediğimi sanacaksınız; ama öyle değil; hiç öyle değil; bunları isteyerek, hiç bir yanlış harekette bulunmadığıma inanarak söylüyorum. Böyle olduğu halde sizi de buna kandıramam, çünkü vakit pek dar; başka şehirlerde olduğu gibi, Atina'da da büyük davaların bir günde görülmemesi için bir kanun olsaydı, o zaman sizi kandırabileceğime inanırdım. Fakat bu kadar az bir vakitte bu kadar büyük suçlamaları dağıtamam. Nasıl şimdiye kadar kimseye kötülük etmemişsem, kendime de elbette etmeyeceğim; kendimin bir kötülüğe layık olduğumu söylemeyeceğim, kendim için bir ceza teklif etmeyeceğim. Niçin edeyim? Meletos'un ileri sürdüğü ölüm cezasından korktuğumdan mı? Ölümün bir iyilik mi yoksa bir kötülük mü olduğunu bilmediğim halde, muhakkak kötülük olan bir cezayı neden teklif edeyim? Hapis cezası mı? Niçin ceza evlerinde, yılın yargıçlarının, Onbirlerin<sup>35</sup> kölesi olayım? Para cezası mı diyeceksiniz, yoksa para cezası ödeninceye kadar hapislik mi diyeceksiniz? Buna karşı da aynı şey söylenebilir; çünkü beş param olmadığından, cezayı da ödeyemeyeceğimden, cezaevinde öleceğim. O halde, sürgünlüğü mü teklif edeyim? Belki siz de bu cezayı kabul edersiniz. Ama benim kendi hemşerilerim olan sizler bile, artık benim konuşmalarına, sözlerime tahammül edemezken, bunları çekemez ve iğrenç bulurken, başkalarının bana tahammül edeceğini umacak kadar düşüncesiz olmak için, yaşamak hırsının gerçekten gözlerimi bürümüş olması lazım. Hayır, hayır, Atinalılar, bu hiç de böyle değildir. Yer yer dolaşarak, sürgün yerimi hep değiştirerek, her gittiğim yerden kovularak yaşamak, benim yaşımda bir edam için ne acı bir şeydir! İyi biliyorum

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<sup>35</sup> Onbirler: Savcılar kurulu; sanıkları tutuklamak, gardiyanlara ve cellatlara emir vermekle görevli kurul



ki burada olduđu gibi, her gittiğim yerde gene gençler beni dinlemek için etrafıma üşüşecekler; onları yanımdan uzaklaştırsam daha yaşlı hemşerilerini ayaklandırarak beni dışarı attıracaklar; etrafıma toplanmalarına izin verirsem babaları, dostları gene onların yüzünden beni yurtlarından kovacaklar.

Belki bana denecek ki: “Sokrates; ağzını tutamaz mısın, sana kimse karışmadan yabancı bir şehre giderek, yaşayamaz mısın? Buna vereceğim cevabı anlatmak çok güç. Çünkü dediğinizi yapmanın Tanrı’ya karşı bir itaatsizlik olacağını, onun için ağzımı tutamayacağımı söylersem ciddi bir söz söylediğime inanmayacaksınız; erdemi, üzerinde hem kendimi hem başkalarını sınıdığım daha birçok meseleleri her gün tartışmanın insan için en büyük iyilik olduğunu, imtihansız hayatın yaşamaya değer bir hayat olamadığını söylersem bana gene inanmayacaksınız. Size kabul ettirmek kolay olmamakla birlikte, söylediklerim doğrudur.

Kendimi hiçbir cezaya layık görmeye de alışmadım. Param olsaydı, beni beraat ettirecek bir para cezası teklif ederdim; bundan bana kötülük gelmez. Ama ne yapayım, yok; bunun için bu para cezasını, ancak benim verebileceğim kadar kesmenizi dilerim. Evet, belki bir mina verebilirim, onun için bu cezayı teklif ediyorum. Buradaki dostlarım Eflatun, Kritobulos ve Apollodoros otuz mina teklif etmem için beni sıkıştırıyorlar; onlar kefil olacaklar. Haydi, otuz olsun; bu para için onlar size yeter teminat olacaklardır.

### **III. Mahkeme huzurunda son sözler**



Atinalılar, Sokrates'i, bir bilgeyi öldürmüş olmakla, şehrinizi ayıplayacak olanlardan alacağınız kötü üne karşılık, büyük bir karınız olmayacak; ben gerçekte hiç bir şey bilmeyen bir adam olduğum halde onlar bizi kötülemek istedikleri zaman, benim bilge olduğumu söyleyecekler. Hâlbuki biraz daha beklemiş olsaydınız, istediğiniz, tabiatın yürüyüşü ile kendiliğinden yerine gelmiş olacaktı. Çünkü gördüğünüz gibi, yaşıma çok ilerlemişti; ölümden çok uzak değilim.

Şimdi hepinize değil, yalnız bana ölüm hükmünü verenlere sesleniyorum. Onlara söyleyecek bir şeyim daha var: Belki beraatımı kolaylaştıracak şeyler söylemediğimden, suçluluk kararından kurtulmak için gereken şeyleri söylemeği ve yapmağı kabul etmediğimden dolayı mahkûmluğuma karar verildiğini sanacaksınız. Hayır; mahkûm olmama sebep olan kusur, sözlerimde değil sizin istediğiniz gibi, ağlayarak, sızlayarak, haykırarak, bence bana yakışmayan, fakat başkalarından daima işitmeğe alıştığınız birçok şeyleri söyleyerek ve yaparak, size söylemek istediğimi yüzsüzlüğümü küstahlığımı göstermeyişimdendir. Fakat ben, tehlikeye düştüğüm zaman, ne böyle aşağılıklara, alçaklıklara saparım, ne de kendimi müdafaa etmediğime pişman olurum. Asla! Böyle bir şey yapmaktansa, sizin alıştığınız gibi kendimi müdafaa etmektense, alıştığım gibi söz söyleyerek ölmeği üstün görürüm. Çünkü savaş meydanında olduğu kadar adalet karsısında da ben de, başka hiç kimse de kendini ölümden kurtaracak vasıtaları kullanmağa kalkışmamalıdır. Evet, çok defa, bir kimse savaşta silahlarını bırakmakla, düşmanlarının önünde diz çökmekle ölümden kurtulabilir; her şeyi söylemeği, her şeyi yapmayı kabul eden bir kimse için her türlü tehlike karşısında ölümden kurtulmanın daha birçok çareleri vardır; yalnız şuna iyice inanınız, yargıçlarım, asıl mesele, ölümden sakınmak değil,

haksızlıktan sakınmaktır; çünkü kötülük ölümden daha hızlı koşar, Ben yaşlı ve ağır olduğumdan yavaş kosan bana yetişmiştir; hâlbuki beni suçlayanlar kuvvetli ve çabuk olduklarından, çabuk koşan kötülük onlara yetişmiştir. Şimdi ben, tarafınızdan ölüm cezasına, onlar da hakikat tarafından kötülüğün ve haksızlığın cezasına mahkûm edilerek ayrılıyor. Ben cezama boyun eğirim, onlar da cezalarına boyun eğsinler. Herhalde böyle olması mukaddermiş; belki de yerindedir...

Şimdi, ey beni mahkûm edenleri Size bir kehanetimi söylemek isterim; çünkü ben şimdi hayatın öyle bir anında bulunuyorum ki, bunda insanlar ölmezden önce kehanet gücüne erişirler. O halde benim katillerim olan sizlere haber vereyim ki, ölümümünden çok geçmeden bana verdiğiniz cezadan daha ağır bir ceza sizi beklemektedir. Beni öldürmekle hayatınızın hesabını soranlardan kurtulacağınızı sanıyorsunuz. Fakat bana inanınız, sandığınızın tam tersi olacaktır. Evet, hiç şüphe etmeyiniz, şimdiye kadar öne atılmalarına engel olduğum birçok kimseler, karşınıza çıkacak, sizi şiddetle suçlayacaklardır; bunlar daha genç oldukları için sizi daha çok incitecekler, sizinle daha çok uğraşacaklardır. Atinalılar, insanları öldürmekle, herkesi kötü hayatınızı kınamaktan alıkoyacağınızı sanıyorsanız yanıyorsunuz; bu, olası bir kaçış yolu, ünlü bir kaçış yolu değildir; en kolay en asil yol, başkalarını hiçbir şey yapamayacak bir hale getirmek değil, kendinizi yükseltmektir. İşte buradan ayrılmadan önce beni mahkûm eden yargıçlara söyleyeceğim kehanet budur.

Beni beraat ettiren dostlar, yargıçlar meşgulken, öleceğim yere gitmeden, sizlerle olup bitenler hakkında görüşmek isterim. Onun için azıcık daha durunuz, birbirimizle görüşebilecek kadar vakit var. Siz benim dostlarımsınız, onun için başıma gelenin manasını size

belirtmek isterim. Ey yargıçlarım! Çünkü ancak sizlere gerçekten yargıç diyebilirim. Size gerçekten şaşılacak bir olayı anlatmak isterim. Şimdiye kadar, gündelik işlerde bile kötü veya yanlış bir iş işlemek tehlikesi karşısında içimden gelen tanrısal bir ruh beni alıkoyuyordu; şimdi ise, gördüğünüz gibi herkese göre belki de kötülüğün en kötüsü ve en sonuncusu başıma gelmiştir. Hâlbuki sabahleyin evimden ayrılırken de, mahkeme karsısına çıktığımda da, burada söz söyleyeceğim anlarda da Tanrı sesi beni alıkoymamıştır; başka hallerde, birçok kereler söz söylerken, beni alıkorken, bugün bu mesele üzerinde söylediğim ve yaptığım şeylerin hiç birinin önüne geçmemiştir. Bu susmanın manası nedir? İşte size bunu söyleyeceğim: bu şüphesiz başıma gelenin iyilik olduğuna, ölümün bir kötülük olduğuna inananlarımızın yanıldıklarına bir alamettir. Çünkü iyiliğe değil, kötülüğe doğru gitmiş olsaydım, her zamanki işaret herhalde beni alıkoyacaktı.

Başka türlü düşünürsek, ölümün bir iyilik olduğunu umduracak sebep olduğunu da görürüz; ölüm iki şeyden biridir: ya bir hiçlik, büsbütün şuarsuzluk halidir yahut da, herkesin dediği gibi, ruhun bu dünyadan ayrılarak başka bir dünyaya geçmesidir. Ölüm bir şuarsuzluk, deliksiz ve rüyasız uyuyan bir kimsenin uykusu gibi bir uyku ise, o ne mükemmel, ne tam bir kazançtır! Bir kimse, uykusunda, hiç rüya görmediği bir gecesini düşünerek, bunu hayatının öteki günleri ve geceleriyle karşılaştırsaydı, bütün hayatında bundan daha iyi ve daha hoş kaç gün ve kaç gece geçirmiş olduğunu da bize söyleseydi, sanırım ki herkes, değil yalnız alelade kimseler, Büyük Hükümdar<sup>36</sup> bile, hayatında böyle pek az gündüz ve gece bulurdu. Ölüm bu çeşit bir uyku ise, büyük bir kazançtır; çünkü öyle olunca, zamanın bütün akışı, tek bir gece gibi gözükecektir.

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<sup>36</sup> Büyük Hükümdar: yeryüzündeki zenginliğin sembolü olarak kabul edilen Pers kralı

Ama ölüm bizi bu dünyadan başka bir dünyaya götüren bir yolculuk ise ve herkesin dediği gibi, bütün ölenler başka dünyada yaşıyorlarsa, yargıçlarım, bizim için bundan daha büyük ne iyilik olabilir? Gerçekten öteki dünyaya vardığımızda, bu dünyada doğruluk iddia eden kimselerden kurtularak, denildiği gibi asıl doğruluğu veren gerçekten yargıçları, Minos'u, Rhadamanthos'u, Aiakos'u, Triptolemos'u,<sup>37</sup> doğru yaşamış olan yarıtanrıları bulacaksak, bu yolculuk hiçbir zaman bir ceza olamaz. Bir kimse orada, Orpheus'a, Musaios'a, Homeros'a, Hesiodos'a<sup>38</sup> kavuşacaksa, bunun için ne vermez ki?

Hayır, bu doğru ise, bırakınız bir daha, bir daha öleyim. Hele Palamedes ile Telamon oğlu Aias<sup>39</sup> ile haksız bir hüküm yüzünden ölen eski kahramanları ile buluşmak bizim için ne yüksek bir şeydir! Kendi sonumu onların sonu ile karşılaştırmak benim için ne büyük bir zevk! Hepsinin üstünde, burada olduğu gibi öteki dünyada da öz ve yanlış bilgeliği araştırmamı ilerletebileceğim, kimin bilgiç, kimin cahil olduğunu anlayabileceğim. Yargıçlar! Büyük Troia seferinin önderi Odysseus'u, Sisypheos'u,<sup>40</sup> kadınlı erkekli daha birçoklarını deneyebilmekte ne büyük bir zevk var! Onlarla, konuşmakta, onların arasında yaşamakta, onlara sorular sormakta ne sonsuz bir zevk olacaktır! Orada hiç şüphesiz, sormak yüzünden ölüme mahkûm edilmek tehlikesi de yoktur. Bizden daha mesut olduktan başka,

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<sup>37</sup> Minos, Rhadamanthos ve Aiakos: Zeus'un ölümlü oğullarıdır. Yeryüzündeki adaletli yaşayışlarından ötürü öteki dünyada ölümleri yargılıyorlardı. Triptolemos: insanlara tarımı öğretmiştir ve başka herhangi bir yerde ölümlerin yargıcı olarak adı geçmez.

<sup>38</sup> Orpheus ile Musaios: Homeros'tan önce yaşadığına inanılan iki şairdir. Burada Orpheus'un adının şair ve şarkıcı olarak değil, din kurucusu olarak geçtiği besbellidir. Homeros ve Hesiodos: Greklerin en büyük iki şairidir.

