

LARGER^{THAN}**LIFE**
A CELEBRATION OF GREATNESS



Plato
Inspirational
(424/423 BC - 348/347 BC)

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INTRODUCTION

- Plato, whose **original name was Aristocles**, was an **ancient Greek philosopher**, the second of the great trio of ancient Greeks succeeding Socrates and preceding Aristotle who between them laid the philosophical foundations of the Western culture.
- He was also a **mathematician, writer of philosophical dialogues, and founder of the Academy in Athens, the first institution of higher learning in the western world**. The institution was devoted to research and instruction in philosophy and sciences.
- His works on philosophy, politics and mathematics were very influential and laid the foundations for Euclid's systematic approach to mathematics.

EARLY YEARS AND DISCIPLE OF SOCRATES

- Plato was born around 424/423 BC in Athens in a very wealthy and aristocratic family.
- When Plato was a young man, he went to listen to Socrates, and learned a lot from Socrates about how to think, and what sort of questions to think about. **He became the disciple of Socrates.**
- When Socrates was killed in 399 BC, Plato was very upset. **He began to write down some of the conversations he had heard Socrates have.**

PLATO'S PHILOSOPHY AND WORKS

- Following Socrates' execution, Plato became profoundly disillusioned with Athenian democracy and **went into a self-imposed exile for twelve years**, traveling throughout the Greek cities in Italy and Africa and studying **geometry, geology, astronomy, and theology in addition to philosophy**.
- His works consisted of 'dialogues' between Socrates and others. Like Socrates, **he was interested in moral**, not natural philosophy. He believed that the heads of government should be 'philosopher kings' and developed a course of study stressing abstract thought for their education in **the Republic**.

LARGER THAN LIFE

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- He advocated the '**Quadrivium**' (the four math fields of study in the liberal arts), which starts with arithmetic, then progresses to plane geometry, solid geometry, and finally astronomy and harmonics.
- He **believed that knowledge was 'forgotten' at birth, and could be remembered.**
- He saw the search for understanding as an attempt to gain pure knowledge, or '**forms**'.
- In **Timaeus**, he presented his cosmology, which consisted of forms, particular objects, God as the Craftsman, absolute space, and brute matter. As a craftsman, God could not make a perfect world from imperfect material.
- He believed all **substances to be composed of air, earth, fire, and water.**
- He **believed in a spherical Earth**, which was the **center of his universe**, and a motion of planets along crystalline spheres.
- He **invented a theory of vision involving three streams of light**: one from what is being seen, one from the eyes, and one from the illuminating source.
- In keeping with his belief that **philosophy should be pursued for the attainment of pure knowledge, he proposed studying astronomy** as an exact mathematical science based on the assumption that motions were regular and circular.
- He also **described the five regular solids**, the tetrahedron, cube, octahedron, dodecahedron, and icosahedrons, now known as the Platonic solids.

DEATH

In around 347/348 Plato died, leaving the Academy in Athens to his sister's son Speusippus. **The academy was a school that flourished for nearly nine hundred years and is generally considered the first university.**

Quotes

"Better a little which is well done, than a great deal imperfectly."

"Courage is knowing what not to fear."

"Necessity is the mother of invention."

"The beginning is the most important part of any work."

Quiz

- 1) Who was the teacher of Plato?
- 2) What was the name of Plato's sister's son?
- 3) What was Plato's original name?

Send in your answers to one2one@clarislifesciences.com

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