

A Brief Summary of the Platonic Teachings

1. Music was the first subject to be presented to his pupils as Plato believed that the study of this art offers the best preparation for philosophy. “Musical training” he said, “is a more potent instrument than any other, because rhythm and harmony find their way into the inward places of the soul, on which, they mightily fasten.” To this he added gymnastics insisting that even physical exercise should be performed for the benefit of the soul, since the soul demands a temple worthy of its occupancy. The combination of music and gymnastics, he said, produces a harmonious balance of soul and body.
2. There are 3 classes of men, which constitute the 3 classes of the ideal state. An idea borrowed from Pythagoras. These classes are: The statesmen (philosophers) governed by reason. The warrior and ruling or executive class, which include soldiers and policemen; these are governed by spirit and action. The civilian class, the merchants and the professionals, and workers, who provide the material needs; they are governed by appetite and pleasure. All 3 are mutually complementary and interdependent. All three qualities are also in all, as the '*gunas*'.
3. Plato's ideal state was modelled after the form of government of the Golden Age, nations ruled by wise King-Initiates. Men who stand at the head of democratic governments should be models of the highest morality, examples to all.
4. Plato's philosophy is 'ethical' above all else, based upon the idea of man's free will. This power of choice determines a man's stage of evolution.
5. The immortality of the Soul forms the central theme of Plato's philosophy. The Soul is neither dependent on the body for its existence, nor affected by its dissolution. Knowledge is nothing more than reminiscence – and the necessity for reincarnation.
6. Plato taught that gravitation is both the attraction of opposites, and the repulsion of 'similar'. As a Pythagorean, Plato was well versed in the heliocentric system.
7. Plato's 'God' idea. He was principally a Monotheist, in the sense that he believed in a Universal Principle as the underlying immutable Existence which gives rise to the 'finite' existences and the change we perceive, which is only an appearance, i.e. *Maya*.