<sup>39</sup> Troya savaşı kahramanlarından olan Palamedes, Odysseus'un bir sahtekârlığını ortaya çıkarmış ve onun tarafından hazırlanan düzenin kurbanı olarak öldürülmüştü. Aias ise kendini öldürmüştü. Akhilleus, öldüğü zaman, silahlarının Aias'a değil de Odysseus'a verilmesini, Sokrates bir haksızlık olarak görür.

<sup>40</sup> Büyük Troya seferinin önderi, Greklerin başbuğu Agamemnon'du. Odysseus ve insanların en kurnazı olan Sisypheos, Homeros'a göre örnek bilgelilerdi.

doğruyu söyleyen, orada ölmez de olacaktır. O halde, yargıçlar! Siz de benim gibi ölümden korkmayınız, şunu biliniz ki, iyi bir insana, ne hayatta ne de öldükten sonra hiçbir kötülük gelmez. Onu ve onun gibileri tanrılar daima korurlar. Benim yaklaşan sonum, sadece bir tesadüf işi değildir; tam tersine, apaydın görüyorum ki ölmek ve böylece bütün acılardan büsbütün kurtulmak, benim için daha değerlidir. İşte, içimden gelen işaretin alıkoymamasının sebebi budur. Gene bunun için beni mahkûm edenlere, beni suçlayanlara asla kızmıyorum. Onlar bana iyilik etmeyi bile bile istememişlerse de, bana hiç kötülük de etmemişlerdir. Onları ancak, bana bilerek kötülük etmek istediklerinden dolayı kınayabilirim.

Sizden dileyeceğim bir şey daha kaldı: çocuklarım büyüdükları zaman, Atinalılar, erdemden çok zenginliğe yahut herhangi bir şeye düşkünlük gösterecek olurlarsa, ben sizinle nasıl uğraşmışsam, siz de onlarla uğraşınız, onları cezalandırınız; kendilerine, kendilerinde olmayan bir değeri verir, önem vermeleri gereken şeye önem vermez, bir hiç oldukları halde kendilerini bir şey sanırlarsa, ben sizi nasıl azarlamışsam, siz de onları öyle azarlayınız. Bunu yaparsanız, bana da, okullarıma da doğruluk etmiş olursunuz.

Artık ayrılmak zamanı geldi, yolumuza gidelim: ben ölmeye, siz yaşamaya.

Hangisi daha iyi?

Bunu Tanrı'dan başka kimse bilemez.

SON

## Apology<sup>41</sup>

How you, O Athenians, have been affected by my accusers, I cannot tell; but I know that they almost made me forget who I was—so persuasively did they speak; and yet they have hardly uttered a word of truth. But of the many falsehoods told by them, there was one which quite amazed me;—I mean when they said that you should be upon your guard and not allow yourselves to be deceived by the force of my eloquence. To say this, when they were certain to be detected as soon as I opened my lips and proved myself to be anything but a great speaker, did indeed appear to me most shameless—unless by the force of eloquence they mean the force of truth; for is such is their meaning, I admit that I am eloquent. But in how different a way from theirs! Well, as I was saying, they have scarcely spoken the truth at all; but from me you shall hear the whole truth: not, however, delivered after their manner in a set oration duly ornamented with words and phrases. No, by heaven! but I shall use the words and arguments which occur to me at the moment; for I am confident in the justice of my cause (Or, I am certain that I am right in taking this course.): at my time of life I ought not to be appearing before you, O men of Athens, in the character of a juvenile orator—let no one expect it of me. And I must beg of you to grant me a favour:—If I defend myself in my accustomed manner, and you hear me using the words which I have been in the habit of using in the agora, at the tables of the money-changers, or anywhere else, I would ask you not to be surprised, and not to interrupt me on this account. For I am more than seventy years of age, and appearing now for the first time in a court of law, I am quite a stranger to the language of the place; and therefore I would have you regard me as if I were really a stranger, whom you

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<sup>41</sup> Çeviri: Benjamin Jovett, 1891

would excuse if he spoke in his native tongue, and after the fashion of his country:—Am I making an unfair request of you? Never mind the manner, which may or may not be good; but think only of the truth of my words, and give heed to that: let the speaker speak truly and the judge decide justly.

And first, I have to reply to the older charges and to my first accusers, and then I will go on to the later ones. For of old I have had many accusers, who have accused me falsely to you during many years; and I am more afraid of them than of Anytus and his associates, who are dangerous, too, in their own way. But far more dangerous are the others, who began when you were children, and took possession of your minds with their falsehoods, telling of one Socrates, a wise man, who speculated about the heaven above, and searched into the earth beneath, and made the worse appear the better cause. The disseminators of this tale are the accusers whom I dread; for their hearers are apt to fancy that such enquirers do not believe in the existence of the gods. And they are many, and their charges against me are of ancient date, and they were made by them in the days when you were more impressible than you are now—in childhood, or it may have been in youth—and the cause when heard went by default, for there was none to answer. And hardest of all, I do not know and cannot tell the names of my accusers; unless in the chance case of a Comic poet. All who from envy and malice have persuaded you—some of them having first convinced themselves—all this class of men are most difficult to deal with; for I cannot have them up here, and cross-examine them, and therefore I must simply fight with shadows in my own defence, and argue when there is no one who answers. I will ask you then to assume with me, as I was saying, that my opponents are of two kinds; one recent, the other ancient: and I hope that you will see the propriety of my answering the



latter first, for these accusations you heard long before the others, and much oftener.

Well, then, I must make my defence, and endeavour to clear away in a short time, a slander which has lasted a long time. May I succeed, if to succeed be for my good and yours, or likely to avail me in my cause! The task is not an easy one; I quite understand the nature of it. And so leaving the event with God, in obedience to the law I will now make my defence.

I will begin at the beginning, and ask what is the accusation which has given rise to the slander of me, and in fact has encouraged Meletus to prove this charge against me. Well, what do the slanderers say? They shall be my prosecutors, and I will sum up their words in an affidavit: 'Socrates is an evil-doer, and a curious person, who searches into things under the earth and in heaven, and he makes the worse appear the better cause; and he teaches the aforesaid doctrines to others.' Such is the nature of the accusation: it is just what you have yourselves seen in the comedy of Aristophanes (Aristoph., *Clouds.*), who has introduced a man whom he calls Socrates, going about and saying that he walks in air, and talking a deal of nonsense concerning matters of which I do not pretend to know either much or little—not that I mean to speak disparagingly of any one who is a student of natural philosophy. I should be very sorry if Meletus could bring so grave a charge against me. But the simple truth is, O Athenians, that I have nothing to do with physical speculations. Very many of those here present are witnesses to the truth of this, and to them I appeal. Speak then, you who have heard me, and tell your neighbours whether any of you have ever known me hold forth in few words or in many upon such matters...You hear their answer. And from what they say of this part of the charge you will be able to judge of the truth of the rest.



As little foundation is there for the report that I am a teacher, and take money; this accusation has no more truth in it than the other. Although, if a man were really able to instruct mankind, to receive money for giving instruction would, in my opinion, be an honour to him. There is Gorgias of Leontium, and Prodicus of Ceos, and Hippias of Elis, who go the round of the cities, and are able to persuade the young men to leave their own citizens by whom they might be taught for nothing, and come to them whom they not only pay, but are thankful if they may be allowed to pay them. There is at this time a Parian philosopher residing in Athens, of whom I have heard; and I came to hear of him in this way:—I came across a man who has spent a world of money on the Sophists, Callias, the son of Hipponicus, and knowing that he had sons, I asked him: 'Callias,' I said, 'if your two sons were foals or calves, there would be no difficulty in finding some one to put over them; we should hire a trainer of horses, or a farmer probably, who would improve and perfect them in their own proper virtue and excellence; but as they are human beings, whom are you thinking of placing over them? Is there any one who understands human and political virtue? You must have thought about the matter, for you have sons; is there any one?' 'There is,' he said. 'Who is he?' said I; 'and of what country? and what does he charge?' 'Evenus the Parian,' he replied; 'he is the man, and his charge is five minae.' Happy is Evenus, I said to myself, if he really has this wisdom, and teaches at such a moderate charge. Had I the same, I should have been very proud and conceited; but the truth is that I have no knowledge of the kind.

I dare say, Athenians, that some one among you will reply, 'Yes, Socrates, but what is the origin of these accusations which are brought against you; there must have been something strange which you have been doing? All these rumours and this talk about you would never have arisen if you

had been like other men: tell us, then, what is the cause of them, for we should be sorry to judge hastily of you.' Now I regard this as a fair challenge, and I will endeavour to explain to you the reason why I am called wise and have such an evil fame. Please to attend then. And although some of you may think that I am joking, I declare that I will tell you the entire truth. Men of Athens, this reputation of mine has come of a certain sort of wisdom which I possess. If you ask me what kind of wisdom, I reply, wisdom such as may perhaps be attained by man, for to that extent I am inclined to believe that I am wise; whereas the persons of whom I was speaking have a superhuman wisdom which I may fail to describe, because I have it not myself; and he who says that I have, speaks falsely, and is taking away my character. And here, O men of Athens, I must beg you not to interrupt me, even if I seem to say something extravagant. For the word which I will speak is not mine. I will refer you to a witness who is worthy of credit; that witness shall be the God of Delphi—he will tell you about my wisdom, if I have any, and of what sort it is. You must have known Chaerephon; he was early a friend of mine, and also a friend of yours, for he shared in the recent exile of the people, and returned with you. Well, Chaerephon, as you know, was very impetuous in all his doings, and he went to Delphi and boldly asked the oracle to tell him whether—as I was saying, I must beg you not to interrupt—he asked the oracle to tell him whether anyone was wiser than I was, and the Pythian prophetess answered, that there was no man wiser. Chaerephon is dead himself; but his brother, who is in court, will confirm the truth of what I am saying.

Why do I mention this? Because I am going to explain to you why I have such an evil name. When I heard the answer, I said to myself, What can the god mean? and what is the interpretation of his riddle? for I know that I have no wisdom, small or great. What then can he mean when he says that I am

the wisest of men? And yet he is a god, and cannot lie; that would be against his nature. After long consideration, I thought of a method of trying the question. I reflected that if I could only find a man wiser than myself, then I might go to the god with a refutation in my hand. I should say to him, 'Here is a man who is wiser than I am; but you said that I was the wisest.' Accordingly I went to one who had the reputation of wisdom, and observed him—his name I need not mention; he was a politician whom I selected for examination—and the result was as follows: When I began to talk with him, I could not help thinking that he was not really wise, although he was thought wise by many, and still wiser by himself; and thereupon I tried to explain to him that he thought himself wise, but was not really wise; and the consequence was that he hated me, and his enmity was shared by several who were present and heard me. So I left him, saying to myself, as I went away: Well, although I do not suppose that either of us knows anything really beautiful and good, I am better off than he is,—for he knows nothing, and thinks that he knows; I neither know nor think that I know. In this latter particular, then, I seem to have slightly the advantage of him. Then I went to another who had still higher pretensions to wisdom, and my conclusion was exactly the same. Whereupon I made another enemy of him, and of many others besides him.

Then I went to one man after another, being not unconscious of the enmity which I provoked, and I lamented and feared this: but necessity was laid upon me,—the word of God, I thought, ought to be considered first. And I said to myself, Go I must to all who appear to know, and find out the meaning of the oracle. And I swear to you, Athenians, by the dog I swear!—for I must tell you the truth—the result of my mission was just this: I found that the men most in repute were all but the most foolish; and that others less esteemed were really wiser and better. I will tell you the tale of my wanderings and

of the 'Herculean' labours, as I may call them, which I endured only to find at last the oracle irrefutable. After the politicians, I went to the poets; tragic, dithyrambic, and all sorts. And there, I said to myself, you will be instantly detected; now you will find out that you are more ignorant than they are. Accordingly, I took them some of the most elaborate passages in their own writings, and asked what was the meaning of them—thinking that they would teach me something. Will you believe me? I am almost ashamed to confess the truth, but I must say that there is hardly a person present who would not have talked better about their poetry than they did themselves. Then I knew that not by wisdom do poets write poetry, but by a sort of genius and inspiration; they are like diviners or soothsayers who also say many fine things, but do not understand the meaning of them. The poets appeared to me to be much in the same case; and I further observed that upon the strength of their poetry they believed themselves to be the wisest of men in other things in which they were not wise. So I departed, conceiving myself to be superior to them for the same reason that I was superior to the politicians.

At last I went to the artisans. I was conscious that I knew nothing at all, as I may say, and I was sure that they knew many fine things; and here I was not mistaken, for they did know many things of which I was ignorant, and in this they certainly were wiser than I was. But I observed that even the good artisans fell into the same error as the poets;—because they were good workmen they thought that they also knew all sorts of high matters, and this defect in them overshadowed their wisdom; and therefore I asked myself on behalf of the oracle, whether I would like to be as I was, neither having their knowledge nor their ignorance, or like them in both; and I made answer to myself and to the oracle that I was better off as I was.

This inquisition has led to my having many enemies of the worst and most dangerous kind, and has given occasion also to many calumnies. And I am called wise, for my hearers always imagine that I myself possess the wisdom which I find wanting in others: but the truth is, O men of Athens, that God only is wise; and by his answer he intends to show that the wisdom of men is worth little or nothing; he is not speaking of Socrates, he is only using my name by way of illustration, as if he said, He, O men, is the wisest, who, like Socrates, knows that his wisdom is in truth worth nothing. And so I go about the world, obedient to the god, and search and make enquiry into the wisdom of any one, whether citizen or stranger, who appears to be wise; and if he is not wise, then in vindication of the oracle I show him that he is not wise; and my occupation quite absorbs me, and I have no time to give either to any public matter of interest or to any concern of my own, but I am in utter poverty by reason of my devotion to the god.

