



# EVOLUTION OF VIEWS ABOUT DEATH

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## Annotation

Life and death is a feature not only of world philosophy, but also of national philosophical thinking. In the second half of the 20th century, a system of objective knowledge in a certain sense was formed between philosophy and science to study the problem of death. From this point of view, it is currently included in the field of scientific research of social philosophy and is being researched by many specialists.

**Key words:** evolution, death, thought, knowledge

## INTRODUCTION

From the earliest times, mankind thought about life and death. Initially, in the Zoroastrian holy book "Avesta", religious-mythological thoughts were expressed about it in order to free people from the fear of death. But it is difficult to assess the role of philosophy in the study of death, because in their time Socrates and Plato called it "giving life".

Interestingly, the Greeks took a deep view of the death process and deliberately created an analogy. According to them, death is the last and longest sleep. After all, the ancient Greek thinker Socrates directly spoke about the similarity between sleep and death before his death: "Death is one of two options, the first is death, becoming nothing, because a dead person does not feel anything. The second is a kind of migration from one place to another, believing in traditions. It's like a dream, sometimes you can't see anything while sleeping, and death is a strange thing. If the transmigration of the soul is death, and in that place are all the dead, is there anything better? If this is true, I am ready to die many times: I would be very happy to hold talks there..." he exclaimed. In this place, Socrates uses the religious-mythical idea of the analogy of sleep and death, well known to the ancient Greeks, but he presents it in a new context. His concept of sleep-death rejects archaic fear and clarifies its essence and content at the level of rational cognition.

In our opinion, the death of Socrates surprised his contemporaries with its moral essence. Because in this, the will power and freedom of a person determine the limits of their existence in the context of religious and mythological traditions. Socrates' death is symbolic because it forms the archetype of willingly dying in pursuit of one's goal. The value of this goal is determined by the fact that it belongs to a human and not to a god, ultimately distinguishing anthropomorphism (human likeness) from personification (animation). In the act of death, god becomes the essence of human life into an abstract principle of purposefulness. God does not define existence, but the essence of existence. The death of Socrates is known to us from Plato's *Phaedo*. His conscious effort to separate the soul from the body will be a symbol for the next generation to achieve life through death. It is in "*Phaedo*" that the initial idea that the death of the philosopher-poet led to the survival of the soul was expressed. Although Socrates' death appears to have been a suicide, his philosophical arguments have become a symbol of life and death for generations to come. The reenactment of the details of his death as a voluntary death also activates the philosopher's own definition of death in the hope of survival. In this place,



the idea of survival acquires more social than natural content. Survival is symbolic because, on the one hand, it emphasizes the dominance of consciousness over fate, and on the other hand, it forms the archetype of social memory, creates a cultural ideal.

After the death of Socrates, not only ethics, but also philosophy faces the problem of determining the meaning and meaning of death. By voluntarily consenting to his execution, Socrates brings into focus the issue of personal choice in the matter of the value and meaning of life. It is no longer possible to understand death in a narrow way as a natural destiny inherent in human nature. It is important to demonstrate the value of life through the act of death, and for this, it is necessary to justify the idea of death in a new moral context. Like many other topics left unfinished by Socrates, the problem of the death and life of the soul finds its solution in the teaching of Plato.

Plato's concept of time is, in our opinion, the key to the philosophical understanding of the idea of the soul's existence. The non-stop movement of things and events ensures the eternity and order of the Universe (it is not for nothing that the Greeks considered the sphere a symbol of order). Therefore, the human soul, which is the symbol of the harmony of the Universe, must follow the order of exchange of things established by the divine power. The soul, lying from the center of the sky to its edges, and surrounding the outside of the sky, revolving in itself, entered into the divine beginning of conscious and imperishable life for all time. At the same time, the body of the heavens is visible, and the soul is born invisible, and because it pertains to reasoning and harmony, and is born of the most perfect of all sensible and eternal things, it is the most perfect of all things born. Since the soul of man is "imperishable", "the most perfect of all born things", it should be above time, that is, it should be alive. But if it is "imprisoned" in a mortal body, how can it be explained that it does not disappear?

Plato (in the form of Socrates) gives his students four arguments that prove the existence of the soul. The first of them justifies the origin of the opposition to each other. According to him, life is the consequence of death, and death itself conditions the next life as a cause. This order is not "transient", in other words, we witness a constant (periodic, closed) exchange of opposing forces, including life and death.

The second proof is that the source of human knowledge is his soul. He must have this knowledge before he is born, in order to "remember" them later. Remembering, as a type of knowledge, is the result of a "tight" causal chain of thinking. Knowledge that appears out of nowhere does not exist by itself; it can be forgotten, but in time it is possible to restore it to memory with the help of philosophical will and diligence. Knowing is a process of continuous alternation of "forgetting" (at birth) and "remembering" (throughout life, especially at the moment of death) the same set of knowledge.

The third argument holds that the body exists separately as something visible and the soul as something invisible. According to the laws of nature, the body may decay after a certain period of time, but the soul, being an eternal and imperishable essence, remains by its nature permanent and unchanging. In this argument, it seems particularly interesting to ground the moral side of the issue. Not every soul is divine and does not receive the blessings of the gods after death. In this place, we are talking only about people who have been able to separate their soul from their body through deep self-awareness and study of living essences during their lifetime. And other people's souls are divided according to what kind of life they lived before they died. It is precisely in this difference that the moral content of the argument about the existence of the soul is revealed. Such philosophical excitement of death and life gave a new

emphasis to man's knowledge of the meaning of his existence . Now the question of life and death is leaving the sphere of pure myths and moving into the realm of philosophy.

