



Maieutic Philosophy

Plato's [esoteric](#) teachings in his written dialogues are hidden in plain sight. However, discerning their meaning requires proficiency in a special tradition. As we saw in an [earlier essay](#), Plato's teaching about the esoteric nature of philosophy is plainly referred to in his *Phaedo*:

‘For I deem that the true disciple of philosophy is likely to be misunderstood by other men; they do not perceive that he is ever pursuing death and dying . . . the separation of soul and body . . . when the soul lives in herself, and is parted from the body. . .

‘In matters of this sort philosophers, above all other men, may be observed in every sort of way to dis sever the soul from the body.’

Here Plato is referring to the teaching concerning ‘dying before you die’ which is one of the central concepts of the Perennial Tradition. Philosophy, the love of and the search for wisdom, is the actual practice of learning to leave the physical body and live in the soul, the spiritual body.

The philosopher--seeker after wisdom--lives in her soul, the higher consciousness. Discerning the essence of philosophy, we now have important clues as to the nature of Plato's mystical science--what he called Dialectic--and described as *maieutic psychagogy*:

- Maieutic: *maieûtikos*, midwife, one who assists in the delivery of a new being
- Psychagogy: *psuchagôgê*, from Greek, *psûchê*, soul, and *agogê*, transport to or lead out of; the science of helping to bring out (give birth to) new elements (ideas, beings) from a person's soul or to bring into (transmit to) a person's soul, elements from a higher level of being

Plato's Socrates, in the dialogues, practiced an extraordinary kind of *shared mystical experience* in which he served as a psychagogic midwife, overseeing the process of the divulgence of, the bringing into being of new elements: ideas, feelings, inspirations, and images.

Source: http://www.hermes-press.com/platonic_dialectic.htm

Illustration: The Death of Socrates from the above website