There is another thing:—young men of the richer classes, who have not much to do, come about me of their own accord; they like to hear the pretenders examined, and they often imitate me, and proceed to examine others; there are plenty of persons, as they quickly discover, who think that they know something, but really know little or nothing; and then those who are examined by them instead of being angry with themselves are angry with me: This confounded Socrates, they say; this villainous misleader of youth!—and then if somebody asks them, Why, what evil does he practise or teach? they do not know, and cannot tell; but in order that they may not appear to be at a loss, they repeat the ready-made charges which are used against all philosophers about teaching things up in the clouds and under the earth, and having no gods, and making the worse appear the better cause; for they do not like to confess that their pretence of knowledge has been detected—which is the truth; and as they are numerous and

ambitious and energetic, and are drawn up in battle array and have persuasive tongues, they have filled your ears with their loud and inveterate calumnies. And this is the reason why my three accusers, Meletus and Anytus and Lycon, have set upon me; Meletus, who has a quarrel with me on behalf of the poets; Anytus, on behalf of the craftsmen and politicians; Lycon, on behalf of the rhetoricians: and as I said at the beginning, I cannot expect to get rid of such a mass of calumny all in a moment. And this, O men of Athens, is the truth and the whole truth; I have concealed nothing, I have dissembled nothing. And yet, I know that my plainness of speech makes them hate me, and what is their hatred but a proof that I am speaking the truth?—Hence has arisen the prejudice against me; and this is the reason of it, as you will find out either in this or in any future enquiry.

I have said enough in my defence against the first class of my accusers; I turn to the second class. They are headed by Meletus, that good man and true lover of his country, as he calls himself. Against these, too, I must try to make a defence:—Let their affidavit be read: it contains something of this kind: It says that Socrates is a doer of evil, who corrupts the youth; and who does not believe in the gods of the state, but has other new divinities of his own. Such is the charge; and now let us examine the particular counts. He says that I am a doer of evil, and corrupt the youth; but I say, O men of Athens, that Meletus is a doer of evil, in that he pretends to be in earnest when he is only in jest, and is so eager to bring men to trial from a pretended zeal and interest about matters in which he really never had the smallest interest. And the truth of this I will endeavour to prove to you.

Come hither, Meletus, and let me ask a question of you. You think a great deal about the improvement of youth?

Yes, I do.

Tell the judges, then, who is their improver; for you must know, as you have taken the pains to discover their corrupter, and are citing and accusing me before them. Speak, then, and tell the judges who their improver is.—Observe, Meletus, that you are silent, and have nothing to say. But is not this rather disgraceful, and a very considerable proof of what I was saying, that you have no interest in the matter? Speak up, friend, and tell us who their improver is.

The laws.

But that, my good sir, is not my meaning. I want to know who the person is, who, in the first place, knows the laws.

The judges, Socrates, who are present in court.

What, do you mean to say, Meletus, that they are able to instruct and improve youth?

Certainly they are.

What, all of them, or some only and not others?

All of them.

By the goddess Here, that is good news! There are plenty of improvers, then. And what do you say of the audience,—do they improve them?

Yes, they do.

And the senators?

Yes, the senators improve them.

But perhaps the members of the assembly corrupt them?—or do they too improve them?

They improve them.



Then every Athenian improves and elevates them; all with the exception of myself; and I alone am their corrupter? Is that what you affirm?

That is what I stoutly affirm.

I am very unfortunate if you are right. But suppose I ask you a question: How about horses? Does one man do them harm and all the world good? Is not the exact opposite the truth? One man is able to do them good, or at least not many;—the trainer of horses, that is to say, does them good, and others who have to do with them rather injure them? Is not that true, Meletus, of horses, or of any other animals? Most assuredly it is; whether you and Anytus say yes or no. Happy indeed would be the condition of youth if they had one corrupter only, and all the rest of the world were their improvers. But you, Meletus, have sufficiently shown that you never had a thought about the young: your carelessness is seen in your not caring about the very things which you bring against me.

And now, Meletus, I will ask you another question—by Zeus I will: Which is better, to live among bad citizens, or among good ones? Answer, friend, I say; the question is one which may be easily answered. Do not the good do their neighbours good, and the bad do them evil?

Certainly.

And is there anyone who would rather be injured than benefited by those who live with him? Answer, my good friend, the law requires you to answer—does any one like to be injured?

Certainly not.

And when you accuse me of corrupting and deteriorating the youth, do you allege that I corrupt them intentionally or unintentionally?



Intentionally, I say.

But you have just admitted that the good do their neighbours good, and the evil do them evil. Now, is that a truth which your superior wisdom has recognized thus early in life, and am I, at my age, in such darkness and ignorance as not to know that if a man with whom I have to live is corrupted by me, I am very likely to be harmed by him; and yet I corrupt him, and intentionally, too—so you say, although neither I nor any other human being is ever likely to be convinced by you. But either I do not corrupt them, or I corrupt them unintentionally; and on either view of the case you lie. If my offence is unintentional, the law has no cognizance of unintentional offences: you ought to have taken me privately, and warned and admonished me; for if I had been better advised, I should have left off doing what I only did unintentionally—no doubt I should; but you would have nothing to say to me and refused to teach me. And now you bring me up in this court, which is a place not of instruction, but of punishment.

It will be very clear to you, Athenians, as I was saying, that Meletus has no care at all, great or small, about the matter. But still I should like to know, Meletus, in what I am affirmed to corrupt the young. I suppose you mean, as I infer from your indictment, that I teach them not to acknowledge the gods which the state acknowledges, but some other new divinities or spiritual agencies in their stead. These are the lessons by which I corrupt the youth, as you say.

Yes, that I say emphatically.

Then, by the gods, Meletus, of whom we are speaking, tell me and the court, in somewhat plainer terms, what you mean! for I do not as yet understand whether you affirm that I teach other men to acknowledge some gods, and therefore that I do believe in gods, and am not an entire atheist—this you do not

lay to my charge,—but only you say that they are not the same gods which the city recognizes—the charge is that they are different gods. Or, do you mean that I am an atheist simply, and a teacher of atheism?

I mean the latter—that you are a complete atheist.

What an extraordinary statement! Why do you think so, Meletus? Do you mean that I do not believe in the godhead of the sun or moon, like other men?

I assure you, judges, that he does not: for he says that the sun is stone, and the moon earth.

Friend Meletus, you think that you are accusing Anaxagoras: and you have but a bad opinion of the judges, if you fancy them illiterate to such a degree as not to know that these doctrines are found in the books of Anaxagoras the Clazomenian, which are full of them. And so, forsooth, the youth are said to be taught them by Socrates, when there are not unfrequently exhibitions of them at the theatre (Probably in allusion to Aristophanes who caricatured, and to Euripides who borrowed the notions of Anaxagoras, as well as to other dramatic poets.) (price of admission one drachma at the most); and they might pay their money, and laugh at Socrates if he pretends to father these extraordinary views. And so, Meletus, you really think that I do not believe in any god?

I swear by Zeus that you believe absolutely in none at all.

Nobody will believe you, Meletus, and I am pretty sure that you do not believe yourself. I cannot help thinking, men of Athens, that Meletus is reckless and impudent, and that he has written this indictment in a spirit of mere wantonness and youthful bravado. Has he not compounded a riddle, thinking to try me? He said to himself:—I shall see whether the wise Socrates will discover my facetious contradiction, or whether I shall be able to deceive him and the rest of them. For he

certainly does appear to me to contradict himself in the indictment as much as if he said that Socrates is guilty of not believing in the gods, and yet of believing in them—but this is not like a person who is in earnest.

I should like you, O men of Athens, to join me in examining what I conceive to be his inconsistency; and do you, Meletus, answer. And I must remind the audience of my request that they would not make a disturbance if I speak in my accustomed manner:

Did ever man, Meletus, believe in the existence of human things, and not of human beings?...I wish, men of Athens, that he would answer, and not be always trying to get up an interruption. Did ever any man believe in horsemanship, and not in horses? or in flute-playing, and not in flute-players? No, my friend; I will answer to you and to the court, as you refuse to answer for yourself. There is no man who ever did. But now please to answer the next question: Can a man believe in spiritual and divine agencies, and not in spirits or demigods?

He cannot.

How lucky I am to have extracted that answer, by the assistance of the court! But then you swear in the indictment that I teach and believe in divine or spiritual agencies (new or old, no matter for that); at any rate, I believe in spiritual agencies,—so you say and swear in the affidavit; and yet if I believe in divine beings, how can I help believing in spirits or demigods;—must I not? To be sure I must; and therefore I may assume that your silence gives consent. Now what are spirits or demigods? Are they not either gods or the sons of gods?

Certainly they are.

But this is what I call the facetious riddle invented by you: the demigods or spirits are gods, and you say first that I do not

believe in gods, and then again that I do believe in gods; that is, if I believe in demigods. For if the demigods are the illegitimate sons of gods, whether by the nymphs or by any other mothers, of whom they are said to be the sons—what human being will ever believe that there are no gods if they are the sons of gods? You might as well affirm the existence of mules, and deny that of horses and asses. Such nonsense, Meletus, could only have been intended by you to make trial of me. You have put this into the indictment because you had nothing real of which to accuse me. But no one who has a particle of understanding will ever be convinced by you that the same men can believe in divine and superhuman things, and yet not believe that there are gods and demigods and heroes.

I have said enough in answer to the charge of Meletus: any elaborate defence is unnecessary, but I know only too well how many are the enmities which I have incurred, and this is what will be my destruction if I am destroyed;—not Meletus, nor yet Anytus, but the envy and detraction of the world, which has been the death of many good men, and will probably be the death of many more; there is no danger of my being the last of them.

Some one will say: And are you not ashamed, Socrates, of a course of life which is likely to bring you to an untimely end? To him I may fairly answer: There you are mistaken: a man who is good for anything ought not to calculate the chance of living or dying; he ought only to consider whether in doing anything he is doing right or wrong—acting the part of a good man or of a bad. Whereas, upon your view, the heroes who fell at Troy were not good for much, and the son of Thetis above all, who altogether despised danger in comparison with disgrace; and when he was so eager to slay Hector, his goddess mother said to him, that if he avenged his companion

Patroclus, and slew Hector, he would die himself—'Fate,' she said, in these or the like words, 'waits for you next after Hector;' he, receiving this warning, utterly despised danger and death, and instead of fearing them, feared rather to live in dishonour, and not to avenge his friend. 'Let me die forthwith,' he replies, 'and be avenged of my enemy, rather than abide here by the beaked ships, a laughing-stock and a burden of the earth.' Had Achilles any thought of death and danger? For wherever a man's place is, whether the place which he has chosen or that in which he has been placed by a commander, there he ought to remain in the hour of danger; he should not think of death or of anything but of disgrace. And this, O men of Athens, is a true saying.

Strange, indeed, would be my conduct, O men of Athens, if I who, when I was ordered by the generals whom you chose to command me at Potidaea and Amphipolis and Delium, remained where they placed me, like any other man, facing death—if now, when, as I conceive and imagine, God orders me to fulfil the philosopher's mission of searching into myself and other men, I were to desert my post through fear of death, or any other fear; that would indeed be strange, and I might justly be arraigned in court for denying the existence of the gods, if I disobeyed the oracle because I was afraid of death, fancying that I was wise when I was not wise. For the fear of death is indeed the pretence of wisdom, and not real wisdom, being a pretence of knowing the unknown; and no one knows whether death, which men in their fear apprehend to be the greatest evil, may not be the greatest good. Is not this ignorance of a disgraceful sort, the ignorance which is the conceit that a man knows what he does not know? And in this respect only I believe myself to differ from men in general, and may perhaps claim to be wiser than they are:—that whereas I know but little of the world below, I do not suppose that I know: but I do know that injustice and disobedience to a

better, whether God or man, is evil and dishonourable, and I will never fear or avoid a possible good rather than a certain evil. And therefore if you let me go now, and are not convinced by Anytus, who said that since I had been prosecuted I must be put to death; (or if not that I ought never to have been prosecuted at all); and that if I escape now, your sons will all be utterly ruined by listening to my words—if you say to me, Socrates, this time we will not mind Anytus, and you shall be let off, but upon one condition, that you are not to enquire and speculate in this way any more, and that if you are caught doing so again you shall die;—if this was the condition on which you let me go, I should reply: Men of Athens, I honour and love you; but I shall obey God rather than you, and while I have life and strength I shall never cease from the practice and teaching of philosophy, exhorting any one whom I meet and saying to him after my manner: You, my friend,—a citizen of the great and mighty and wise city of Athens,—are you not ashamed of heaping up the greatest amount of money and honour and reputation, and caring so little about wisdom and truth and the greatest improvement of the soul, which you never regard or heed at all? And if the person with whom I am arguing, says: Yes, but I do care; then I do not leave him or let him go at once; but I proceed to interrogate and examine and cross-examine him, and if I think that he has no virtue in him, but only says that he has, I reproach him with undervaluing the greater, and overvaluing the less. And I shall repeat the same words to every one whom I meet, young and old, citizen and alien, but especially to the citizens, inasmuch as they are my brethren. For know that this is the command of God; and I believe that no greater good has ever happened in the state than my service to the God. For I do nothing but go about persuading you all, old and young alike, not to take thought for your persons or your properties, but first and chiefly to care about the greatest improvement of the soul. I

tell you that virtue is not given by money, but that from virtue comes money and every other good of man, public as well as private. This is my teaching, and if this is the doctrine which corrupts the youth, I am a mischievous person. But if any one says that this is not my teaching, he is speaking an untruth. Wherefore, O men of Athens, I say to you, do as Anytus bids or not as Anytus bids, and either acquit me or not; but whichever you do, understand that I shall never alter my ways, not even if I have to die many times.