The fourth argument about the survival of the soul concludes Plato's thanatological reasoning. One form of these arguments is formally constructed in the form of a syllogistic (making a third conclusion from two arguments) conclusion, which convinces the correctness of this conclusion. Is that which does not accept death alive? Does the soul not accept death? So is the soul alive? The starting point of this reasoning is that the opposite sides do not accept each other, in other words, they do not become each other without losing their qualities. Life does not accept death, it retains its permanence as the eida of life and is considered a living soul. Modern interpretations of these and other arguments show that Plato did not specify exactly which eidos he was talking about, that is, the eidos of life in general or the eidos of each human life.

The death of Socrates became the fulcrum of Plato's philosophical discourse and became the central point of content for all subsequent philosophical thanatology. Without Socrates' moral views, the idea of death would have sunk into the depths of another myth and fraud, and we would never have been able to appreciate its heuristic content.

All the above four proofs of the existence of the soul are embodied in the idea of the meaning of life, enlightened by effort and human knowledge. On this basis, death itself loses its meaning and departs from man. "Death is the destiny of any constituent thing. Work diligently" - this is Siddhartha Gautama's last commandment to his disciples, which fully corresponds to Socrates' (Plato's) thoughts on the morality of death. Thus, it is philosophy that teaches about life and death, and philosophers become teachers who prepare people for death. Philosophical thanatological discourse continues in this form during the Hellenistic period.

For the ancient Greeks, there were several ways of understanding the discourse of death. These are a legendary story and a philosophical explanation. Most of the topics defining the subject of Greek thought were moved in the space of language in these two ways. Philosophy, in its heyday, often turned to myths about the problems of life, death, and survival. Therefore, it is sometimes difficult to separate philosophical ideas about death from its mythological appearance. Nevertheless, several stages of the formation and development of the single symbol of death in ancient Greek thought can be distinguished.

Man's first thoughts about death go back to the archaic era and the "dark ages" of Homer. During this period, at the level of myths, subconsciously animated archetypes are formed in the form of Thanatos, Aid, Persephone, etc. Then the legendary characters are combined with real life history, in other words, legends are "revived in historical facts". The gods, who were once concerned with life and were considered immortal, now begin to give way to people like Orpheus and Odysseus in search of eternal life. By the final stage of its development, the mythic stage gives rise to the idea of impersonal existence. The legendary idea of eternity gradually becomes a pattern of everyday life and becomes a social ideal. He aligns himself with Pythagoras, Empedocles, and finally Socrates as an example of a heroic death that entitles him to immortality. Thus, the ideal of the movement of death and immortality arises.

Within the framework of philosophical discourse, the ethics of ideal behavior becomes a metaphysical doctrine of the soul (soul). The service of Plato and Aristotle in systematizing the idea of death and the immortality of the soul (soul) is great.

With the collapse of Hellenism, the philosophical idea of death enters its final stage and merges with the religious teachings of the East. The crisis of culture, and in turn the crisis of cultural

ideals, leads to an increase in fear. And it, in turn, causes the formation of the eschatological idea. Thus, the ancient idea of death consists of several important components. These are: the myth of life (impersonal), the morality of the ideal movement of death-immortality, the metaphysics (philosophy) of human death and the immortality of his soul, eschatology.

Aristotle's idea of death and life is somewhat different from the above. For him, the question of understanding the end (infinity) of the world is as important as the mortal nature of the human soul. Aristotle expresses his physical views in a number of works. His work "About Heaven" presents the vision of the existence of a divine being. According to the philosopher, "Heaven" (or "high place") is the only living being, because it has no beginning and end, it does not disappear, and unlike beings that are certain to die, it does not experience any anxiety. The ever-living God is also a link in this chain and is therefore equal to the ever-moving sky.

Aristotle explained the logical content of the idea of death and life in his work "Topics". In it, the philosopher tries to explain the differences of the concept of species and gender. While emphasizing the immortality of the Gods, Aristotle calls it a species difference for certain living beings who have immortality in a different "condition" or "state" of life. After that, the temporal dimension of this state - "no longer the cause of death" is explained in an interesting way. It can be considered in at least three senses: first, "he is no longer dead," second, "he can no longer die," and third, "he is now such that he can never die." Bringing these three meanings, Aristotle wants to show that the concept of "existence" cannot be interpreted in one sense, it must be strictly applied in the logic of time, movement and subject.

In general, Aristotle's idea of death and life is directly related to his thoughts on psychology, metaphysics, physics, logic and ethics. Therefore, it is impossible to define it in one sense, it can only be conditionally included in the principle of impersonal existence. Because Aristotle does not indicate anywhere that the human soul can exist in an individual (physical) way after the death of the body. Thus, Aristotle puts forward the idea of impersonal existence of the divine soul (Heaven).

## CONCLUSION

The case of Pythagoras and Empedocles concerning the imaginary death and eternity belongs to the final stage of the development of myth-based thinking. The argument that the myth "turned into historical fact" makes us think about the changes that took place in the worldview of the ancient Greeks. It is the myth of eternity in human behavior, and with it the content of the idea of eternity, becomes the actions of individuals who aim to form a new belief. In fact, Pythagoras and Empedocles attempted to expand the boundaries of human culture by transforming the divine ideal of eternity into the reality of man, who was certain to die by nature. In the pursuit of survival by humans, regardless of the means, belief or deception, an important characteristic of the growth of culture is manifested. For the first time, man goes beyond the boundary (Heaven - the place of the gods) and enters there with his goals. The idea that not gods, but man can be alive forces a person to look at himself from a new point of view.

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