Men of Athens, do not interrupt, but hear me; there was an understanding between us that you should hear me to the end: I have something more to say, at which you may be inclined to cry out; but I believe that to hear me will be good for you, and therefore I beg that you will not cry out. I would have you know, that if you kill such an one as I am, you will injure yourselves more than you will injure me. Nothing will injure me, not Meletus nor yet Anytus—they cannot, for a bad man is not permitted to injure a better than himself. I do not deny that Anytus may, perhaps, kill him, or drive him into exile, or deprive him of civil rights; and he may imagine, and others may imagine, that he is inflicting a great injury upon him: but there I do not agree. For the evil of doing as he is doing—the evil of unjustly taking away the life of another—is greater far.

And now, Athenians, I am not going to argue for my own sake, as you may think, but for yours, that you may not sin against the God by condemning me, who am his gift to you. For if you kill me you will not easily find a successor to me, who, if I may use such a ludicrous figure of speech, am a sort of gadfly, given to the state by God; and the state is a great and noble steed who is tardy in his motions owing to his very size, and requires to be stirred into life. I am that gadfly which God has attached to the state, and all day long and in all places am always fastening upon you, arousing and persuading and



reproaching you. You will not easily find another like me, and therefore I would advise you to spare me. I dare say that you may feel out of temper (like a person who is suddenly awakened from sleep), and you think that you might easily strike me dead as Anytus advises, and then you would sleep on for the remainder of your lives, unless God in his care of you sent you another gadfly. When I say that I am given to you by God, the proof of my mission is this:—if I had been like other men, I should not have neglected all my own concerns or patiently seen the neglect of them during all these years, and have been doing yours, coming to you individually like a father or elder brother, exhorting you to regard virtue; such conduct, I say, would be unlike human nature. If I had gained anything, or if my exhortations had been paid, there would have been some sense in my doing so; but now, as you will perceive, not even the impudence of my accusers dares to say that I have ever exacted or sought pay of any one; of that they have no witness. And I have a sufficient witness to the truth of what I say—my poverty.

Some one may wonder why I go about in private giving advice and busying myself with the concerns of others, but do not venture to come forward in public and advise the state. I will tell you why. You have heard me speak at sundry times and in divers places of an oracle or sign which comes to me, and is the divinity which Meletus ridicules in the indictment. This sign, which is a kind of voice, first began to come to me when I was a child; it always forbids but never commands me to do anything which I am going to do. This is what deters me from being a politician. And rightly, as I think. For I am certain, O men of Athens, that if I had engaged in politics, I should have perished long ago, and done no good either to you or to myself. And do not be offended at my telling you the truth: for the truth is, that no man who goes to war with you or any other multitude, honestly striving against the many lawless



and unrighteous deeds which are done in a state, will save his life; he who will fight for the right, if he would live even for a brief space, must have a private station and not a public one.

I can give you convincing evidence of what I say, not words only, but what you value far more—actions. Let me relate to you a passage of my own life which will prove to you that I should never have yielded to injustice from any fear of death, and that 'as I should have refused to yield' I must have died at once. I will tell you a tale of the courts, not very interesting perhaps, but nevertheless true. The only office of state which I ever held, O men of Athens, was that of senator: the tribe Antiochis, which is my tribe, had the presidency at the trial of the generals who had not taken up the bodies of the slain after the battle of Arginusae; and you proposed to try them in a body, contrary to law, as you all thought afterwards; but at the time I was the only one of the Prytanes who was opposed to the illegality, and I gave my vote against you; and when the orators threatened to impeach and arrest me, and you called and shouted, I made up my mind that I would run the risk, having law and justice with me, rather than take part in your injustice because I feared imprisonment and death. This happened in the days of the democracy. But when the oligarchy of the Thirty was in power, they sent for me and four others into the rotunda, and bade us bring Leon the Salaminian from Salamis, as they wanted to put him to death. This was a specimen of the sort of commands which they were always giving with the view of implicating as many as possible in their crimes; and then I showed, not in word only but in deed, that, if I may be allowed to use such an expression, I cared not a straw for death, and that my great and only care was lest I should do an unrighteous or unholy thing. For the strong arm of that oppressive power did not frighten me into doing wrong; and when we came out of the rotunda the other four went to Salamis and fetched Leon, but I went quietly home. For which I

might have lost my life, had not the power of the Thirty shortly afterwards come to an end. And many will witness to my words.

Now do you really imagine that I could have survived all these years, if I had led a public life, supposing that like a good man I had always maintained the right and had made justice, as I ought, the first thing? No indeed, men of Athens, neither I nor any other man. But I have been always the same in all my actions, public as well as private, and never have I yielded any base compliance to those who are slanderously termed my disciples, or to any other. Not that I have any regular disciples. But if any one likes to come and hear me while I am pursuing my mission, whether he be young or old, he is not excluded. Nor do I converse only with those who pay; but any one, whether he be rich or poor, may ask and answer me and listen to my words; and whether he turns out to be a bad man or a good one, neither result can be justly imputed to me; for I never taught or professed to teach him anything. And if any one says that he has ever learned or heard anything from me in private which all the world has not heard, let me tell you that he is lying.

But I shall be asked, Why do people delight in continually conversing with you? I have told you already, Athenians, the whole truth about this matter: they like to hear the cross-examination of the pretenders to wisdom; there is amusement in it. Now this duty of cross-examining other men has been imposed upon me by God; and has been signified to me by oracles, visions, and in every way in which the will of divine power was ever intimated to any one. This is true, O Athenians, or, if not true, would be soon refuted. If I am or have been corrupting the youth, those of them who are now grown up and have become sensible that I gave them bad advice in the days of their youth should come forward as

accusers, and take their revenge; or if they do not like to come themselves, some of their relatives, fathers, brothers, or other kinsmen, should say what evil their families have suffered at my hands. Now is their time. Many of them I see in the court. There is Crito, who is of the same age and of the same deme with myself, and there is Critobulus his son, whom I also see. Then again there is Lysanias of Sphettus, who is the father of Aeschines—he is present; and also there is Antiphon of Cephissus, who is the father of Epigenes; and there are the brothers of several who have associated with me. There is Nicostratus the son of Theosdotides, and the brother of Theodotus (now Theodotus himself is dead, and therefore he, at any rate, will not seek to stop him); and there is Paralus the son of Demodocus, who had a brother Theages; and Adeimantus the son of Ariston, whose brother Plato is present; and Aeantodorus, who is the brother of Apollodorus, whom I also see. I might mention a great many others, some of whom Meletus should have produced as witnesses in the course of his speech; and let him still produce them, if he has forgotten—I will make way for him. And let him say, if he has any testimony of the sort which he can produce. Nay, Athenians, the very opposite is the truth. For all these are ready to witness on behalf of the corrupter, of the injurer of their kindred, as Meletus and Anytus call me; not the corrupted youth only—there might have been a motive for that—but their uncorrupted elder relatives. Why should they too support me with their testimony? Why, indeed, except for the sake of truth and justice, and because they know that I am speaking the truth, and that Meletus is a liar.

Well, Athenians, this and the like of this is all the defence which I have to offer. Yet a word more. Perhaps there may be some one who is offended at me, when he calls to mind how he himself on a similar, or even a less serious occasion, prayed and entreated the judges with many tears, and how he

produced his children in court, which was a moving spectacle, together with a host of relations and friends; whereas I, who am probably in danger of my life, will do none of these things. The contrast may occur to his mind, and he may be set against me, and vote in anger because he is displeased at me on this account. Now if there be such a person among you,—mind, I do not say that there is,—to him I may fairly reply: My friend, I am a man, and like other men, a creature of flesh and blood, and not 'of wood or stone,' as Homer says; and I have a family, yes, and sons, O Athenians, three in number, one almost a man, and two others who are still young; and yet I will not bring any of them hither in order to petition you for an acquittal. And why not? Not from any self-assertion or want of respect for you. Whether I am or am not afraid of death is another question, of which I will not now speak. But, having regard to public opinion, I feel that such conduct would be discreditable to myself, and to you, and to the whole state. One who has reached my years, and who has a name for wisdom, ought not to demean himself. Whether this opinion of me be deserved or not, at any rate the world has decided that Socrates is in some way superior to other men. And if those among you who are said to be superior in wisdom and courage, and any other virtue, demean themselves in this way, how shameful is their conduct! I have seen men of reputation, when they have been condemned, behaving in the strangest manner: they seemed to fancy that they were going to suffer something dreadful if they died, and that they could be immortal if you only allowed them to live; and I think that such are a dishonour to the state, and that any stranger coming in would have said of them that the most eminent men of Athens, to whom the Athenians themselves give honour and command, are no better than women. And I say that these things ought not to be done by those of us who have a reputation; and if they are done, you ought not to permit them; you ought rather

to show that you are far more disposed to condemn the man who gets up a doleful scene and makes the city ridiculous, than him who holds his peace.

But, setting aside the question of public opinion, there seems to be something wrong in asking a favour of a judge, and thus procuring an acquittal, instead of informing and convincing him. For his duty is, not to make a present of justice, but to give judgment; and he has sworn that he will judge according to the laws, and not according to his own good pleasure; and we ought not to encourage you, nor should you allow yourselves to be encouraged, in this habit of perjury—there can be no piety in that. Do not then require me to do what I consider dishonourable and impious and wrong, especially now, when I am being tried for impiety on the indictment of Meletus. For if, O men of Athens, by force of persuasion and entreaty I could overpower your oaths, then I should be teaching you to believe that there are no gods, and in defending should simply convict myself of the charge of not believing in them. But that is not so—far otherwise. For I do believe that there are gods, and in a sense higher than that in which any of my accusers believe in them. And to you and to God I commit my cause, to be determined by you as is best for you and me.

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There are many reasons why I am not grieved, O men of Athens, at the vote of condemnation. I expected it, and am only surprised that the votes are so nearly equal; for I had thought that the majority against me would have been far larger; but now, had thirty votes gone over to the other side, I should have been acquitted. And I may say, I think, that I have escaped Meletus. I may say more; for without the

assistance of Anytus and Lycon, any one may see that he would not have had a fifth part of the votes, as the law requires, in which case he would have incurred a fine of a thousand drachmae.

And so he proposes death as the penalty. And what shall I propose on my part, O men of Athens? Clearly that which is my due. And what is my due? What return shall be made to the man who has never had the wit to be idle during his whole life; but has been careless of what the many care for—wealth, and family interests, and military offices, and speaking in the assembly, and magistracies, and plots, and parties. Reflecting that I was really too honest a man to be a politician and live, I did not go where I could do no good to you or to myself; but where I could do the greatest good privately to every one of you, thither I went, and sought to persuade every man among you that he must look to himself, and seek virtue and wisdom before he looks to his private interests, and look to the state before he looks to the interests of the state; and that this should be the order which he observes in all his actions. What shall be done to such an one? Doubtless some good thing, O men of Athens, if he has his reward; and the good should be of a kind suitable to him. What would be a reward suitable to a poor man who is your benefactor, and who desires leisure that he may instruct you? There can be no reward so fitting as maintenance in the Prytaneum, O men of Athens, a reward which he deserves far more than the citizen who has won the prize at Olympia in the horse or chariot race, whether the chariots were drawn by two horses or by many. For I am in want, and he has enough; and he only gives you the appearance of happiness, and I give you the reality. And if I am to estimate the penalty fairly, I should say that maintenance in the Prytaneum is the just return.

Perhaps you think that I am braving you in what I am saying now, as in what I said before about the tears and prayers. But this is not so. I speak rather because I am convinced that I never intentionally wronged any one, although I cannot convince you—the time has been too short; if there were a law at Athens, as there is in other cities, that a capital cause should not be decided in one day, then I believe that I should have convinced you. But I cannot in a moment refute great slanders; and, as I am convinced that I never wronged another, I will assuredly not wrong myself. I will not say of myself that I deserve any evil, or propose any penalty. Why should I? because I am afraid of the penalty of death which Meletus proposes? When I do not know whether death is a good or an evil, why should I propose a penalty which would certainly be an evil? Shall I say imprisonment? And why should I live in prison, and be the slave of the magistrates of the year—of the Eleven? Or shall the penalty be a fine, and imprisonment until the fine is paid? There is the same objection. I should have to lie in prison, for money I have none, and cannot pay. And if I say exile (and this may possibly be the penalty which you will affix), I must indeed be blinded by the love of life, if I am so irrational as to expect that when you, who are my own citizens, cannot endure my discourses and words, and have found them so grievous and odious that you will have no more of them, others are likely to endure me. No indeed, men of Athens, that is not very likely. And what a life should I lead, at my age, wandering from city to city, ever changing my place of exile, and always being driven out! For I am quite sure that wherever I go, there, as here, the young men will flock to me; and if I drive them away, their elders will drive me out at their request; and if I let them come, their fathers and friends will drive me out for their sakes.

Some one will say: Yes, Socrates, but cannot you hold your tongue, and then you may go into a foreign city, and no one



will interfere with you? Now I have great difficulty in making you understand my answer to this. For if I tell you that to do as you say would be a disobedience to the God, and therefore that I cannot hold my tongue, you will not believe that I am serious; and if I say again that daily to discourse about virtue, and of those other things about which you hear me examining myself and others, is the greatest good of man, and that the unexamined life is not worth living, you are still less likely to believe me. Yet I say what is true, although a thing of which it is hard for me to persuade you. Also, I have never been accustomed to think that I deserve to suffer any harm. Had I money I might have estimated the offence at what I was able to pay, and not have been much the worse. But I have none, and therefore I must ask you to proportion the fine to my means. Well, perhaps I could afford a mina, and therefore I propose that penalty: Plato, Crito, Critobulus, and Apollodorus, my friends here, bid me say thirty minae, and they will be the sureties. Let thirty minae be the penalty; for which sum they will be ample security to you.

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Not much time will be gained, O Athenians, in return for the evil name which you will get from the detractors of the city, who will say that you killed Socrates, a wise man; for they will call me wise, even although I am not wise, when they want to reproach you. If you had waited a little while, your desire would have been fulfilled in the course of nature. For I am far advanced in years, as you may perceive, and not far from death. I am speaking now not to all of you, but only to those who have condemned me to death. And I have another thing to say to them: you think that I was convicted because I had

no words of the sort which would have procured my acquittal—I mean, if I had thought fit to leave nothing undone or unsaid. Not so; the deficiency which led to my conviction was not of words—certainly not. But I had not the boldness or impudence or inclination to address you as you would have liked me to do, weeping and wailing and lamenting, and saying and doing many things which you have been accustomed to hear from others, and which, as I maintain, are unworthy of me. I thought at the time that I ought not to do anything common or mean when in danger: nor do I now repent of the style of my defence; I would rather die having spoken after my manner, than speak in your manner and live. For neither in war nor yet at law ought I or any man to use every way of escaping death. Often in battle there can be no doubt that if a man will throw away his arms, and fall on his knees before his pursuers, he may escape death; and in other dangers there are other ways of escaping death, if a man is willing to say and do anything. The difficulty, my friends, is not to avoid death, but to avoid unrighteousness; for that runs faster than death. I am old and move slowly, and the slower runner has overtaken me, and my accusers are keen and quick, and the faster runner, who is unrighteousness, has overtaken them. And now I depart hence condemned by you to suffer the penalty of death,—they too go their ways condemned by the truth to suffer the penalty of villainy and wrong; and I must abide by my award—let them abide by theirs. I suppose that these things may be regarded as fated,—and I think that they are well.

And now, O men who have condemned me, I would fain prophesy to you; for I am about to die, and in the hour of death men are gifted with prophetic power. And I prophesy to you who are my murderers, that immediately after my departure punishment far heavier than you have inflicted on me will surely await you. Me you have killed because you wanted to escape the accuser, and not to give an account of

your lives. But that will not be as you suppose: far otherwise. For I say that there will be more accusers of you than there are now; accusers whom hitherto I have restrained: and as they are younger they will be more inconsiderate with you, and you will be more offended at them. If you think that by killing men you can prevent some one from censuring your evil lives, you are mistaken; that is not a way of escape which is either possible or honourable; the easiest and the noblest way is not to be disabling others, but to be improving yourselves. This is the prophecy which I utter before my departure to the judges who have condemned me.

Friends, who would have acquitted me, I would like also to talk with you about the thing which has come to pass, while the magistrates are busy, and before I go to the place at which I must die. Stay then a little, for we may as well talk with one another while there is time. You are my friends, and I should like to show you the meaning of this event which has happened to me. O my judges—for you I may truly call judges—I should like to tell you of a wonderful circumstance. Hitherto the divine faculty of which the internal oracle is the source has constantly been in the habit of opposing me even about trifles, if I was going to make a slip or error in any matter; and now as you see there has come upon me that which may be thought, and is generally believed to be, the last and worst evil. But the oracle made no sign of opposition, either when I was leaving my house in the morning, or when I was on my way to the court, or while I was speaking, at anything which I was going to say; and yet I have often been stopped in the middle of a speech, but now in nothing I either said or did touching the matter in hand has the oracle opposed me. What do I take to be the explanation of this silence? I will tell you. It is an intimation that what has happened to me is a good, and that those of us who think that death is an evil are in error. For the

customary sign would surely have opposed me had I been going to evil and not to good.

Let us reflect in another way, and we shall see that there is great reason to hope that death is a good; for one of two things—either death is a state of nothingness and utter unconsciousness, or, as men say, there is a change and migration of the soul from this world to another. Now if you suppose that there is no consciousness, but a sleep like the sleep of him who is undisturbed even by dreams, death will be an unspeakable gain. For if a person were to select the night in which his sleep was undisturbed even by dreams, and were to compare with this the other days and nights of his life, and then were to tell us how many days and nights he had passed in the course of his life better and more pleasantly than this one, I think that any man, I will not say a private man, but even the great king will not find many such days or nights, when compared with the others. Now if death be of such a nature, I say that to die is gain; for eternity is then only a single night. But if death is the journey to another place, and there, as men say, all the dead abide, what good, O my friends and judges, can be greater than this? If indeed when the pilgrim arrives in the world below, he is delivered from the professors of justice in this world, and finds the true judges who are said to give judgment there, Minos and Rhadamanthus and Aeacus and Triptolemus, and other sons of God who were righteous in their own life, that pilgrimage will be worth making. What would not a man give if he might converse with Orpheus and Musaeus and Hesiod and Homer? Nay, if this be true, let me die again and again. I myself, too, shall have a wonderful interest in there meeting and conversing with Palamedes, and Ajax the son of Telamon, and any other ancient hero who has suffered death through an unjust judgment; and there will be no small pleasure, as I think, in comparing my own sufferings with theirs. Above all, I shall

then be able to continue my search into true and false knowledge; as in this world, so also in the next; and I shall find out who is wise, and who pretends to be wise, and is not. What would not a man give, O judges, to be able to examine the leader of the great Trojan expedition; or Odysseus or Sisyphus, or numberless others, men and women too! What infinite delight would there be in conversing with them and asking them questions! In another world they do not put a man to death for asking questions: assuredly not. For besides being happier than we are, they will be immortal, if what is said is true.

Wherefore, O judges, be of good cheer about death, and know of a certainty, that no evil can happen to a good man, either in life or after death. He and his are not neglected by the gods; nor has my own approaching end happened by mere chance. But I see clearly that the time had arrived when it was better for me to die and be released from trouble; wherefore the oracle gave no sign. For which reason, also, I am not angry with my condemners, or with my accusers; they have done me no harm, although they did not mean to do me any good; and for this I may gently blame them.

Still I have a favour to ask of them. When my sons are grown up, I would ask you, O my friends, to punish them; and I would have you trouble them, as I have troubled you, if they seem to care about riches, or anything, more than about virtue; or if they pretend to be something when they are really nothing,—then reprove them, as I have reproved you, for not caring about that for which they ought to care, and thinking that they are something when they are really nothing. And if you do this, both I and my sons will have received justice at your hands.

The hour of departure has arrived, and we go our ways—I to die, and you to live. Which is better God only knows.



## The Apology of Socrates<sup>42</sup>

I know not, O Athenians! how far you have been influenced by my accusers for my part, in listening to them I almost forgot myself, so plausible were their arguments however, so to speak, they have said nothing true. But of the many falsehoods which they uttered I wondered at one of them especially, that in which they said that you ought to be on your guard lest you should be deceived by me, as being eloquent in speech. For that they are not ashamed of being forthwith convicted by me in fact, when I shall show that I am not by any means eloquent, this seemed to me the most shameless thing in them, unless indeed they call him eloquent who speaks the truth. For, if they mean this, then I would allow that I am an orator, but not after their fashion for they, as I affirm, have said nothing true, but from me you shall hear the whole truth. Not indeed, Athenians, arguments highly wrought, as theirs were, with choice phrases and expressions, nor adorned, but you shall hear a speech uttered without premeditation in such words as first present themselves. For I am confident that what I say will be just, and let none of you expect otherwise, for surely it would not become my time of life to come before you like a youth with a got up speech. Above all things, therefore, I beg and implore this of you, O Athenians! if you hear me defending myself in the same language as that in which I am accustomed to speak both in the forum at the counters, where many of you have heard me, and elsewhere, not to be surprised or disturbed on this account. For the case is this: I now for the first time come before a court of justice, though more than seventy years old; I am therefore utterly a stranger to the language here. As, then, if I were really a stranger, you would have pardoned me if I spoke in the

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<sup>42</sup> Çeviri: Henry Cary, 1901



language and the manner in which I had been educated, so now I ask this of you as an act of justice, as it appears to me, to disregard the manner of my speech, for perhaps it may be somewhat worse, and perhaps better, and to consider this only, and to give your attention to this, whether I speak what is just or not; for this is the virtue of a judge, but of an orator to speak the truth.

2. First, then, O Athenians! I am right in defending myself against the first false accusations alleged against me, and my first accusers, and then against the latest accusations, and the latest accusers. For many have been accusers of me to you, and for many years, who have asserted nothing true, of whom I am more afraid than of Anytus and his party, although they too are formidable; but those are still more formidable, Athenians, who, laying hold of many of you from childhood, have persuaded you, and accused me of what is not true: "that there is one Socrates, a wise man, who occupies himself about celestial matters, and has explored every thing under the earth, and makes the worse appear the better reason." Those, O Athenians! who have spread abroad this report are my formidable accusers; for they who hear them think that such as search into these things do not believe that there are gods. In the next place, these accusers are numerous, and have accused me now for a long time; moreover, they said these things to you at that time of life in which you were most credulous, when you were boys and some of you youths, and they accused me altogether in my absence, when there was no one to defend me. But the most unreasonable thing of all is, that it is not possible to learn and mention their names, except that one of them happens to be a comic poet.<sup>43</sup> Such, however, as, influenced by envy and calumny, have persuaded you, and those who, being themselves persuaded, have persuaded

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<sup>43</sup> Aristophanes

others, all these are most difficult to deal with; for it is not possible to bring any of them forward here, nor to confute any; but it is altogether necessary to fight, as it were with a shadow, in making my defense, and to convict when there is no one to answer. Consider, therefore, as I have said, that my accusers are twofold, some who have lately accused me, and others long since, whom I have made mention of; and believe that I ought to defend myself against these first; for you heard them accusing me first, and much more than these last.

Well. I must make my defense, then, O Athenians! and endeavor in this so short a space of time to remove from your minds the calumny which you have long entertained. I wish, indeed, it might be so, if it were at all better both for you and me, and that in making my defense I could effect something more advantageous still: I think, however, that it will be difficult, and I am not entirely ignorant what the difficulty is. Nevertheless, let this turn out as may be pleasing to God, I must obey the law and make my defense.

3. Let us, then, repeat from the beginning what the accusation is from which the calumny against me has arisen, and relying on which Melitus has preferred this indictment against me. Well. What, then, do they who charge me say in their charge? For it is necessary to read their deposition as of public accusers. "Socrates acts wickedly, and is criminally curious in searching into things under the earth, and in the heavens, and in making the worse appear the better cause, and in teaching these same things to others." Such is the accusation: for such things you have yourselves seen in the comedy of Aristophanes, one Socrates there carried about, saying that he walks in the air, and acting many other buffooneries, of which I understand nothing whatever. Nor do I say this as disparaging such a science, if there be any one skilled in such things, only let me not be prosecuted by Melitus on a charge of this kind;

but I say it, O Athenians! because I have nothing to do with such matters. And I call upon most of you as witnesses of this, and require you to inform and tell each other, as many of you as have ever heard me conversing; and there are many such among you. Therefore tell each other, if any one of you has ever heard me conversing little or much on such subjects. And from this you will know that other things also, which the multitude assert of me, are of a similar nature.

4. However not one of these things is true; nor, if you have heard from any one that I attempt to teach men, and require payment, is this true. Though this, indeed, appears to me to be an honorable thing, if one should be able to instruct men, like Gorgias the Leontine, Prodicus the Cean, and Hippias the Elean. For each of these, O Athenians! is able, by going through the several cities, to persuade the young men, who can attach themselves gratuitously to such of their own fellow-citizens as they please, to abandon their fellow-citizens and associate with them, giving them money and thanks besides. There is also another wise man here, a Parian, who, I hear, is staying in the city. For I happened to visit a person who spends more money on the sophists than all others together: I mean Callias, son of Hipponicus. I therefore asked him, for he has two sons, "Callias," I said, "if your two sons were colts or calves, we should have had to choose a master for them, and hire a person who would make them excel in such qualities as belong to their nature; and he would have been a groom or an agricultural laborer. But now, since your sons are men, what master do you intend to choose for them? Who is there skilled in the qualities that become a man and a citizen? For I suppose you must have considered this, since you have sons. Is there any one," I said, "or not?" "Certainly," he answered. "Who is he?" said I, "and whence does he come? and on what terms does he teach?" He replied, "Evenus the Parian, Socrates, for five minæ." And I deemed Evenus happy, if he really possesses

this art, and teaches admirably. And I too should think highly of myself, and be very proud, if I possessed this knowledge, but I possess it not, O Athenians.

5. Perhaps, one of you may now object: "But, Socrates, what have you done, then? Whence have these calumnies against you arisen? For surely if you had not busied yourself more than others, such a report and story would never have got abroad, unless you had done something different from what most men do. Tell us, therefore, what it is, that we may not pass a hasty judgment on you." He who speaks thus appears to me to speak justly, and I will endeavor to show you what it is that has occasioned me this character and imputation. Listen, then: to some of you perhaps I shall appear to jest, yet be assured that I shall tell you the whole truth. For I, O Athenians! have acquired this character through nothing else than a certain wisdom. Of what kind, then, is this wisdom? Perhaps it is merely human wisdom. For in this, in truth, I appear to be wise. They probably, whom I have just now mentioned, possessed a wisdom more than human, otherwise I know not what to say about it; for I am not acquainted with it, and whosoever says I am, speaks falsely, and for the purpose of calumniating me. But, O Athenians! do not cry out against me, even though I should seem to you to speak somewhat arrogantly. For the account which I am going to give you is not my own; but I shall refer to an authority whom you will deem worthy of credit. For I shall adduce to you the god at Delphi as a witness of my wisdom, if I have any, and of what it is. You doubtless know Chærepho: he was my associate from youth, and the associate of most of you; he accompanied you in your late exile, and returned with you. You know, then, what kind of a man Chærepho was, how earnest in whatever he undertook. Having once gone to Delphi, he ventured to make the following inquiry of the oracle (and, as I said, O Athenians! do not cry out), for he asked if there was any one wiser than I. The

Pythian thereupon answered that there was not one wiser; and of this, his brother here will give you proofs, since he himself is dead.

6. Consider, then, why I mention these things: it is because I am going to show you whence the calumny against me arose. For when I heard this, I reasoned thus with myself, What does the god mean? What enigma is this? For I am not conscious to myself that I am wise, either much or little. What, then, does he mean by saying that I am the wisest? For assuredly he does not speak falsely: that he could not do. And for a long time I was in doubt what he meant; afterward, with considerable difficulty, I had recourse to the following method of searching out his meaning. I went to one of those who have the character of being wise, thinking that there, if anywhere, I should confute the oracle, and show in answer to the response that This man is wiser than I, though you affirmed that I was the wisest. Having, then, examined this man (for there is no occasion to mention his name; he was, however, one of our great politicians, in examining whom I felt as I proceed to describe, O Athenians!), having fallen into conversation with him, this man appeared to be wise in the opinion of most other men, and especially in his own opinion, though in fact he was not so. I thereupon endeavored to show him that he fancied himself to be wise, but really was not. Hence I became odious, both to him and to many others who were present. When I left him, I reasoned thus with myself: I am wiser than this man, for neither of us appears to know anything great and good; but he fancies he knows something, although he knows nothing; whereas I, as I do not know anything, so I do not fancy I do. In this trifling particular, then, I appear to be wiser than he, because I do not fancy I know what I do not know. After that I went to another who was thought to be wiser than the former, and formed the very same opinion. Hence I became odious to him and to many others.

7. After this I went to others in turn, perceiving indeed, and grieving and alarmed, that I was making myself odious; however, it appeared necessary to regard the oracle of the god as of the greatest moment, and that, in order to discover its meaning, I must go to all who had the reputation of possessing any knowledge. And by the dog, O Athenians! for I must tell you the truth, I came to some such conclusion as this: those who bore the highest reputation appeared to me to be most deficient, in my researches in obedience to the god, and others who were considered inferior more nearly approaching to the possession of understanding. But I must relate to you my wandering, and the labors which I underwent, in order that the oracle might prove incontrovertible. For after the politicians I went to the poets, as well the tragic as the dithyrambic and others, expecting that here I should in very fact find myself more ignorant than they. Taking up, therefore, some of their poems, which appeared to me most elaborately finished, I questioned them as to their meaning, that at the same time I might learn something from them. I am ashamed, O Athenians! to tell you the truth; however, it must be told. For, in a word, almost all who were present could have given a better account of them than those by whom they had been composed. I soon discovered this, therefore, with regard to the poets, that they do not effect their object by wisdom, but by a certain natural inspiration, and under the influence of enthusiasm, like prophets and seers; for these also say many fine things, but they understand nothing that they say. The poets appeared to me to be affected in a similar manner; and at the same time I perceived that they considered themselves, on account of their poetry, to be the wisest of men in other things, in which they were not. I left them, therefore, under the persuasion that I was superior to them, in the same way that I was to the politicians.



8. At last, therefore, I went to the artisans. For I was conscious to myself that I knew scarcely anything, but I was sure that I should find them possessed of much beautiful knowledge. And in this I was not deceived; for they knew things which I did not, and in this respect they were wiser than I. But, O Athenians! even the best workmen appeared to me to have fallen into the same error as the poets; for each, because he excelled in the practice of his art, thought that he was very wise in other most important matters, and this mistake of theirs obscured the wisdom that they really possessed. I therefore asked myself, in behalf of the oracle, whether I should prefer to continue as I am, possessing none, either of their wisdom or their ignorance, or to have both as they have. I answered, therefore, to myself and to the oracle, that it was better for me to continue as I am.

9. From this investigation, then, O Athenians! many enmities have arisen against me, and those the most grievous and severe, so that many calumnies have sprung from them, and among them this appellation of being wise; for those who are from time to time present think that I am wise in those things, with respect to which I expose the ignorance of others. The god, however, O Athenians! appears to be really wise, and to mean this by his oracle: that human wisdom is worth little or nothing; and it is clear that he did not say this to Socrates, but made use of my name, putting me forward as an example, as if he had said, that man is the wisest among you, who, like Socrates, knows that he is in reality worth nothing with respect to wisdom. Still, therefore, I go about and search and inquire into these things, in obedience to the god, both among citizens and strangers, if I think any one of them is wise; and when he appears to me not to be so, I take the part of the god, and show that he is not wise. And, in consequence of this occupation, I have no leisure to attend in any considerable degree to the affairs of the state or my own; but I am in the



greatest poverty through my devotion to the service of the god.

10. In addition to this, young men, who have much leisure and belong to the wealthiest families, following me of their own accord, take great delight in hearing men put to the test, and often imitate me, and themselves attempt to put others to the test; and then, I think, they find a great abundance of men who fancy they know something, although they know little or nothing. Hence those who are put to the test by them are angry with me, and not with them, and say that "there is one Socrates, a most pestilent fellow, who corrupts the youth." And when any one asks them by doing or teaching what, they have nothing to say, for they do not know; but, that they may not seem to be at a loss, they say such things as are ready at hand against all philosophers; "that he searches into things in heaven and things under the earth, that he does not believe there are gods, and that he makes the worse appear the better reason." For they would not, I think, be willing to tell the truth that they have been detected in pretending to possess knowledge, whereas they know nothing. Therefore, I think, being ambitious and vehement and numerous, and speaking systematically and persuasively about me, they have filled your ears, for a long time and diligently calumniating me. From among these, Melitus, Anytus and Lycon have attacked me; Melitus being angry on account of the poets, Anytus on account of the artisans and politicians, and Lycon on account of the rhetoricians. So that, as I said in the beginning, I should wonder if I were able in so short a time to remove from your minds a calumny that has prevailed so long. This, O Athenians! is the truth; and I speak it without concealing or disguising anything from you, much or little; though I very well know that by so doing I shall expose myself to odium. This, however, is a proof that I speak the truth, and that this is the nature of the calumny against me, and that these are its causes. And if you

will investigate the matter, either now or hereafter, you will find it to be so.

11. With respect, then, to the charges which my first accusers have alleged against me, let this be a sufficient apology to you. To Melitus, that good and patriotic man, as he says, and to my later accusers, I will next endeavor to give an answer; and here, again, as there are different accusers, let us take up their deposition. It is pretty much as follows: "Socrates," it says, "acts unjustly in corrupting the youth, and in not believing in those gods in whom the city believes, but in other strange divinities." Such is the accusation; let us examine each particular of it. It says that I act unjustly in corrupting the youth. But I, O Athenians! say that Melitus acts unjustly, because he jests on serious subjects, rashly putting men upon trial, under pretense of being zealous and solicitous about things in which he never at any time took any concern. But that this is the case I will endeavor to prove to you.

12. Come, then, Melitus, tell me, do you not consider it of the greatest importance that the youth should be made as virtuous as possible?

*Mel.* I do.

*Socr.* Well, now, tell the judges who it is that makes them better, for it is evident that you know, since it concerns you so much; for, having detected me in corrupting them, as you say, you have cited me here, and accused me: come, then, say, and inform the judges who it is that makes them better. Do you see, Melitus, that you are silent, and have nothing to say? But does it not appear to you to be disgraceful, and a sufficient proof of what I say, that you never took any concern about the matter? But tell me, friend, who makes them better?

*Mel.* The laws.

*Socr.* I do not ask this, most excellent sir, but what man, who surely must first know this very thing, the laws?

*Mel.* These, Socrates, the judges.

*Socr.* How say you, Melitus? Are these able to instruct the youth, and make them better?

*Mel.* Certainly.

*Socr.* Whether all, or some of them, and others not?

*Mel.* All.

*Socr.* You say well, by Juno! and have found a great abundance of those that confer benefit. But what further? Can these hearers make them better, or not?

*Mel.* They, too, can.

*Socr.* And what of the senators?

*Mel.* The senators, also.

*Socr.* But, Melitus, do those who attend the public assemblies corrupt the younger men? or do they all make them better?

*Mel.* They too.

*Socr.* All the Athenians, therefore, as it seems, make them honorable and good, except me; but I alone corrupt them. Do you say so?

*Mel.* I do assert this very thing.

*Socr.* You charge me with great ill-fortune. But answer me: does it appear to you to be the same, with respect to horses? Do all men make them better, and is there only some one that spoils them? or does quite the contrary of this take place? Is there some one person who can make them better, or very few; that is, the trainers? But if the generality of men should meddle with and make use of horses, do they spoil them? Is

not this the case, Melitus, both with respect to horses and all other animals? It certainly is so, whether you and Anytus deny it or not. For it would be a great good-fortune for the youth if only one person corrupted, and the rest benefited them. However, Melitus, you have sufficiently shown that you never bestowed any care upon youth; and you clearly evince your own negligence, in that you have never paid any attention to the things with respect to which you accuse me.

13. Tell us further, Melitus, in the name of Jupiter, whether is it better to dwell with good or bad citizens? Answer, my friend; for I ask you nothing difficult. Do not the bad work some evil to those that are continually near them, but the good some good?

*Mel.* Certainly.

*Socr.* Is there any one that wishes to be injured rather than benefited by his associates? Answer, good man; for the law requires you to answer. Is there any one who wishes to be injured?

*Mel.* No, surely.

*Socr.* Come, then, whether do you accuse me here, as one that corrupts the youth, and makes them more depraved, designedly or undesignedly?

*Mel.* Designedly, I say.

*Socr.* What, then, Melitus, are you at your time of life so much wiser than I at my time of life, as to know that the evil are always working some evil to those that are most near to them, and the good some good; but I have arrived at such a pitch of ignorance as not to know that if I make any one of my associates depraved, I shall be in danger of receiving some evil from him; and yet I designedly bring about this so great evil, as you say? In this I can not believe you, Melitus, nor do I

think would any other man in the world. But either I do not corrupt the youth, or, if I do corrupt them, I do it undesignedly: so that in both cases you speak falsely. But if I corrupt them undesignedly, for such involuntary offenses it is not usual to accuse one here, but to take one apart, and teach and admonish one. For it is evident that if I am taught, I shall cease doing what I do undesignedly. But you shunned me, and were not willing to associate with and instruct me; but you accuse me here, where it is usual to accuse those who need punishment, and not instruction.

14. Thus, then, O Athenians! this now is clear that I have said; that Melitus never paid any attention to these matters, much or little. However, tell us, Melitus, how you say I corrupt the youth? Is it not evidently, according to the indictment which you have preferred, by teaching them not to believe in the gods in whom the city believes, but in other strange deities? Do you not say that, by teaching these things, I corrupt the youth?

*Mel.* Certainly I do say so.

*Socr.* By those very gods, therefore, Melitus, of whom the discussion now is, speak still more clearly both to me and to these men. For I can not understand whether you say that I teach them to believe that there are certain gods (and in that case I do believe that there are gods, and am not altogether an atheist, nor in this respect to blame), not, however, those which the city believes in, but others; and this it is that you accuse me of, that I introduce others. Or do you say outright that I do not myself believe that there are gods, and that I teach others the same?

*Mel.* I say this: that you do not believe in any gods at all.

*Socr.* O wonderful Melitus, how come you to say this? Do I not, then, like the rest of mankind, believe that the sun and moon are gods?

*Mel.* No, by Jupiter, O judges! for he says that the sun is a stone, and the moon an earth.

*Socr.* You fancy that you are accusing Anaxagoras, my dear Melitus, and thus you put a slight on these men, and suppose them to be so illiterate as not to know that the books of Anaxagoras of Clazomene are full of such assertions. And the young, moreover, learn these things from me, which they might purchase for a drachma, at most, in the orchestra, and so ridicule Socrates, if he pretended they were his own, especially since they are so absurd? I ask then, by Jupiter, do I appear to you to believe that there is no god?

*Mel.* No, by Jupiter, none whatever.

*Socr.* You say what is incredible, Melitus, and that, as appears to me, even to yourself. For this man, O Athenians! appears to me to be very insolent and intemperate and to have preferred this indictment through downright insolence, intemperance, and wantonness. For he seems, as it were, to have composed an enigma for the purpose of making an experiment. Whether will Socrates the wise know that I am jesting, and contradict myself, or shall I deceive him and all who hear me? For, in my opinion, he clearly contradicts himself in the indictment, as if he should say, Socrates is guilty of wrong in not believing that there are gods, and in believing that there are gods. And this, surely, is the act of one who is trifling.

15. Consider with me now, Athenians, in what respect he appears to me to say so. And do you, Melitus, answer me; and do ye, as I besought you at the outset, remember not to make an uproar if I speak after my usual manner.

Is there any man, Melitus, who believes that there are human affairs, but does not believe that there are men? Let him answer, judges, and not make so much noise. Is there any one who does not believe that there are horses, but that there are things pertaining to horses? or who does not believe that there are pipers, but that there are things pertaining to pipes? There is not, O best of men! for since you are not willing to answer, I say it to you and to all here present. But answer to this at least: is there any one who believes that there are things relating to demons, but does not believe that there are demons?

*Mel.* There is not.

*Socr.* How obliging you are in having hardly answered; though compelled by these judges! You assert, then, that I do believe and teach things relating to demons, whether they be new or old; therefore, according to your admission, I do believe in things relating to demons, and this you have sworn in the bill of indictment. If, then, I believe in things relating to demons, there is surely an absolute necessity that I should believe that there are demons. Is it not so? It is. For I suppose you to assent, since you do not answer. But with respect to demons, do we not allow that they are gods, or the children of gods? Do you admit this or not?

*Mel.* Certainly.

*Socr.* Since, then, I allow that there are demons, as you admit, if demons are a kind of gods, this is the point in which I say you speak enigmatically and divert yourself in saying that I do not allow there are gods, and again that I do allow there are, since I allow that there are demons? But if demons are the children of gods, spurious ones, either from nymphs or any others, of whom they are reported to be, what man can think that there are sons of gods, and yet that there are not gods?



For it would be just as absurd as if any one should think that there are mules, the offspring of horses and asses, but should not think there are horses and asses. However, Melitus, it can not be otherwise than that you have preferred this indictment for the purpose of trying me, or because you were at a loss what real crime to allege against me; for that you should persuade any man who has the smallest degree of sense that the same person can think that there are things relating to demons and to gods, and yet that there are neither demons, nor gods, not heroes, is utterly impossible.

16. That I am not guilty, then, O Athenians! according to the indictment of Melitus, appears to me not to require a lengthened defense; but what I have said is sufficient. And as to what I said at the beginning, that there is a great enmity toward me among the multitude, be assured it is true. And this it is which will condemn me, if I am condemned, not Melitus, nor Anytus, but the calumny and envy of the multitude, which have already condemned many others, and those good men, and will, I think, condemn others also; for there is no danger that it will stop with me.

Perhaps, however, some one may say, "Are you not ashamed, Socrates, to have pursued a study from which you are now in danger of dying?" To such a person I should answer with good reason, You do not say well, friend, if you think that a man, who is even of the least value, ought to take into the account the risk of life or death, and ought not to consider that alone when he performs any action, whether he is acting justly or unjustly, and the part of a good man or bad man. For, according to your reasoning, all those demi-gods that died at Troy would be vile characters, as well all the rest as the son of Thetis, who so far despised danger in comparison of submitting to disgrace, that when his mother, who was a goddess, spoke to him, in his impatience to kill Hector, something to this

effect, as I think,<sup>44</sup> "My son, if you revenge the death of your friend Patroclus, and slay Hector, you will yourself die, for," she said, "death awaits you immediately after Hector;" but he, on hearing this, despised death and danger, and dreading much more to live as a coward, and not avenge his friend, said, "May I die immediately when I have inflicted punishment on the guilty, that I may not stay here an object of ridicule, by the curved ships, a burden to the ground?"—do you think that he cared for death and danger? For thus it is, O Athenians! in truth: wherever any one has posted himself, either thinking it to be better, or has been posted by his chief, there, as it appears to me, he ought to remain and meet danger, taking no account either of death or anything else in comparison with disgrace.

17. I then should be acting strangely, O Athenians! if, when the generals whom you chose to command me assigned me my post at Potidæa, at Amphipolis, and at Delium, I then remained where they posted me, like any other person, and encountered the danger of death; but when the deity, as I thought and believed, assigned it as my duty to pass my life in the study of philosophy, and examining myself and others, I should on that occasion, through fear of death or any thing else whatsoever, desert my post, strange indeed would it be; and then, in truth, any one might justly bring me to trial, and accuse me of not believing in the gods, from disobeying the oracle, fearing death, and thinking myself to be wise when I am not. For to fear death, O Athenians! is nothing else than to appear to be wise, without being so; for it is to appear to know what one does not know. For no one knows but that death is the greatest of all good to man; but men fear it, as if they well knew that it is the greatest of evils. And how is not this the most reprehensible ignorance, to think that one knows what

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<sup>44</sup> "Iliad," lib. xviii. ver. 94, etc.

one does not know? But I, O Athenians! in this, perhaps, differ from most men; and if I should say that I am in any thing wiser than another, it would be in this, that not having a competent knowledge of the things in Hades, I also think that I have not such knowledge. But to act unjustly, and to disobey my superior, whether God or man, I know is evil and base. I shall never, therefore, fear or shun things which, for aught I know, maybe good, before evils which I know to be evils. So that, even if you should now dismiss me, not yielding to the instances of Anytus, who said that either I should not<sup>45</sup> appear here at all, or that, if I did appear, it was impossible not to put me to death, telling you that if I escaped, your sons, studying what Socrates teaches, would all be utterly corrupted; if you should address me thus, "Socrates, we shall not now yield to Anytus, but dismiss you, on this condition, however, that you no longer persevere in your researches nor study philosophy; and if hereafter you are detected in so doing, you shall die"—if, as I said, you should dismiss, me on these terms, I should say to you, "O Athenians! I honor and love you; but I shall obey God rather than you; and so long as I breathe and am able, I shall not cease studying philosophy, and exhorting you and warning any one of you I may happen to meet, saying, as I have been accustomed to do: 'O best of men! seeing you are an Athenian, of a city the most powerful and most renowned for wisdom and strength, are you not ashamed of being careful for riches, how you may acquire them in greatest abundance, and for glory, and honor, but care not nor take any thought for wisdom and truth, and for your soul, how it maybe made most perfect?'" And if any one of you should question my assertion, and affirm that he does care for these things, I shall not at once let him go, nor depart, but I shall question him, sift and prove him. And if he should appear to me not to possess virtue, but to pretend that he does, I shall reproach him for

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<sup>45</sup> See the "Crito," sec. 5.

that he sets the least value on things of the greatest worth, but the highest on things that are worthless. Thus I shall act to all whom I meet, both young and old, stranger and citizen, but rather to you, my fellow-citizens, because ye are more nearly allied to me. For be well assured, this the deity commands. And I think that no greater good has ever befallen you in the city than my zeal for the service of the god. For I go about doing nothing else than persuading you, both young and old, to take no care either for the body, or for riches, prior to or so much as for the soul, how it may be made most perfect, telling you that virtue does not spring from riches, but riches and all other human blessings, both private and public, from virtue. If, then, by saying these things, I corrupt the youth, these things must be mischievous; but if any one says that I speak other things than these, he misleads you.<sup>46</sup> Therefore I must say, O Athenians! either yield to Anytus, or do not, either dismiss me or not, since I shall not act otherwise, even though I must die many deaths.

18. Murmur not, O Athenians! but continue to attend to my request, not to murmur at what I say, but to listen, for, as I think, you will derive benefit from listening. For I am going to say other things to you, at which, perhaps, you will raise a clamor; but on no account do so. Be well assured, then, if you put me to death, being such a man as I say I am, you will not injure me more than yourselves. For neither will Melitus nor Anytus harm me; nor have they the power; for I do not think that it is possible for a better man to be injured by a worse. He may perhaps have me condemned to death, or banished, or deprived of civil rights; and he or others may perhaps consider these as mighty evils; I, however, do not consider them so, but that it is much more so to do what he is now doing, to endeavor to put a man to death unjustly. Now, therefore, O

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<sup>46</sup> Ουδεν λεγει, literally, "he says nothing:" on se trompe, ou l'on vous impose, Cousin.

Athenians! I am far from making a defense on my behalf, as any one might think, but I do so on your own behalf, lest by condemning me you should offend at all with respect to the gift of the deity to you. For, if you should put me to death, you will not easily find such another, though it may be ridiculous to say so, altogether attached by the deity to this city as to a powerful and generous horse, somewhat sluggish from his size, and requiring to be roused by a gad-fly; so the deity appears to have united me, being such a person as I am, to the city, that I may rouse you, and persuade and reprove every one of you, nor ever cease besetting you throughout the whole day. Such another man, O Athenians! will not easily be found; therefore, if you will take my advice, you will spare me. But you, perhaps, being irritated like drowsy persons who are roused from sleep, will strike me, and, yielding to Anytus, will unthinkingly condemn me to death; and then you will pass the rest of your life in sleep, unless the deity, caring for you, should send some one else to you. But that I am a person who has been given by the deity to this city, you may discern from hence; for it is not like the ordinary conduct of men, that I should have neglected all my own affairs, and suffered my private interest to be neglected for so many years, and that I should constantly attend to your concerns, addressing myself to each of you separately, like a father, or elder brother, persuading you to the pursuit of virtue. And if I had derived any profit from this course, and had received pay for my exhortations, there would have been some reason for my conduct; but now you see yourselves that my accusers, who have so shamelessly calumniated me in everything else, have not had the impudence to charge me with this, and to bring witnesses to prove that I ever either exacted or demanded any reward. And I think I produce a sufficient proof that I speak the truth, namely, my poverty.

19. Perhaps, however, it may appear absurd that I, going about, thus advise you in private and make myself busy, but never venture to present myself in public before your assemblies and give advice to the city. The cause of this is that which you have often and in many places heard me mention; because I am moved by a certain divine and spiritual influence, which also Melitus, through mockery, has set out in the indictment. This began with me from childhood, being a kind of voice which, when present, always diverts me from what I am about to do, but never urges me on. This it is which opposed my meddling in public politics; and it appears to me to have opposed me very properly. For be well assured, O Athenians! if I had long since attempted to intermeddle with politics, I should have perished long ago, and should not have at all benefited you or myself. And be not angry with me for speaking the truth. For it is not possible that any man should be safe who sincerely opposes either you, or any other multitude, and who prevents many unjust and illegal actions from being committed in a city; but it is necessary that he who in earnest contends for justice, if he will be safe for but a short time, should live privately, and take no part in public affairs.

20. I will give you strong proofs of this, not words, but what you value, facts. Hear, then, what has happened to me, that you may know that I would not yield to any one contrary to what is just, through fear of death, at the same time by not yielding I must perish. I shall tell you what will be displeasing and wearisome,<sup>47</sup> yet true. For I, O Athenians! never bore any other magisterial office in the city, but have been a senator: and our Antiochean tribe happened to supply the Prytanes when you chose to condemn in a body the ten generals who had not taken off those that perished in the sea-fight, in violation of the law, as you afterward all thought. At that time I

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<sup>47</sup> But for the authority of Stallbaum, I should have translated δίκαιικα "forensic;" that is, such arguments as an advocate would use in a court of justice.



alone of the Prytanes opposed your doing anything contrary to the laws, and I voted against you; and when the orators were ready to denounce me, and to carry me before a magistrate, and you urged and cheered them on, I thought I ought rather to meet the danger with law and justice on my side, than through fear of imprisonment or death, to take part with you in your unjust designs. And this happened while the city was governed by a democracy. But when it became an oligarchy, the Thirty, having sent for me with four others to the Tholus, ordered us to bring Leon the Salaminian from Salamis, that he might be put to death; and they gave many similar orders to many others, wishing to involve as many as they could in guilt. Then, however, I showed, not in word but in deed, that I did not care for death, if the expression be not too rude, in the smallest degree; but that all my care was to do nothing unjust or unholy. For that government, strong as it was, did not so overawe me as to make me commit an unjust action; but when we came out from the Tholus, the four went to Salamis, and brought back Leon; but I went away home. And perhaps for this I should have been put to death, if that government had not been speedily broken up. And of this you can have many witnesses.

21. Do you think, then, that I should have survived so many years if I had engaged in public affairs, and, acting as becomes a good man, had aided the cause of justice, and, as I ought, had deemed this of the highest importance? Far from it, O Athenians! nor would any other man have done so. But I, through the whole of my life, if I have done anything in public, shall be found to be a man, and the very same in private, who has never made a concession to any one contrary to justice, neither to any other, nor to any one of these whom my calumniators say are my disciples. I, however, was never the preceptor of any one; but if any one desired to hear me speaking, and to see me busied about my own mission,



whether he were young or old, I never refused him. Nor do I discourse when I receive money, and not when I do not receive any, but I allow both rich and poor alike to question me, and, if any one wishes it, to answer me and hear what I have to say. And for these, whether any one proves to be a good man or not, I cannot justly be responsible, because I never either promised them any instruction or taught them at all. But if any one says that he has ever learned or heard anything from me in private which all others have not, be well assured that he does not speak the truth.

22. But why do some delight to spend so long a time with me? Ye have heard, O Athenians! I have told you the whole truth, that they delight to hear those closely questioned who think that they are wise but are not; for this is by no means disagreeable. But this duty, as I say, has been enjoined me by the deity, by oracles, by dreams, and by every mode by which any other divine decree has ever enjoined anything to man to do. These things, O Athenians! are both true, and easily confuted if not true. For if I am now corrupting some of the youths, and have already corrupted others, it were fitting, surely, that if any of them, having become advanced in life, had discovered that I gave them bad advice when they were young, they should now rise up against me, accuse me, and have me punished; or if they were themselves unwilling to do this, some of their kindred, their fathers, or brothers, or other relatives, if their kinsman have ever sustained any damage from me, should now call it to mind. Many of them, however, are here present, whom I see: first, Crito, my contemporary and fellow-burgher, father of this Critobulus; then Lysanias of Sphettus, father of this Æschines; again, Antiphon of Cephissus, father of Epigenes. There are those others, too, whose brothers maintained the same intimacy with me, namely, Nicostratus, son of Theodotus, brother of Theodotus—Theodotus indeed is dead, so that he could not deprecate his

brother's proceedings—and Paralus here, son of Demodocus, whose brother was Theages; and Adimantus, son of Ariston, whose brother is this Plato; and Æantodorus, whose brother is this Apollodorus. I could also mention many others to you, some one of whom certainly Melitus ought to have adduced in his speech as a witness. If, however, he then forgot to do so, let him now adduce them; I give him leave to do so, and let him say it, if he has anything of the kind to allege. But, quite contrary to this, you will find, O Athenians! all ready to assist me, who have corrupted and injured their relatives, as Melitus and Anytus say. For those who have been themselves corrupted might perhaps have some reason for assisting me; but those who have not been corrupted, men now advanced in life, their relatives, what other reason can they have for assisting me, except that right and just one, that they know that Melitus speaks falsely, and that I speak the truth.

23. Well, then, Athenians, these are pretty much the things I have to say in my defense, and others perhaps of the same kind. Perhaps, however, some among you will be indignant on recollecting his own case, if he, when engaged in a cause far less than this, implored and besought the judges with many tears, bringing forward his children in order that he might excite their utmost compassion, and many others of his relatives and friends, whereas I do none of these things, although I may appear to be incurring the extremity of danger. Perhaps, therefore, some one, taking notice of this, may become more determined against me, and, being enraged at this very conduct of mine, may give his vote under the influence of anger. If, then, any one of you is thus affected—I do not, however, suppose that there is—but if there should be, I think I may reasonably say to him: "I, too, O best of men, have relatives; for, to make use of that saying of Homer, I am not sprung from an oak, nor from a rock, but from men, so that I, too, O Athenians! have relatives, and three sons, one

now grown up, and two boys: I shall not, however, bring any one of them forward and implore you to acquit me." Why, then, shall I not do this? Not from contumacy, O Athenians! nor disrespect toward you. Whether or not I am undaunted at the prospect of death is another question; but, out of regard to my own character, and yours, and that of the whole city, it does not appear to me to be honorable that I should do any thing of this kind at my age, and with the reputation I have, whether true or false. For it is commonly agreed that Socrates in some respects excels the generality of men. If, then, those among you who appear to excel either in wisdom, or fortitude, or any other virtue whatsoever, should act in such a manner as I have often seen some when they have been brought to trial, it would be shameful, who appearing indeed to be something, have conducted themselves in a surprising manner, as thinking they should suffer something dreadful by dying, and as if they would be immortal if you did not put them to death. Such men appear to me to bring disgrace on the city, so that any stranger might suppose that such of the Athenians as excel in virtue, and whom they themselves choose in preference to themselves for magistracies and other honors, are in no respect superior to women. For these things, O Athenians! neither ought we to do who have attained to any height of reputation, nor, should we do them, ought you to suffer us; but you should make this manifest, that you will much rather condemn him who introduces these piteous dramas, and makes the city ridiculous, than him who quietly awaits your decision.

24. But, reputation apart, O Athenians! it does not appear to me to be right to entreat a judge, or to escape by entreaty; but one ought to inform and persuade him. For a judge does not sit for the purpose of administering justice out of favor, but that he may judge rightly, and he is sworn not to show favor to whom he pleases, but that he will decide according to the laws.

It is, therefore, right that neither should we accustom you, nor should you accustom yourselves, to violate your oaths; for in so doing neither of us would act righteously. Think not then, O Athenians! that I ought to adopt such a course toward you as I neither consider honorable, nor just, nor holy, as well, by Jupiter! on any other occasion, and now especially when I am accused of impiety by this Melitus. For clearly, if I should persuade you, and by my entreaties should put a constraint on you who are bound by an oath, I should teach you to think that there are no gods, and in reality, while making my defense, should accuse myself of not believing in the gods. This, however, is far from being the case; for I believe, O Athenians! as none of my accusers do, and I leave it to you and to the deity to judge concerning me in such way as will be best both for me and for you.

[Socrates here concludes his defense, and, the votes being taken, he is declared guilty by a majority of voices. He thereupon resumes his address.]

25. That I should not be grieved, O Athenians! at what has happened—namely, that you have condemned me—as well many other circumstances concur in bringing to pass; and, moreover this, that what has happened has not happened contrary to my expectation; but I much rather wonder at the number of votes on either side. For I did not expect that I should be condemned by so small a number, but by a large majority; but now, as it seems, if only three more votes had changed sides, I should have been acquitted. So far as Melitus is concerned, as it appears to me, I have been already acquitted; and not only have I been acquitted, but it is clear to every one that had not Anytus and Lycon come forward to accuse me, he would have been fined a thousand drachmas, for not having obtained a fifth part of the votes.

26. The man, then, awards me the penalty of death. Well. But what shall I, on my part, O Athenians! award myself? Is it not clear that it will be such as I deserve? What, then, is that? Do I deserve to suffer, or to pay a fine? for that I have purposely during my life not remained quiet, but neglecting what most men seek after, money-making, domestic concerns, military command, popular oratory, and, moreover, all the magistracies, conspiracies, and cabals that are met with in the city, thinking that I was in reality too upright a man to be safe if I took part in such things, I therefore did not apply myself to those pursuits, by attending to which I should have been of no service either to you or to myself; but in order to confer the greatest benefit on each of you privately, as I affirm, I thereupon applied myself to that object, endeavoring to persuade every one of you not to take any care of his own affairs before he had taken care of himself in what way he may become the best and wisest, nor of the affairs of the city before he took care of the city itself; and that he should attend to other things in the same manner. What treatment, then, do I deserve, seeing I am such a man? Some reward, O Athenians! if, at least, I am to be estimated according to my real deserts; and, moreover, such a reward as would be suitable to me. What, then, is suitable to a poor man, a benefactor, and who has need of leisure in order to give you good advice? There is nothing so suitable, O Athenians! as that such a man should be maintained in the Prytaneum, and this much more than if one of you had been victorious at the Olympic games in a horserace, or in the two or four horsed chariot race: for such a one makes you appear to be happy, but I, to be so; and he does not need support, but I do. If, therefore, I must award a sentence according to my just deserts, I award this, maintenance in the Prytaneum.

27. Perhaps, however, in speaking to you thus, I appear to you to speak in the same presumptuous manner as I did respecting

commiseration and entreaties; but such is not the case, O Athenians! it is rather this: I am persuaded that I never designedly injured any man, though I can not persuade you of this, for we have conversed with each other but for a short time. For if there were the same law with you as with other men, that in capital cases the trial should last not only one day, but many, I think you would be persuaded; but it is not easy in a short time to do away with, great calumnies. Being persuaded, then, that I have injured no one, I am far from intending to injure myself, and of pronouncing against myself that I am deserving of punishment, and from awarding myself any thing of the kind. Through fear of what? lest I should suffer that which Melitus awards me, of which I say I know not whether it be good or evil? Instead of this, shall I choose what I well know to be evil, and award that? Shall I choose imprisonment? And why should I live in prison, a slave to the established magistracy, the Eleven? Shall I choose a fine, and to be imprisoned until I have paid it? But this is the same as that which I just now mentioned, for I have not money to pay it. Shall I, then, award myself exile? For perhaps you would consent to this award. I should indeed be very fond of life, O Athenians! if I were so devoid of reason as not to be able to reflect that you, who are my fellow-citizens, have been unable to endure my manner of life and discourses, but they have become so burdensome and odious to you that you now seek to be rid of them: others, however, will easily bear them. Far from it, O Athenians! A fine life it would be for me at my age to go out wandering, and driven from city to city, and so to live. For I well know that, wherever I may go, the youth will listen to me when I speak, as they do here. And if I repulse them, they will themselves drive me out, persuading the elders; and if I do not repulse them, their fathers and kindred will banish me on their account.



28. Perhaps, however, some one will say, Can you not, Socrates, when you have gone from us, live a silent and quiet life? This is the most difficult thing of all to persuade some of you. For if I say that that would be to disobey the deity, and that, therefore, it is impossible for me to live quietly, you would not believe me, thinking I spoke ironically. If, on the other hand, I say that this is the greatest good to man, to discourse daily on virtue, and other things which you have heard me discussing, examining both myself and others, but that a life without investigation is not worth living for, still less would you believe me if I said this. Such, however, is the case, as I affirm, O Athenians! though it is not easy to persuade you. And at the same time I am not accustomed to think myself deserving of any ill. If, indeed, I were rich, I would amerce myself in such a sum as I should be able to pay; for then I should have suffered no harm, but now—for I can not, unless you are willing to amerce me in such a sum as I am able to pay. But perhaps I could pay you a mina of silver: in that sum, then, I amerce myself. But Plato here, O Athenians! and Crito Critobulus, and Apollodorus bid me amerce myself in thirty minæ, and they offer to be sureties. I amerce myself, then, to you in that sum; and they will be sufficient sureties for the money.

[The judges now proceeded to pass the sentence, and condemned Socrates to death; whereupon he continued:]

29. For the sake of no long space of time, O Athenians! you will incur the character and reproach at the hands of those who wish to defame the city, of having put that wise man, Socrates, to death. For those who wish to defame you will assert that I am wise, though I am not. If, then, you had waited for a short time, this would have happened of its own accord; for observe my age, that it is far advanced in life, and near death. But I say this not to you all, but to those only who have condemned



me to die. And I say this, too, to the same persons. Perhaps you think, O Athenians! that I have been convicted through the want of arguments, by which I might have persuaded you, had I thought it right to do and say any thing, so that I might escape punishment. Far otherwise: I have been convicted through want indeed, yet not of arguments, but of audacity and impudence, and of the inclination to say such things to you as would have been most agreeable for you to hear, had I lamented and bewailed and done and said many other things unworthy of me, as I affirm, but such as you are accustomed to hear from others. But neither did I then think that I ought, for the sake of avoiding danger, to do any thing unworthy of a freeman, nor do I now repent of having so defended myself; but I should much rather choose to die, having so defended myself, than to live in that way. For neither in a trial nor in battle is it right that I or any one else should employ every possible means whereby he may avoid death; for in battle it is frequently evident that a man might escape death by laying down his arms, and throwing himself on the mercy of his pursuers. And there are many other devices in every danger, by which to avoid death, if a man dares to do and say every thing. But this is not difficult, O Athenians! to escape death; but it is much more difficult to avoid depravity, for it runs swifter than death. And now I, being slow and aged, am overtaken by the slower of the two; but my accusers, being strong and active, have been overtaken by the swifter, wickedness. And now I depart, condemned by you to death; but they condemned by truth, as guilty of iniquity and injustice: and I abide my sentence, and so do they. These things, perhaps, ought so to be, and I think that they are for the best.

30. In the next place, I desire to predict to you who have condemned me, what will be your fate; for I am now in that condition in which men most frequently prophesy—namely,

when they are about to die. I say, then, to you, O Athenians! who have condemned me to death, that immediately after my death a punishment will overtake you, far more severe, by Jupiter! than that which you have inflicted on me. For you have done this, thinking you should be freed from the necessity of giving an account of your lives. The very contrary, however, as I affirm, will happen to you. Your accusers will be more numerous, whom I have now restrained, though you did not perceive it; and they will be more severe, inasmuch as they are younger, and you will be more indignant. For if you think that by putting men to death you will restrain any one from upbraiding you because you do not live well, you are much mistaken; for this method of escape is neither possible nor honorable; but that other is most honorable and most easy, not to put a check upon others, but for a man to take heed to himself how he may be most perfect. Having predicted thus much to those of you who have condemned me, I take my leave of you.

31. But with you who have voted for my acquittal I would gladly hold converse on what has now taken place, while the magistrates are busy, and I am not yet carried to the place where I must die. Stay with me, then, so long, O Athenians! for nothing hinders our conversing with each other, while we are permitted to do so; for I wish to make known to you, as being my friends, the meaning of that which has just now befallen me. To me, then, O my judges! and in calling you judges I call you rightly—a strange thing has happened. For the wonted prophetic voice of my guardian deity on every former occasion, even in the most trifling affairs, opposed me if I was about to do any thing wrong; but now that has befallen me which ye yourselves behold, and which any one would think, and which is supposed to be the extremity of evil; yet neither when I departed from home in the morning did the warning of the god oppose me, nor when I came up here to the

place of trial, nor in my address when I was about to say any thing; yet on other occasions it has frequently restrained me in the midst of speaking. But now it has never, throughout this proceeding, opposed me, either in what I did or said. What, then, do I suppose to be the cause of this? I will tell you: what has befallen me appears to be a blessing; and it is impossible that we think rightly who suppose that death is an evil. A great proof of this to me is the fact that it is impossible but that the accustomed signal should have opposed me, unless I had been about to meet with some good.

32. Moreover, we may hence conclude that there is great hope that death is a blessing. For to die is one of two things: for either the dead may be annihilated, and have no sensation of any thing whatever; or, as it is said, there are a certain change and passage of the soul from one place to another. And if it is a privation of all sensation, as it were a sleep in which the sleeper has no dream, death would be a wonderful gain. For I think that if any one, having selected a night in which he slept so soundly as not to have had a dream, and having compared this night with all the other nights and days of his life, should be required, on consideration, to say how many days and nights he had passed better and more pleasantly than this night throughout his life, I think that not only a private person, but even the great king himself, would find them easy to number, in comparison with other days and nights. If, therefore, death is a thing of this kind, I say it is a gain; for thus all futurity appears to be nothing more than one night. But if, on the other hand, death is a removal from hence to another place, and what is said be true, that all the dead are there, what greater blessing can there be than this, my judges? For if, on arriving at Hades, released from these who pretend to be judges, one shall find those who are true judges, and who are said to judge there, Minos and Rhadamanthus, Æacus and Triptolemus, and such others of the demi-gods as

were just during their own life, would this be a sad removal? At what price would you not estimate a conference with Orpheus and Musæus, Hesiod and Homer? I indeed should be willing to die often, if this be true. For to me the sojourn there would be admirable, when I should meet with Palamedes, and Ajax, son of Telamon, and any other of the ancients who has died by an unjust sentence. The comparing my sufferings with theirs would, I think, be no unpleasing occupation. But the greatest pleasure would be to spend my time in questioning and examining the people there as I have done those here, and discovering who among them is wise, and who fancies himself to be so, but is not. At what price, my judges, would not any one estimate the opportunity of questioning him who led that mighty army against Troy, or Ulysses, or Sisyphus, or ten thousand others whom one might mention both men and women—with whom to converse and associate, and to question them, would be an inconceivable happiness? Surely for that the judges there do not condemn to death; for in other respects those who live there are more happy than those who are here, and are henceforth immortal, if, at least, what is said be true.

33. You, therefore, O my judges! ought to entertain good hopes with respect to death, and to meditate on this one truth, that to a good man nothing is evil, neither while living nor when dead, nor are his concerns neglected by the gods. And what has befallen me is not the effect of chance; but this is clear to me, that now to die, and be freed from my cares is better for me. On this account the warning in no way turned me aside; and I bear no resentment toward those who condemned me, or against my accusers, although they did not condemn and accuse me with this intention, but thinking to injure me: in this they deserve to be blamed.

Thus much, however, I beg of them. Punish my sons when they grow up, O judges! paining them as I have pained you, if

they appear to you to care for riches or anything else before virtue; and if they think themselves to be something when they are nothing, reproach them as I have done you, for not attending to what they ought, and for conceiving themselves to be something when they are worth nothing. If ye do this, both I and my sons shall have met with just treatment at your hands.

But it is now time to depart—for me to die, for you to live. But which of us is going to a better state is unknown to every one but God.

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